



FOOD ACCESS TOOLKIT

ABOUT FAIRSHARE CSA COALITION

Vision

FairShare CSA Coalition (FairShare) envisions a future where Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is the backbone of a strong local food system; where all families have access to locally produced, organic food and have strong connections to their farms, food and community.

History & Work

FairShare CSA Coalition (formerly the Madison Area CSA Coalition, or MACSAC) is one of the oldest and most successful CSA organizations in the country. The organization began in 1992 as a consumer-farmer partnership to bring community supported agriculture to the Madison, Wisconsin area. Working together, the Coalition grew from a network of eight farmers serving approximately 1,000 individuals to a coalition of 53 farms serving over 13,500 households in 2017.¹ This remarkable market growth was due in part to the high standard of quality maintained by coalition growers and the effective leveraging of shared outreach and financial resources to reach target audiences.

FairShare's commitment to increasing the quality and availability of CSA shares is realized through farm and consumer education, community engagement, and increasing access to CSA shares for everyone in the community. FairShare's Partner Shares program makes healthy, locally grown fruits and vegetables affordable and available to low-income households. Events like the CSA Open House and Bike the Barns offer opportunities for consumers to learn about and connect with CSA farms. FairShare's Workplace CSA initiative connects CSA farms to businesses. Workplace CSA supports company wellness and sustainability goals and combines the community of farm membership with the convenience of workplace delivery. FairShare works with area health plans to provide rebates or wellness rewards to health plan members for the individual or family purchase of a CSA share. In addition, FairShare encourages workplace partners to offer incentives such as share discounts, payroll deduction, and FairShare cookbooks to employees. These programs encourage organic farming, keep local dollars in the community, and build a healthier Wisconsin.

FairShare works closely with its community of growers to develop and share resources, build skills, offer farm endorsement, and maintain a spirit of collaboration and camaraderie. Through its nationally marketed food books, *From Asparagus to Zucchini* and *Farm-Fresh & Fast*, FairShare helps consumers make the most of seasonal produce.

For more information about FairShare CSA Coalition and its initiatives visit www.csacoalition.org.



¹ Data gathered from FairShare's annual survey of coalition farms

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FairShare CSA Coalition owes its success to the many dedicated farmers and consumers who have been part of the Coalition over the past 26 years. The efforts of these pioneers have positioned FairShare as an example of what is possible when collaboration, camaraderie, and connection are shared among farmers and consumers. FairShare is thankful for the farmers and consumers who have made numerous contributions to the organization over the years.

FairShare offers a special thank you to those who contributed time and content to this toolkit: Laura Berry (Physician’s Plus), Christine Balch (Crossroads Community Food Network), Sandy Cannon (Bluegrass Harvest), and Hannah Quigley and Alice Ammerman (UNC Chapel Hill).

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- Dave Runsten and Michelle Wyler, Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF)
- Landis Spickerman and Rick Dalen, Duluth CSA Guild
- Hudson Valley CSA Coalition
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OVERVIEW OF THE FARMERS MARKET PROMOTION PROGRAM GRANT & TOOLKITS

As a leader among CSA networks, FairShare regularly fields inquiries from farms and emerging CSA coalitions interested in replicating its successful CSA marketing, education, and outreach programs around the country.

In 2015, FairShare began this project to create toolkits for several of its popular organization initiatives, and to create a CSA marketing survey to better understand consumer preferences. Working closely on these projects with four diverse farm networks from different regions at various organizational stages, will aid FairShare and partner CSA networks in devising targeted marketing efforts. This will help build consumer demand for CSA and increase sales of CSA shares, both locally and nationally.

The purpose of the toolkits is to provide CSA coalitions and farmer groups with the framework for several of FairShare’s signature programs, so that they may jumpstart similar initiatives in their respective regions. Through this work, FairShare will continue to support the regional and national growth of the CSA market.



THANK YOU



HUDSON VALLEY CSA COALITION

Duluth CSA Guild

INTRODUCTION

Everyone has a right to fresh, nutritious food, but not every family gets it. Many food access programs emphasize staples, low cost filler foods and pre-packaged meals. Vegetables are mostly canned, or “retired” produce donated by grocery stores. Such options are not only less appealing, but also less nutritious. But what if we could do it better? What if lower income families could have access to the same high quality vegetables that more affluent people enjoy? This is the mission of FairShare CSA Coalition’s Partner Share Program and programs like it. Through education, outreach, community building, and resource sharing, we strive to make CSA more accessible to everyone.

