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**CHILDHOOD
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Working Together to Shape a Healthy Future

Ordering Farm Fresh Produce



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Network for a Healthy California

Resources for Faith Communities

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Faith communities have always been concerned about the spiritual and physical well-being of their members. With less than one in three Californians eating 5 or more fruits and vegetables a day — dietary guidelines recommend 4 to 13 servings (i.e., 2 to 6 ½ cups)^{1, 2}, our families and children are at risk for serious health problems like obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Churches, synagogues, and temples are needed more than ever to support communities in living healthy, productive lives. Like the old adage says “an apple a day keeps the doctor away”; faith communities that offer fruits and vegetables on a regular basis can help reduce their members’ risk of disease. If your faith community would like to encourage healthy eating habits and improve the health of its members, then this simple guide to fresh produce delivery is right for you.

This easy-to-use guide offers step-by-step instructions on how to order boxes of fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers and have those boxes delivered right to your faith community, or to a nearby location, with a schedule that meets your needs.

How to Order Boxes of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables from Local Farmers

One simple way to have fresh fruits and vegetables delivered to your faith community is to participate in a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program. A CSA Program provides locally grown, seasonal fruits and vegetables to faith communities, businesses, and individuals, on a subscription basis. This subscription typically includes a weekly delivery of one or more large boxes of produce. Each box of produce contains enough fruits and vegetables to feed a family of four for a week. If a CSA Program is right for your faith community, here are a few steps you should consider:

- The cost for each weekly CSA delivery of fresh fruits and vegetables ranges from \$13 to \$30 per box. Collaborate with your faith community staff or volunteers to determine the best way to pay for the fruit and vegetable deliveries.
 - If your faith community pays for the fresh produce, you can distribute the items to your congregants and staff as snacks that they can enjoy before or after services; during meals, classes, and meetings; and throughout the staff workday.
 - If your faith community is unable to pay for the fruit and vegetable deliveries, you can determine whether individual members or groups of congregants would like to pay for the produce themselves. With this approach, the congregants who pay for the produce deliveries can choose whether they want to take the produce home to their families or share it with the entire congregation. A different group of congregants may choose to sponsor the CSA delivery each week. Another approach is to share the cost of the fruit and vegetable deliveries between the church, synagogue, or temple and its members.

¹ (2006, November 2). *Average Fruit and Vegetable Consumption Per Day California -- 2007*. Retrieved February 11, 2008, from Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion: <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/5ADaySurveillance/>

² *About the National Fruit & Vegetable Program*. Retrieved February 11, 2009, from National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion: http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/health_professionals/about.html

- Designate a person in your faith community who will be responsible for coordinating the CSA fruit and vegetable deliveries.
- Locate participating CSA farms in your area by visiting www.localharvest.org and entering in your faith community's zip code.
- Contact a nearby CSA Program to set up a partnership agreement or subscription between your faith community and the farm.
- Once a subscription has been established, you can expect your weekly drop-off of fresh fruits and vegetables delivered to, or near, your faith community.
- Often, CSA Programs have pre-existing drop-off/pick up locations, times, and days for each specific geographic area. Locations are usually centralized, such as a community hall or nearby recreation club.
- You may also arrange for your subscription to be delivered directly to your faith community. CSAs often have a minimum order requirement that must be met to establish a new drop-off site. You and the farmer should discuss this prior to committing to a subscription service. It may be necessary to speak with a couple of farms in the region to find one that meets your needs.
- The subscriber will not always know what is in the box until he or she opens it up, which adds to the fun of receiving produce straight from the farm. For those who can't wait, most CSA Programs have Web sites that list the week's fruit and vegetable selections. During a bountiful season, subscribers may receive extra boxes of produce during the week, with more types of fruits and vegetables than normal. There is no additional cost for these extra boxes, but keep in mind that during less bountiful times of the year, selection and abundance can be limited.

How to Order Boxes of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables from Private Companies

If you prefer to receive customized orders of fresh fruits and vegetables, consider utilizing private companies who specialize in shipping fresh produce. The benefit of such companies is that you can choose how much, how often, and what type of fruits and vegetables you want delivered to your faith community. The fruits and vegetables are sent directly to your faith community, and the time from harvest to consumption can be as little as 3 days. If this approach fits well with your faith community, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Make sure a person in your congregation is designated to order the fruits and vegetables, monitor the deliveries, place the produce boxes in common eating or gathering areas, communicate with members that the produce is available, and keep track of the payment process.
- A 25 pound box (50 pieces) of fresh produce can be delivered directly to your faith community for as little as \$64 per week, which includes overnight shipping.
- A long-term annual commitment is not required from a private produce supplier, and a faith community can cancel its subscription at any time.
- Many forms of payment can be used, such as credit cards, installment agreements, and purchase orders.
- Private produce suppliers want to know what you think of their products, so make sure your faith community provides feedback on the quality and variety of fruits and vegetables that are provided.

This document was adapted from the tool "Ordering Farm Fresh Produce for Worksites" in the California Fit Business Kit, a resource produced by the California Department of Public Health, Network for a Healthy California and funded by the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program). These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. In California, food stamps provide assistance to low-income households, and can help buy nutritious foods for better health. For food stamp information, call 877-847-3663. To access the 10 tools of the California Fit Business Kit, visit <http://www.takeactionca.com/california-fit-business-kit-tools.asp>.

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