



## **California Farmers Market Consortium: A Model of Healthy Food Access & Economic Development**

**Description:** Eleven nonprofit organizations are collaborating with assistance from Roots of Change (ROC) to promote purchase of healthy and fresh fruits, nuts and vegetables at **124 farmers markets** in the State by low-income people, who suffer disproportionately from diet related disease.

**Funding:** The project is primarily supported with California Department of Food and Agriculture specialty crop block grant funds (Federal Farm Bill's Specialty Crop Title). CDFA has granted \$1.5 million to ROC since 2009. These funds are used to promote use of CalFresh and WIC benefits to buy specialty crop items at participating farmers markets. Promotion is done using mailings, flyers, radio spots, brochures and signs that are widely distributed in the participating counties. ROC's provides it own philanthropic funds to our partners who have also raised money within their communities for incentive match money utilized in the project.

**Target population to be served:** recipients of federal nutrition benefits in areas of California with the highest levels of food insecurity. Over 16,000 families served so far. It is also important to note that over 750 small farmers have increased sales of specialty crops due to the project.

**How it works:** Via contracts, ROC distributes the CDFA block grant funds to the partners for promotion and outreach work. ROC's philanthropic funds are also distributed for use as incentive match. Partners implement outreach and promotion plans and nutrition benefit client see or hear the promotional efforts and then attend a participating farmers market. Typically, a mother will arrive and use her CalFresh EBT card to purchase \$10 of specialty crop tokens. She is then provided with \$2 to \$10 worth of additional incentive specialty crop tokens from the incentive match funds. The amount of match is determined by the partner organization. ROC convenes the partners via phone and in person to share lessons and speed learning.

### **Full List of Project Partners Since 2009/Area Served:**

1. Agricultural Institute of Marin, Marin County
2. Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association, Monterey and Santa Cruz counties
3. Alchemist Community Development Corporation, Sacramento County
4. Berkeley Ecology Center, Statewide
5. Food For People, Humboldt County
6. Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission, Fresno County
7. Hunger Action Los Angeles, Los Angeles County
8. International Rescue Committee, San Diego County
9. North Coast Growers Association, Humboldt and Mendocino counties
10. Pacific Coast Farmers Market Association, Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, Santa Clara counties
11. Puente de la Costa Sur, San Mateo County
12. Santa Rosa Vista Health Clinic Markets, Sonoma County
13. Soil Born Farm, Sacramento County
14. Sustainable Economic Enterprises Los Angeles, Los Angeles County
15. Visalia Farmers Market Association, Tulare County

**ROC Mission:** ROC brings a diverse range of Californians to the table to build a common interest in food and farming so that every aspect of our food—from the time it's grown to the time it's eaten— can be healthy, safe, profitable, affordable and fair.

Please Turn Over

**ROC's Activity:** ROC is building and supporting a collaborative network of leaders and institutions in California with interest in establishing a sustainable food system in our state by the year 2030. This network involves food producers, businesses, nonprofits, communities, government agencies, and foundations that share a commitment to changing our food thinking, food markets, and food policies. We convene these stakeholders to build relationship by uncovering common values, increase systems thinking and organize transformative collaborative projects that link grass root and grass top leaders in common cause.

**ROC's Vision:** Collaboration of diverse partners creates a sustainable food system in California that

- Improves the health of people
- Increases access to healthy fresh food for all communities
- Lifts the fortunes of the food production industry
- Offers dignity and opportunity to workers
- Demonstrates the highest standards of environmental stewardship
- Creates pride of place
- Leads worldwide demand for health and quality in everyday living.

**Some Results of ROC's First 5-year Plan: 2007-11:**

- Invested \$6.5 million and attracted nearly \$7 million in matching funds for its projects and partners, which have impacted most of the counties in the state
- Formed and coordinate the California Farmers' Market Consortium that now involves 124 farmers markets across the State to increase access to fresh fruits, nuts and vegetables for low-income people
- Supported formation of 12 of the California's 25 local food policy entities
- Spawned the California Roundtable on Agriculture & Environment
- Catalyzed formation of the California Ag Vision process
- Catalyzed formation of sustainable food policies in San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego
- Catalyzed formation of the California's first statewide Food Policy Council, which will commence operation in 2012
- 65,000 online followers from across the State.

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