FairShare’s Partner Shares Program (PSP) began in 1996 to improve access to fresh vegetables grown by local farmers. PSP is a cost-sharing program which provides 50% of assistance, up to \$300, towards the purchase of a CSA share for qualifying individuals. In 2010, we became a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit processor, enabling us to help farm members use their food benefits to purchase a share. FairShare has developed creative fundraising options that enable us to sustain and expand our Partner Shares program. We have a number of different outreach partners, including community and governmental organizations, who assist us by promoting the program and reaching out to potential PSP members.

In the over 25 years since its inception, the program has evolved considerably. In 2017, we completed a PSP evaluation which enabled us to analyze long term trends in the program and see patterns. For example, since 2008 the program has grown to serve over 180 households or organizations. Participants have steadily become more diverse and represent a greater number of counties, gradually expanding the reach of the program.

There are many reasons that PSP and similar programs are valuable. Benefits to farmers include a more stable income base and a measurable way to give back to the community, which enhances the depth and meaning of CSA’s commitment to community. Lower income families receive the support they need to access the best and freshest produce that our farms can provide.

We invite you to consider if a similar program might add to your organization’s mission.

As you read through the case studies, you’ll be able to see practical, real-life examples of how food access can be improved in our communities. This toolkit should help you to build a program which will meet the needs of your local community as well as farmers.

“We are filled with gratitude to receive assistance in signing up for a CSA. Thank you so much for helping us feed our family beautiful food.”

Lia Woo
Partner Shares Member



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FAIRSHARE PARTNER SHARES PROGRAM

PROGRAM HISTORY

FairShare CSA Coalition connects and supports Community Supported Agriculture farmers and eaters. Now in our 25th year, FairShare’s mission is to make CSA accessible, ensure farmers get a fair price, and make certain that membership in a CSA farm is affordable for all in the community.

The Partner Shares Program (PSP), established around 1996, provides financial assistance to offset the cost of CSA membership in FairShare farms. The Partner Shares Program has grown from subsidizing CSA shares for 18 households and six organizations in 1997, to subsidizing shares for 180 households and organizations in 2017.

Initially, a volunteer committee oversaw the management and direction of the PSP. That group, the Food Access Committee, still contributes to the program’s goals, policy, and funding direction. This volunteer committee is comprised of past PSP participants, partner organizations, FairShare Board members, FairShare farmers, and other community members with an interest in ensuring CSA is accessible and affordable. The Food Access Committee now meets one to two times a year to advise FairShare staff members regarding PSP policy and procedures. The committee also assists with appropriate grant seeking and writing for the program.

FairShare seeks to increase the accessibility of CSA to low-income households in urban and, increasingly, rural settings in southern Wisconsin. We provide more than \$30,000 in financial assistance to low-income households for purchasing CSA shares each year, as well as opportunities to use SNAP benefits. Ongoing initiatives include raising awareness of CSA and program resources; building partnerships with community organizations; exploring methods for minimizing barriers to CSA; and monitoring growth, evaluating, and generating funding for the Partner Shares Program.

Over the years, the program has developed a number of well-integrated funding strategies. In 2010, FairShare became a 501(c)3 nonprofit and also became a SNAP eligible retailer, allowing us to process payments for farm members. Our largest fundraiser, Bike the Barns, annually earns the bulk of funds needed for the program. Donations from farms, other farm members, and individuals round out the mix.

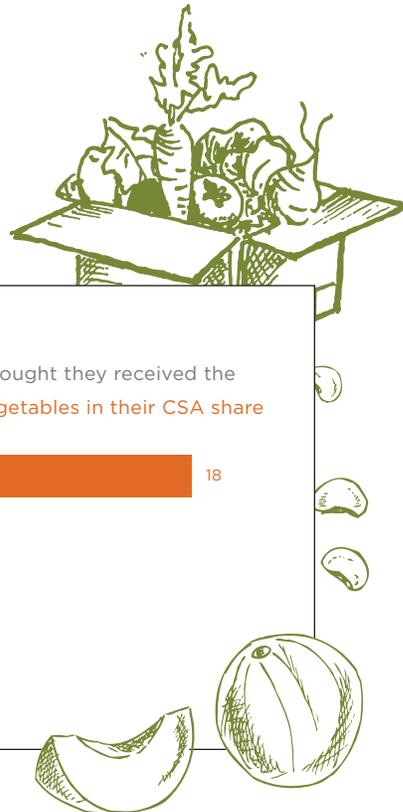
PARTNER SHARES PROGRAM BASICS

How it Works

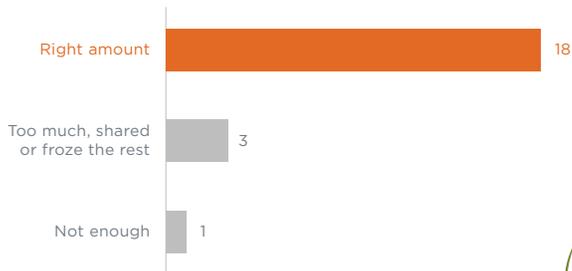
Partner Shares is a cost-sharing program, in which eligibility is based on 185% of US Poverty Income Guidelines. For eligible households and organizations serving low income households, FairShare will contribute 50%, up to \$300, toward the cost of shares from FairShare-affiliated farms. For example, a share worth \$600 will qualify for \$300 from FairShare and require a payment of \$300 from the participant, which can be spread over the course of the season. Only on-farm produced shares are eligible.

