

California Department of Food and Agriculture  
2012 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

**Nutrition- Food Security and Healthy Eating**

*California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom*

**\$203,782**

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**Title:** Tasting California Specialty Crops in the Classroom

**Abstract:** California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (CFAITC) will provide 500 third through eighth grade classroom teachers with mini-grants of \$300 each to purchase California specialty crop fruits and vegetables for monthly taste testing's and nutrition lessons over a six month period. Mini-grant recipients will receive training at CFAITC's annual teacher conference and resources to teach their students about the nutritional benefits of specialty crops. Students will taste the fruits and vegetables and participate in engaging lessons highlighting California specialty crops, easy-to-prepare recipes, and nutritional information. Recipes will be sent home with the students for parents and guardians to use. The specialty crop lessons and resources will be made available through a new website page devoted solely to California specialty crops on CFAITC's website. Pre-service educators will receive information about the lessons through CFAITC's University Student Teacher Program.

*City Slicker Farms*

**\$137,310**

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**Title:** Backyard Garden Program

**Abstract:** With 11 years of experience, City Slicker Farms has expertly crafted the Backyard Garden Program to build food self-sufficiency by empowering low-income households to grow fresh produce in their own yards for their own table. This program increases awareness of, access to, and consumption of California specialty crops for West Oakland residents and their families. In addition, since 2008, City Slicker Farms has partnered with First 5 Alameda County to expand the reach to childcare centers - working with teachers and students (0-5 years old). Each participant is partnered with a mentor to support the family or childcare center for two years. Mentors provide technical assistance with growing specialty crops and bring needed supplies (e.g. compost and plants). Backyard Gardeners are responsible for maintaining their gardens. Each year, City Slicker Farms works with over 125 families and childcare centers (representing over 1,400 individuals of all ages), and prioritize working with low-income people.

*Ecology Center*

**\$200,000**

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**Title:** Ecology Center Nutrition Food and Farming Policy Program

**Abstract:** The Ecology Center's (EC) Nutrition, Food, and Farming Policy (NFFP) programs are a comprehensive farm-to-fork continuum that improves nutrition by increasing access to and consumption of California Specialty Crops (CSCs). Specialty Crop farmers struggle with high production costs and losses due to perish ability that increase the farther the CSCs are shipped. Industrial scale cooling, packing, and distribution houses take the lion's share of profits out of farming communities, making direct sales to local shoppers a critical avenue for many small farmers. The Ecology Center sees this as a win-win opportunity to drive revenue to CSC growers by directly connecting farmers with new shoppers for the benefit of all. However, making that connection work is complex. Challenges of convenience, familiarity, affordability, infrastructure, policy, and preference must all be addressed.

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*Fresh Approach*

**\$392,810**

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**Title:** Veggie Rx

**Abstract:** VeggieRx gives low-income families in weight management and diabetes clinics prescription vouchers to purchase fruits and vegetables at local farmers' markets. During at least 8 visits over 4 months, clinic staffs assist nutrition education and monitor health indicators such as blood pressure and Body Mass Index (BMI). Fresh Approach then collects health data from the clinics and voucher redemption data from the farmers' markets to measure the correlation between produce consumption and health improvements. In 2011, Fresh Approach piloted VeggieRx at a clinic and results were promising. VeggieRx decreases barriers to accessing and using fresh fruits and vegetables and encourages the development of healthy shopping and eating patterns which will encourage the long-term purchase and consumption of specialty crops.

*Friends of Independent Living Services of Northern California*

**\$400,000**

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**Title:** Cultivating Community Advocates

**Abstract:** Cultivating Community Advocates (CCA) complements 2011 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) Project 48. Cultivating a Community Nutritional Health Network (CCNHN) teaches and promotes low-cost consumption, cultivation, preparation, preservation and marketing of Specialty Crops (SCs) and incentivizes Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) use at Farmers Markets (FMs). CCA increases food security and the SC economy by improving the capacity and sustainability of CCNHN and other projects promoting nutritional/agricultural literacy by reaching into underserved communities for whom access to such resources is a significant barrier. CCA will increase access-challenged residents' participation in—and skill-implementation beyond—CCNHN workshops and other farm-to-fork educational activities. CCA trains advocates to serve as bridges into communities (disabled, homeless, once-incarcerated, and English-limited), whose cultural, lingual, systemic, cognitive or physical access to such programs requires unique facilitation.

*Healthy Eating Lifestyle Principles*

**\$281,532**

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**Title:** Best Buds

**Abstract:** Best Buds (BB) will be a year round multi-faceted nutrition education program promoting healthy eating, while combating the obesity epidemic by empowering participants with knowledge necessary to make healthy food choices and increase their consumption of California fresh fruits and vegetables. Through after school and community activities on nutrition, healthy eating, farming and positive lifestyle values, participants from elementary aged children to adults will learn the value of good nutrition and come away with life-long skills that will benefit their health and well-being both now and in the future. BB will expand existing afterschool and parent nutrition education classes and projects thereby reaching more people throughout the county and in particular the Salinas Valley. BB brings valuable nutrition education that is lacking in elementary schools and provides a venue for adults to receive practical and life-changing information they would otherwise not receive.

