

California Department of Food and Agriculture
2013 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Nutrition

Ag Against Hunger

\$50,000

Title: Harvest Program

Abstract: The current recession and soaring food costs have greatly affected California citizen's health, with 3.8 million low-income people frequently utilizing food banks. Ag Against Hunger's Harvest Program collects 10 million pounds of surplus produce from growers, shippers and processors to give to food banks in California, feeding two million people annually. A healthy diet can prevent and reduce the effects of obesity and diabetes; therefore food banks are in constant need of fresh produce. The Harvest Program seeks to expand access to healthy, safe California specialty crops, by donating more surplus produce grown in Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito counties to food banks across California. This expanded access will increase the amount of specialty crops consumed by low-income Californians.

California Association of Food Banks

\$330,818

Title: Produce Toolbox: Linking Produce Education and Specialty Crop Distributions at California Food Pantries

Abstract: The California Association of Food Banks' (CAFB) Produce Toolbox program delivers innovative "walk the line" produce education to people waiting in food pantry lines to receive fresh fruit and vegetable specialty crops. The program trains pantry staff to conduct interactive lessons focused on single specialty crops. Participants engage in taste testing; learn health benefits of produce consumption and how to store and prepare specialty crops; and receive multilingual recipe cards and nutrition information with their fresh produce. Produce is provided free through CAFB's Farm to Family program, which obtains 125 million pounds of donated specialty crops annually from growers for distribution by food banks. Participants are also encouraged to purchase eligible specialty crops (fruits and vegetables) at farmers markets using Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards. A 2012 Produce Toolbox pilot (broccoli and stone fruit) showed positive results in increasing specialty crop consumption. This project expands the pilot to include 20 unique specialty crop lessons delivered statewide to at least 30,000 low income people annually.

California State University, Chico Research Foundation

\$398,799

Title: Connecting Agriculture to Schools and Homes (CASH)

Abstract: California State University (CSU), Chico Center for Nutrition and Activity Promotion's (CNAP) research demonstrated that the school-based Harvest of the Month (HOTM) program is an effective way to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables. CNAP's proposed Connecting Agriculture to Schools and Homes (CASH) program will implement a farm-to-school HOTM program in Butte, Glenn and Tehama elementary schools to increase both familiarity with and consumption of California grown specialty crops for at least 15,000 children and their families and 615 teachers. HOTM includes tastings (prepared in a certified kitchen) of specialty crops in school classrooms/cafeterias and nutrition education provided by trained teachers, CNAP staff and university interns. Over the life of the project, students and teachers will receive over 405,000 exposures to featured crops and meet CA farmers through Farmer of the Month (FOTM) newsletters and videos, which will be made available statewide. California Department of Food and Agriculture funds will enable continuation of these successful programs in 30 tri-county schools.

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Community Alliance with Family Farmers

\$400,000

Title: California Farm to School Network

Abstract: With over 1,000 school districts in California (CA), new Farm to School (F2S) programs are beginning in every region, and existing programs want a streamlined way of finding resources, sharing successes, and networking with other organizations. To support programs at various stages statewide, the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) proposes to develop a California Farm to School Network (CFSN). The goal is to support CA specialty crop growers through creating a unified, organized F2S movement that allows for better understanding of the CA F2S landscape, minimize duplication of efforts and increase economic viability of local growers. The objectives are to: 1) launch and build the CFSN; 2) foster efficient regional distribution efforts through facilitating at least 30 meetings among growers, distributors and school districts; and 3) provide training and resources through deploying 12 FoodCorps service members to increase awareness of CA specialty crops among K-12 students.

Hoopa Valley Tribe

\$315,003

Title: Fresh Food for Native Folks

Abstract: This project aims to help create multiple local farms and develop a community based farmers' market. In doing this it will bring farm fresh healthy foods to the Hoopa Valley Reservation community and nearby communities. "Fresh Food for Native Folks" will provide people with the assistance needed to construct farms for vegetable production and marketing. In the Hoopa Valley there is only one store to purchase food from and the produce section is small, not very diverse in selection and overpriced for the majority of the community that is low-income or poverty stricken. The need to create opportunity for people of Hoopa and the surrounding towns to start eating healthier is immensely due to the rise in obesity and diabetes. Vegetables and other healthy produce will be more readily available to the local public by creating the crops, creating the market and by providing financial assistance to low-income families by awarding those who qualify with farmers' market vouchers.

Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative

\$266,080

Title: Developing Farmer to Consumer Relationships in the Faith Community of the North San Francisco Bay Area

Abstract: The project will increase marketing of specialty crops by establishing producer marketing relationships with faith-based institutions through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), farm stands, as well as marketing to faith-based schools, camps and retreat centers. The project will facilitate increased purchasing of local produce in Northern California by promoting farmers' products to faith-based groups through outreach, technical assistance, training, resource materials and a conference. It will benefit local specialty crop producers who need additional marketing outlets to maintain economic viability. It will also support promotion of CalFresh nutrition assistance through congregational educational programming. The project will focus on Sonoma and Marin counties. Cooperating entities include private farms, churches, synagogues and Buddhist temples, and government agencies.

International Rescue Committee

\$396,225

Title: Growing Community Food Systems in Underserved Neighborhoods

Abstract: Building on International Rescue Committee (IRC)'s longstanding experience in community development and food security, this project aims to scale up the Community Food System (CFS) approach -- a dual public health and economic development strategy that addresses gaps in nutrition and

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specialty crop consumption by engaging low-income beneficiaries in urban agriculture, farming microenterprise, nutrition education and farmers' markets. IRC will improve the nutritional status for 2,000 low-income beneficiaries. Additionally, 400 community gardeners will increase their specialty crop production and consumption. At least \$1 million will be generated in revenue for the California specialty crop industry for at least 20 specialty crop farmers. At least \$225,000 will be in CalFresh revenue and at least \$10,000 in microenterprise revenue by urban, small-scale farmers in San Diego County.

My Three Squares

\$100,000

Title: Cooking Matters in Community

Abstract: Three Squares will increase consumption of California-grown specialty crops among 1,000 low-income residents in 7 Bay Area counties through Cooking Matters nutrition and cooking classes, increased participation in CalFresh benefits, and support for urban farms. In each class, Cooking Matters participants prepare and eat healthy fruit- or vegetable-based recipes, then take home a bag of produce to make the recipes at home. Among other sites, Three Squares will partner with two urban farms located in and serving low-income communities; they will provide Cooking Matters graduates with the opportunity to purchase weekly bags of affordable, local specialty crops directly from the farms. Three Squares will also train peer educators to teach Cooking Matters. These efforts will combine to ensure that low-income community residents have the knowledge, skills, support, and access they need to increase their consumption of healthy California-grown specialty crops.

North Coast Opportunities, Inc.

\$400,000

Title: NCO FoodPREP (Produce + Rural Enterprise for Prosperity) Project

Abstract: Through the Produce + Rural Enterprise for Prosperity (FoodPREP) Project, North Coast Opportunities (NCO) and the Ford Street Project (FSP) will partner with specialty crop producers to purchase and process Mendocino and Lake County fruits and vegetables and market them to institutional and retail buyers. FSP is a safety net provider of shelter and housing whose clients will learn and practice food processing skills to fulfill their commitment to work 20 hours per week in exchange for transitional housing. FoodPREP will increase farm income for specialty crop producers, because they will have increased access to institutional markets, and open doors to health, hope, and social justice for FSP homeless clients, who will gain nutrition knowledge and job skills, learning to clean, cube, freeze, can, or otherwise process specialty crops.

People's Grocery

\$52,244

Title: California Hotel Community Crops Project

Abstract: The CA Hotel is a low-income housing development in West Oakland where People's Grocery has managed an agricultural space since 2009. The West Oakland community faces considerable health challenges with high rates of diabetes, hypertension, cholesterol, and a number of other health disorders related to limited access to healthy fresh produce and specialty crops. People's Grocery's specialty crop garden at the CA Hotel provides produce to residents and neighbors and serves as a healthy foods education & community building hub for West Oakland. Through the garden space, People's Grocery intends to build community amongst individuals suffering from the worst health effects of poverty while creating opportunities for residents to increase their knowledge of, access to, and interaction with specialty crops.

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Sacramento Neighborhood Housing Services Inc.

\$54,802

Title: Oak Park Farmers Market

Abstract: NeighborWorks® Sacramento completed the third year of the Farmers Market in Oct 2012. During these three years, it has increased pounds of specialty crop sold from 20,000 to 60,000 pounds, and grown to 12 specialty crop vendors. The project goals are to continue to increase specialty crop sales and add specialty crop vendors through marketing strategies and vendor outreach. A special outreach focus will be placed on immigrant populations and low-income residents. To meet these goals, the current specialty crop promotion will be continued and the promotion will be held weekly instead of periodically during the season. Through this promotion, a specialty crop word of the week and information about the crop will be posted on Facebook. This promotion has increased traffic on the organization's Facebook page and increased sales of specialty crops, which helps attract and retain vendors.

Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles

\$257,293

Title: Bring the Farmer to Your School Program

Abstract: Since 2002, Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles (SEE-LA) and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) have partnered to conduct the Bring the Farmer to Your School program with funding from the California Department of Public Health-Network for a Healthy California. SEE-LA and the Network are the sole providers of this important service in all of Los Angeles County. This unique program brings local California farmers into Title I LAUSD classrooms to deliver interactive presentations about agriculture, specialty crops, and the importance to good health of eating more fresh fruits and vegetables. In 2011-12, at 200 schools, the program provided over 80,000 students from urban communities with an impactful educational experience about local agriculture and nutrition they would not receive through the standard LAUSD curriculum. Despite the program's proven track record of success, due to changes in federal SNAP-Ed funding, the program is not funded past 2012-13. SEE-LA is seeking funding to conduct this innovative and successful program in 2013-14.

The HEAL Project

\$256,308

Title: The HEAL Project: EAAT (Engaged Active Agricultural Tasters)

Abstract: A child engaged in planting and preparation of food is more likely to enjoy that food, eat it again and influence buying choices at home. The Health, Environment and Agriculture Lessons (HEAL) Project (THP) curriculum integrates health, environment and agriculture in a California science standards-based lessons, delivered during the school day to 2,300 kindergarten-twelfth grade (K-12) students per year, in classrooms and on the Farm sites, offering students vital education and hands-on experience with growing, preparing and eating fresh produce. Engaged Active Agricultural Tasters (EAAT) expands THP's curriculum to include the purchase of more fresh produce that students will learn to prepare and eat in every class or farm visit. Health department-approved, portable kitchens in the project's classrooms and Farm sites will allow instructors to teach students how to prepare more varieties of California specialty crop (CSC) produce, encourage students to experiment and enjoy new foods in class, then request them at meals, as snacks at home and school, associate fruits and vegetables with feeling great, and become life-long consumers of CSC.

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The Regents of the University of California, Santa Cruz

\$72,912

Title: "Food, What?!" - Food for Self, Food for Family, Food for Community

Abstract: While Santa Cruz County is rich in agricultural production, low-income Latino youth and adults are disproportionately suffering from obesity and poor nutrition. "Food, What?!" utilizes farming and cooking as the vehicle for enhanced nutrition and increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables (California Specialty Crops "CSCs") for 975 area low-income high school youth and 300 adults annually. "Food, What?!" (FW) will achieve these goals through operating seasonal programs and large events on a unique youth-run production farm with outdoor kitchen. At FW teens will dive into a culturally relevant meal with CSCs that they have cultivated, harvested and cooked (*Food for Self*). Youth will harvest and package Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares to take home for their family, and FW will engage parents in a cooking series using the produce (*Food for Family*). Youth will operate a weekly farm stand at a low-income elementary school and organize three major seasonal events on the farm (*Food for Community*).

Trust for Conservation Innovation

\$398,327

Title: Fresno Food Commons Prototype Implementation

Abstract: The Fresno Food Commons Prototype Implementation project will launch a vertically integrated, community-owned and operated enterprise to produce and deliver locally grown fruit and vegetable specialty crops to residents in the Fresno region. The project is the first prototype of the Food Commons initiative, which is bringing national resources and expertise to bear on the creation in Fresno of an innovative, values-based model for operating, financing, ownership and governance of regional food production assets and infrastructure.

Western Growers Foundation

\$165,000

Title: If They Grow it, They'll Eat It

Abstract: Western Growers Foundation (WGF) will work with The California Department of Education (CDE) to award 100 K-12 schools \$1,500 each to grow and sustain a fruit and vegetable school garden. Schools will apply for these competitive grants via an on-line application. Before awarding any funding to the schools, the applicants will sign a form committing to only using the funds for fruit and veggie seeds/plants, garden equipment and professional development. According to the CDE, nutrition is an essential building block for student success. Healthy, active, and well-nourished children are more likely to attend school and more prepared and motivated to learn. Studies showed children who were taught nutrition while growing vegetables outdoors in their own gardens, increased their preference for vegetables. Improving the desire to taste vegetables is a first step in developing healthier eating patterns.