Partner Shares Participant Responsibilities

Partner Shares participants take on the responsibilities of being a good CSA member of the farm they choose, and work with FairShare to complete an affordable payment plan for the remaining cost of their share. Assistance funds and availability of CSA shares are limited. We recommend applicants complete and submit their Partner Shares application as soon as possible as the program typically fills up by mid-spring each year. Requests for Partner Shares funding assistance are granted on a first-come, first-served basis.



Nearly 82% of respondents thought they received the **right amount** of fruits and vegetables in their CSA share





BEST PRACTICES: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

When setting up an equivalent program for your own CSA coalition, it's important to realize that it takes a considerable amount of time and planning to administer the program.

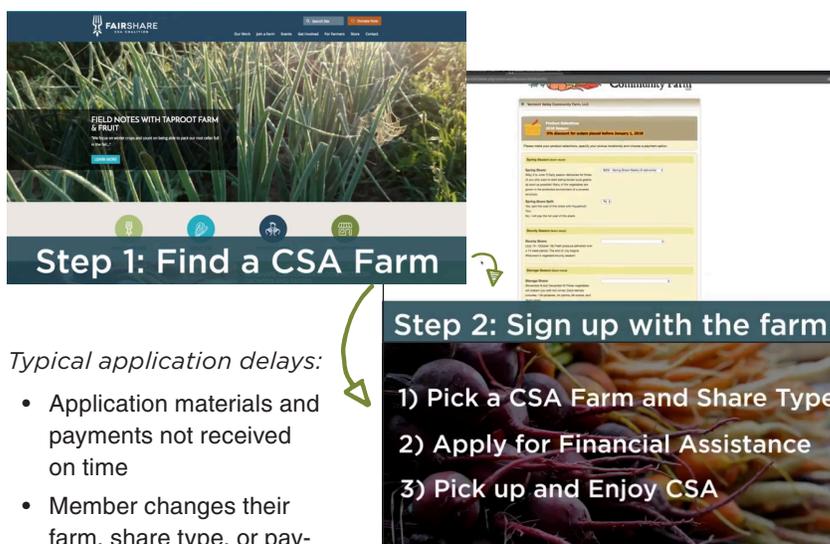
Payments

Co-payments can be made by PSP members by check, SNAP, or credit card. Typically members make payments on a six month payment plan. FairShare pays the farms in either one or two installments.

Application Process

The application is made available starting January 15 each year, and continues until funds are exhausted. Materials on our website, including a how-to video, make it easy to get started. FairShare staff and a PSP intern are available to answer questions, process applications, and provide follow-up.

Figure 1: Partner Shares Sign-up Process



Typical application delays:

- Application materials and payments not received on time
- Member changes their farm, share type, or payment plan
- Payment defaults requiring additional follow-up

The majority of time spent on program administration is spent on answering questions as people sign up, such as the basics of CSA and how the program works. Another portion of time is spent doing follow-up on making payments. Program administrators will want to set aside time for follow-up of missed payments, new payment plans, EBT card number changes, and SNAP benefit changes. Our program is very flexible, allowing PSP members to design their own payment system. This means that although we work with a small number of people, each situation is unique, resulting in greater administrative time.

CALENDAR OVERVIEW	
LATE DEC./ EARLY JAN.	Partner Shares Program intern begins providing support.
EARLY JAN.	Promotions/outreach begins, and continues until funding is exhausted.
JAN. 15	Applications become available.
APRIL/MAY	Program usually reaches capacity.
END OF APRIL & END OF JUNE	Payments are distributed to farmers.
END OF OCT.	Evaluation sent to all PSP members at the end of the share season.
NOV. & DEC.	Refine and/or create new PSP materials.
END OF DEC.	Evaluation and program review.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR PSP

Individuals

The main requirement for program participation is a current monthly household income that is at or below the 185% of Federal Poverty Guidelines (see chart), and the honor system is used to verify income. Households eligible for SNAP benefits, the WIC program, or if children are eligible for free or reduced lunch at school, also qualifies for program eligibility. If someone requests inclusion in the program based on extenuating circumstances in their life, but reports a higher income than the eligibility guidelines, we place them at the beginning of the waitlist. The requested CSA shares are only for on-farm food products. For example, Partner Shares funding cannot be used for coffee shares. Participants must understand the concept of CSA, and agree to the farm’s member responsibilities, specifically picking up their share each week.