*Napa County Agriculture in the Classroom*

**\$252,148**

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**Title:** Agriculture in the Classroom Harvest of the Month Program

**Abstract:** This project will implement the Network for a Healthy California Farm to School "Harvest of the Month" (HOTM) program in Napa County. Working with the Napa Valley Unified School District (NVUSD) Food Service and Sodexo food services, locally grown fruits and vegetables will be provided to school cafeterias. "Harvest of the Month" also will utilize template resources to provide families and teachers with newsletters that provide nutritional information and healthy recipes about local produce.

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Students will learn about agriculture and benefit from improved nutrition from meals provided by the school district's food service program.

*People United for a Better Life in Oakland (PUEBLO)*

**\$114,675**

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**Title:** Building vertically-integrated, community-owned fresh foods enterprise networks

**Abstract:** In building the socially equitable, ecologically restorative food systems which the future societal health depends on, the path to ensuring long-term sustainability involves relationships between land, producer, and consumer. To achieve results in the low-income urban areas most impacted by gaps in the current food systems, the growth of new networks will have to be driven by entrepreneurs who are deeply rooted in these communities. In addition, the ownership entities will have to achieve economic viability while upholding missions of social and ecological benefit. Through existing partnerships with public landholding agencies, career training/education programs, and resident-owned businesses, People United for a Better Life in Oakland (PUEBLO) and allies will build an integrated network of specialty crops production, distribution/retail, enterprise development/training, and education/marketing programs, creating a foundation for long-term food security in Oakland's most vulnerable neighborhoods.

*Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital Foundation*

**\$303,043**

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**Title:** Real kids, Real food Farm to School Program

**Abstract:** The mission of Live Healthy Nevada County Food and Nutrition Action Committee (LHNC FNAC) is to educate, inspire and connect Western Nevada County families to fresh, local, seasonal food. The project would support a replication of a pilot farm to school program throughout the county and would build capacity in the following pilot programs: field trips to local farms; using seasonal, local crops for Harvest of the Month Education; cooking classes with seasonal harvest; hands on experiential learning using school or community gardens; Farm Docent/Garden Docent training; garden stands to improve fresh food access at school; nutrition based enrichment programs; and student engagement in established community gleaning program. A farm to school coordinator serving K-8 students in Nevada County would implement existing farm to school pilot programs and measure results of increased awareness and consumption of fresh, local, seasonal food.

*Stanislaus Multi-Cultural Community Health Coalition West Modesto  
Kennedy Neighborhood Collaborative*

**\$376,232**

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**Title:** Vine and Branches Community Supported Agriculture

**Abstract:** The project, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), is designed to provide access to affordable fresh fruits and vegetables to low-income individuals residing, working or attending church in West Modesto. A 2007 interview conducted in West Modesto identified a lack of neighborhood stores with fresh affordable produce in close proximity as a barrier to healthy eating. The CSA will operate as one "prong" of a larger, multifaceted effort comprised of (1) partnering with local farmers; (2) expansion of farming currently provided; (3) establishment of a community garden and; (4) expansion of the local Farmers' Market which is held one day a week, between June-October. This project will meet the food and nutritious needs of low-income individuals and families; provide access to quality affordable foods; and promote partnerships and provide community education on healthy eating practices. The CSA, initially supported by grants, will become sustainable through revenue generation.

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*Trust for Conservation Innovation*

***\$394,124***

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**Title:** California Farmers Market Consortium (CFMC)

**Abstract:** The California Farmers Market Consortium (CFMC) will continue to promote the sales of California grown Specialty Crops (SC) at 115 farmers markets in 20 counties by increasing EBT access at direct marketing venues and diversifying marketing outlets for these farmers. Specialty crop farmers will be introduced to other direct marketing opportunities to connect to buyers from neighborhood grocery stores, local restaurants, and aging and daycare centers. The project will connect partners to statewide food advisory committees to increase sales of SC by low-income populations and those in less food secure communities.

*Western Growers Foundation*

***\$105,000***

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**Title:** Child care/Pre-school Fruit and Vegetable Gardens

**Abstract:** Western Growers Foundation (WGF) will work with the California Department of Education (CDE) to provide \$1,000 to 100 child care/pre-school sites. These competitive grants will be applied for through their Child Care Centers and awarded to pre-school sites for garden equipment, supplies, and professional development. This funding supports Garden-enhanced Nutrition Education (GENE). Through these gardens, California's youngest students are provided opportunities for experiential nutrition education through planting, harvesting, and eating fruits and vegetables. Two recent studies of California child care agencies reveal servings of fruit and vegetables are well below recommended levels. GENE for Pre-school Children Grants impacts: nutrition education related to fruit and vegetables as food choices for pre-school children; the foods served at their homes; and California's specialty crops served to pre-school children in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child Care Food Program.

*Yolo County*

***\$399,930***

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**Title:** Yolo County Farm-to-School Planning and Implementation

**Abstract:** Yolo County is a pilot to provide California county agricultural commissioner's and school food service directors with a set of 'tools' to deliver a "California Grown" School Lunch reflecting the specialty crops of the region. The project connects school districts countywide with the food and farming community through (1) a countywide website describing and highlighting available crops, (2) sample seasonal menus and recipes naming California Specialty Crops, (3) professional cooking classes with school food services about how to incorporate these crops into lunch menus (e.g. salad bars and scratch cooking), and (4) farmer training about school food service needs and how to meet them. The template, provided to all California counties, will include 40 seasonal recipes integrating California Specialty Crops, sample seasonal lunch menus, a California seasonality chart, and suggested education techniques for professional development of school food service personnel.