Organizations

Organizations that serve the needs of low income households may also apply to the PSP. In order to qualify, the majority (>50%) of the population they serve must meet the above income guidelines. The organization must serve prepared meals to their community members, rather than using this produce for their food pantry. Again, the requested CSA share must be for on-farm produced food products only. As with individuals, the organization contact understands the concept of CSA and agrees to the farm’s CSA member responsibilities, specifically picking up the organization’s share each week. Also, the organization must offer educational materials or activities related to healthy eating, nutritional guidelines, and promotion of CSA.

☆ RECORD KEEPING

You’ll want to think about your data management systems in advance as you plan your program. Consider whether you’d prefer to collect the information in a database or spreadsheet. Designate which staff member will be in charge of entering the data. The majority of PSP applicants apply online through our website. Application data is exported into an Excel master application file. Some apply by paper application, and we add this into the master application file.

It’s also useful to create template materials such as follow-up letters and emails regarding application received, acceptance to the program, payment plans and other internal forms, including notifying the farm about PSP members signing up through their farm and when payment is sent.

2018 Partner Share Income Eligibility Guidelines
(based on 185% of US Poverty Income Guidelines)

Household Size	Annual Income	Monthly Income
1	\$22,311	\$1,860
2	\$30,044	\$2,503
3	\$37,777	\$3,148
4	\$45,510	\$3,792
5	\$53,243	\$4,436
6	\$60,976	\$5,081
7	\$68,709	\$5,725

For each additional family member add: \$7,733 (annual) or \$644 (monthly).



Payment Options

Once applicants have filled out their application, they must submit a \$25 initial payment (cash, check or money order) to reserve their spot in the program. The initial payment will be applied to their balance due. For example, if their payment contribution for the whole share is \$300, once they complete the initial payment of \$25, they will owe \$275.

We offer many options for program participants to make a co-payment, including payment plans based on their needs.

Here are some payment options:

Single Check—This is a single payment for the total amount due. A separate \$25 initial payment is not needed.

Multiple Checks—Payments are spread out over the delivery season. An initial payment of \$25 is still required with the application. All checks must be written, post-dated, and mailed when participants submit their PSP application.

SNAP/EBT Card—FairShare is considered a cooperative organization, allowing us to process SNAP benefits. SNAP benefits cannot be used for the initial \$25 payment, since it is processed before a PSP member receives their share, and SNAP benefits must be debited within two weeks of receiving food. Participant's accounts are debited each month of their payment plan. Due to current USDA Food & Nutrition Service guidelines, we cannot deduct the full payment at one time. The \$25 initial payment is still required with the application.



Multiple methods participants can pay for part of their share by check(s) and part with SNAP.

Credit Card Participants can pay their full co-payment amount at once with a credit or debit card. A payment processing fee of 3% of the amount is applied to the transaction. With this method, we do not create monthly payment plans. A separate \$25 initial payment is not needed.

Submitting Applications

Most applicants choose to complete and submit their application online, but they may also be printed out and mailed in. Participants must also complete a Participation Agreement which verifies that they qualify for the program, understand CSA, and take financial responsibility for their memberships. Our online video and list of frequently asked questions provides additional support for program participants.

FairShare CSA Coalition | 303 S. Paterson St. #18, Madison, WI 53703
(608) 226-0300 | info@csacoalition.org | www.csacoalition.org

PARTNER SHARES PROGRAM APPLICATION

First Name		Last Name		Primary Phone Number	
Street Address		City	County	State	Zip Code
Email		Best way to contact you		<input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Phone	
How did you hear about Partner Shares? <input type="checkbox"/> Friend <input type="checkbox"/> CSA Farm <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper <input type="checkbox"/> Internet <input type="checkbox"/> Event <input type="checkbox"/> Other - Please list: _____					
Are you a 1 st time CSA member? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		If no, which years were you a CSA member? <input type="checkbox"/> 2014 <input type="checkbox"/> 2015 <input type="checkbox"/> 2016 <input type="checkbox"/> 2017 <input type="checkbox"/> Other - List: _____			
What is your occupation?		Are you a 1 st time Partner Shares Applicant? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
What amount (\$) are you willing/able to spend on fresh fruits & vegetables/week for your household?		Describe your current household eating habits:		How often do you eat fruits and vegetables?	
		<input type="checkbox"/> I/we eat out for most meals		<input type="checkbox"/> I/we eat fruits and/or vegetables at every meal	
		<input type="checkbox"/> I/we eat mostly pre-prepared/package foods		<input type="checkbox"/> I/we eat fruits and/or vegetables at least once per day	
Funds are limited and available on a first-come first-served basis. If funds are not available, do you still plan on joining a CSA? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other - Explain: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> I/we eat mostly eat meals prepared at home		<input type="checkbox"/> I/we eat fruits and/or vegetables at least 5 times/week	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other - Explain: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> I/we eat fruits and/or vegetables at least 3 times/week	
				<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

1. PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT:
As a Partner Shares participant, I certify with my initials and signature that:
 My household qualifies for Partner Shares assistance based on FairShare's eligibility requirements.
 I agree to pay FairShare CSA Coalition the CSA share co-payment amount determined by my income level.
 I will inform the Coalition immediately if I am having trouble making a payment, changing banking accounts or EBT card numbers, or must cancel my farm membership.
 I understand that I am making a commitment to a farm, and will be responsible for picking up my vegetable share every week throughout the season.
 Yes No, thank you: I grant FairShare CSA Coalition the permission to publish photographs of me and my family at CSA Coalition events for media and promotional purposes.

Signature _____ Date _____

2. FARM CHOICE:
Please include a completed farm sign-up form (obtain form from chosen farm) with this application.
 CSA Farm Name _____
 CSA Share Type* _____ (Ex: Full, Half, Standard, Every Other Week) Total
 Share Cost _____

* Only on-farm produced shares are eligible for Partner Share Program funding.

3. INCOME VERIFICATION: (based on Federal Poverty Level - FPL)
 In order to serve as many households as possible, FairShare utilizes an income-based fee scale. Based on your income, FairShare will pay a portion of your CSA share payment, up to a maximum of \$300. In addition, FairShare will work with applicants who are eligible for CSA rebates from their HMO providers to assist you in receiving your rebate.
 How many members are in your household? _____ What is your annual or monthly household income? _____ per month / year (circle one)

Household Size	Annual	Monthly
1	\$22,311	\$1,860
2	30,044	2,503
3	37,777	3,148
4	45,510	3,792
5	53,243	4,436
6	60,976	5,081
7	68,709	5,725
8	76,442	6,369

For each additional family member add: 642 (monthly) or 7,696 (annual).

Particulars of SNAP-processing approval

FairShare became a SNAP authorized retailer in 2010. We use Offline Food Vouchers to process payments and are categorized as a cooperative retailer. This allows us to collect payments and make them offline. However, since the 2014 Farm Bill, Offline Food Vouchers are being phased out. New farms/networks exploring EBT/SNAP payment for CSA will need to explore other methods for processing SNAP payments.

There are some challenges with processing SNAP payments. With the CSA model, pre-payment for shares is typical. However, with SNAP, food must be received within two weeks (14 days) of the payment. NOTE - a provision was added to the 2014 farm bill to allow pre-payment but this rule has not been finalized/implemented yet. To become a SNAP retailer, you must apply through the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS).

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Financial Management & Cashflow

When setting up the PSP, we scheduled outgoing payments to best suit our organizational cash flow needs. FairShare provides the farmers with a choice on how they receive their payments--either in full or in two installments of 50% each. This results in a large cash flow out of the organization, typically in the second quarter, but the split payment system provides some balance.

It's important to create policies in advance to deal constructively with financial management. One policy addresses the farmers-- who sign an agreement regarding the timing of the payments. Another policy addresses the PSP members as they pay their cost share. You'll have to determine in advance the consequences for non-payment, and decide at what point a non-compliant member is cancelled, blacklisted, etc. As a result of our strong work with developing policies and enforcing them in a timely manner, we find that very few members default. Only one to five members per season are not able to pay in full (just 1-2%).

PARTNER SHARES PROGRAM FUNDING

For more information, see the Promotions Toolkit.

Bike the Barns

Bike the Barns is our annual fundraiser for the PSP, and it raises the bulk of the funds needed for the program. The ride features area CSA farms and tours, gourmet local food, craft libations and live music. Riders visit FairShare farms on a route that changes each year. The Bike the Barns menu is seasonal, local, and fresh, and the food is almost entirely from FairShare's organic farms. Madison area restaurants and caterers prepare the meals.

All rider pledges are designated to the Partner Shares program, while sponsorships and other monies are designated to FairShare CSA Coalition. During the last two years (2016 and 2017) pledges totalled around \$42,000 each year. There are a number of different fundraising levels, and riders are given incentives along the way. For example, riders who sign up as "Pledge Riders" receive a discounted registration and are eligible for prizes. Complete information can be found at Bike the Barns Fundraising for Riders. Riders are invited to create a personal or team fundraising web page on our cause page after they register. The pledge raising thermometer for riders is automatically set at \$100; \$60 is the minimum pledge requirement.

Individual donations

Though Bike the Barns raises the bulk of the funds for PSP, there are a number of other smaller but important sources of funding. Individual donors provide a total of \$10-15,000 each year.



During Bike the Barns, all rider pledges go directly to the Partner Shares Program.

Farm member donations

In order to receive PSP members, FairShare requires that farms participate in the program, and one of the options for doing so, is to provide information on donating to the PSP on farm sign up forms. This makes it easy for members to donate to the PSP when they are signing up for the year. We encourage farms to promote donating through Bike the Barns to their membership and include information about donating in their newsletters.

Dane County partnership

FairShare's office is located in Madison, in Dane County, Wisconsin. Since 2017, Dane County has allocated \$15,000 to the PSP to subsidize CSA shares for county residents. The PSP aligns with the county's goals to increase food access and affordable, healthy food options. The county requests that FairShare specifically target outreach to those areas that have been identified as low food access areas. For more information, see the case study on the Dane County Partnership.



☆ **BUILDING STRONG TIES WITH PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS IMPROVES OUTREACH EFFORTS.**

Certain outreach strategies and locations are more successful than others. As an example, we have found that WIC clinic outreach is incredibly effective and efficient. A large percentage of families attending the high-traffic clinic showed interest in the program. In addition, WIC clinic had a supportive staff that wished to learn more about the program so they could offer more details to prospective Partner Shares members. Conversely, certain community centers typically serve a lower income population than can feasibly consider the cost-sharing PSP.



SNAP

PSP members (as well as others) can use their SNAP benefits for their co-payment. For more information see “Particulars of SNAP Processing approval” and the payments section.

HMO Rebates

FairShare CSA Coalition was instrumental in launching the CSA Health Insurance Rebate programs offered by area HMOs. These programs offer a rebate for CSA shares, similar to rebates for gym memberships or exercise programs. However, HMO benefit usage for PSP payments have declined since 2012, as area HMOs have changed their benefit programs. Still, these programs are quite effective in boosting access to CSA, and may be used for low income as well as higher income CSA members. For more information, see the CSA Incentive Toolkit.

OUTREACH

In order to reach our target audience, FairShare works with many partner organizations who help spread the word about PSP. Some examples of partner organizations include health clinics and wellness centers, neighborhood centers, church based organizations, YMCAs, Headstart programs, city and county public health organizations, UW Extension, and food pantries/banks. Similar to regular CSA members, PSP members typically hear about the program through word of mouth.

Communications are very important. Annually, FairShare staff emails our partner organizations (community groups) announcing the beginning of the yearly application process. During 2017, FairShare contacted over 30 community organizations in Dane County, and directly partnered with 17 of these organizations. We provide several kinds of outreach: in-person, one-on-one meetings with community partners, and outreach materials and social media content to promote the program. During 2017, FairShare conducted Partner Shares-specific in-person outreach at eight organizations. Our train-the-trainer-sessions make it possible for the staff of our partner organizations to communicate the PSP mission to the audiences they serve.

Several partners report that they send PSP one-pagers home with students in their backpacks, while other partners strongly advocate for the program and frequently refer clients to us.

FOOD ACCESS TOOLKIT

Pilot projects

We are currently working with childcare centers, affordable housing communities, particular neighborhood associations and community centers to develop programs to make CSA even more affordable. For example, we are tailoring the type of share offered to be more accessible to certain communities, and working with other organizations to raise additional funds to make the PSP accessible to even lower income populations.

Promotional materials

Our promotional materials include a program brochure, as well as a flyer on fall and winter share opportunities. See the *Toolshed* to view these materials. Other materials are not normally distributed, but are available online.

EVALUATION

Program evaluation is very important for continued success, so plan some targeted evaluations. Use your evaluation to determine whether you are serving your target population (e.g. income, demographic diversity, geographic locations). If you are not achieving goals, it's important to plan a more effective strategy to achieve your goals in the following year.

Through our evaluations, we've found that the retention rate for PSP members tends to be between 40-50% each year. Approx 90% of PSP applicants are female; this helps in understanding where and how to do outreach. On average, 35-50% of participants use SNAP benefits for their payments.

Moving Forward

To sum up, you can build a successful food access program with careful planning, a philosophy of system improvement, and strong partnerships. With attention to program administration, creative fundraising, outreach, and evaluation, your program can move your whole organization forward.



A PSP member opens their weekly box, packed with fresh, healthy vegetables.





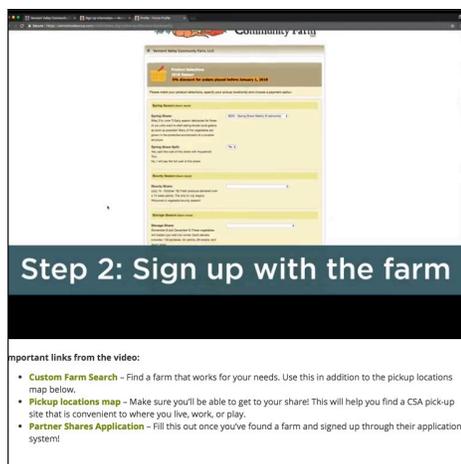
PARTNER SHARES PROGRAM - DANE COUNTY PARTNERSHIP

Although this is a PSP project, we've included it in the "other case studies" because it has slightly different goals and funding than our other programs.

FairShare's office is located in Madison, in Dane County, Wisconsin. Since 2017, Dane County has allocated \$15,000 to the PSP to subsidize CSA shares for county residents. The PSP aligns with the county's goals to increase food access and affordable, healthy food options. This partnership has expanded the reach of the program by 50 households, in both 2017 and 2018.

As part of the Dane County Partnership, FairShare specifically targets outreach efforts to expand CSA membership access and to provide additional Partner Shares funding to households throughout Dane County, particularly among households living in areas identified by the USDA as low income and low access (see map).

FairShare works with several community-based organizations and Dane County nutrition education staff (FoodWise program) to facilitate outreach, and work with CSA partners to expand the availability of CSA pickup points to enhance access in these areas.

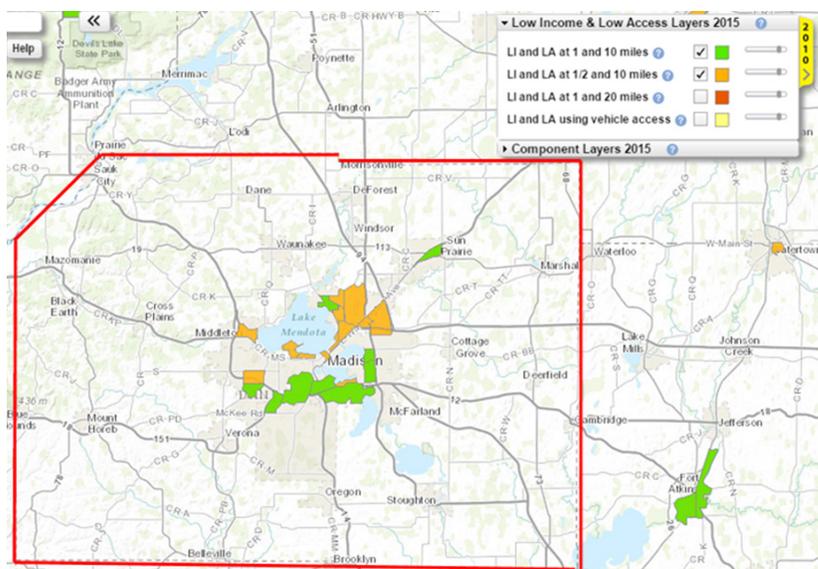


Most PSP applicants prefer to apply online.

Program Highlights

During the last two years, Fairshare has:

- Identified four key partners for outreach. Each partner signed up at least five new Partner Shares members.
- Added one CSA pick-up site to a pre-defined area of limited income and low food access in Dane County.
- Doubled the number of low income households in Dane County receiving assistance toward CSA.
- Allocated 100 hours of staff time to outreach.
- Conducted a targeted post-program evaluation in order to measure changes in health habits and vegetable consumption.



This food access map, generated through a USDA tool, shows low income and low food access areas in Madison, Wisconsin and surrounding areas. In addition to the South Madison, Fitchburg, and Northside areas indicated on the map, the Village of Marshall is also recognized as a potential priority area. Generated using the USDA Food Access Research Atlas.



COMMUNITY ALLIANCE WITH FAMILY FARMS FOOD ACCESS INITIATIVES

About CAFF

Founded in 1978, the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) is a California-based nonprofit that builds sustainable food and farming systems through local and statewide policy advocacy and on-the-ground programs in an effort to initiate institutionalized change. CAFF's programs address current problems and challenges in food and farming systems, creating more resilient family farms, communities and ecosystems. CAFF works to support family farmers and serves community members within the state, including consumers, food service directors, schoolchildren and low-income populations.

Food Access Initiatives

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) has become a popular way for consumers to buy local, seasonal food. It bridges the gap between consumers and farmers, and can be a valuable option for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) authorizes businesses, including CSAs, to accept SNAP. In order to participate in SNAP, all businesses must meet the basic FNS authorization eligibility criteria. In order to accept SNAP benefits, businesses first need to apply for a SNAP license. An application can be completed online. Alternatively, a paper application can be requested by calling the FNS toll-free telephone number at: 1-877-823-4369; the paper application package is usually received within 3-4 business days. Questions about the SNAP authorization process, or eligibility to accept SNAP, can be answered by the SNAP Retailer Service Center at the aforementioned number.

Contrary to a typical CSA arrangement where the farmer receives payment at the start of the growing season, SNAP payments can only be made up to 14 days in advance by swiping the benefit card on site. Furthermore, SNAP benefits may not be used to pay any administrative or fees associated with operating a CSA.

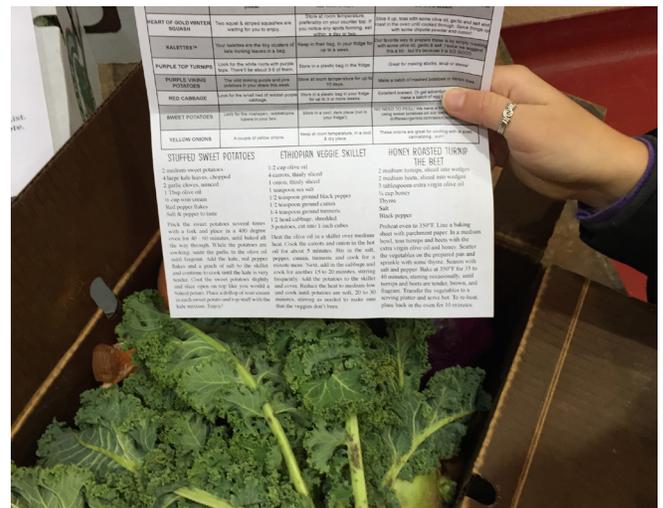
SNAP-CBO partnerships

One alternative to an arrangement in which the farmer is authorized to accept SNAP is for CSAs to partner with Community Based Organizations (CBO). The USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) states that "If a non-profit food buying cooperative is authorized and elects to operate a CSA, then payment may be accepted up to 14 days in advance of product delivery." While payment is still collected over the course of the season, a CBO can dramatically help a CSA farm save resources, streamline the process, and make SNAP payments more feasible.

Need for incentivization to build participation

Limited cellular signals, faulty machines, and the need for a physical presence to swipe the card are just some of the challenges of SNAP CSA. The paper vouchers have been used widely to circumvent the need for physical presence at the time of purchase. However, they are meant for use only in the event of machine failure and FNS is not encouraging their use beyond that. In 2017, in response to the challenges of current systems, USDA FNS began piloting alternative SNAP systems including an online system. Results are pending at this time.

Overall, despite much effort, CSA SNAP participation remains low. In an effort to build momentum, some CSAs are partnering with CBOs to offer incentives similar to those offered by Farmers Market Match programs. These incentive programs match purchases with additional funds in an effort to stretch limited dollars, draw new members, and build consumer loyalty.



CSA newsletter with Driftless Organics CSA share.



HERMIT CREEK FARM - PRESCRIPTION FOR WELLNESS

Linking Local Food With a Local Health-care Community Wellness Program

Introduction

Local communities today are having a conversation about farms and food and health that would have been impossible to imagine even a few short years ago. New interest in small farms and the increasing awareness that these farms are reliable producers of safe and nutritious foods are seen as a thread of the social fabric of the entire community. By linking local food with local healthcare the entire community can become healthier and more resilient.

Fresh Prescription CSA Shares

Since 2016, Northlakes Community Clinic along with area CSA farms have partnered to develop an innovative program that connects public health with the health of the local food economy. Called Prescription For Wellness-Patient CSA Program, the goal is to increase low-income residents’ access to nourishing, seasonal and locally-grown vegetables and fruits through participation in year-round CSA shares while small farmers gain access to new customers and more food dollars circulate in the local economy. The program is funded through grants.

Northlakes Community Clinic is located in far northern Wisconsin and serves Ashland, Washburn, Iron River, Hayward, Minong, Turtle Lake and Balsam Lake communities. Currently, three farms provide year-round CSA shares serving 75 patients located across all clinic service areas. A Health and Wellness Manager provides operational support and each partner farm donates a sample share to be used for demonstrations.

Prescription for Wellness is simple. Primary care physicians prescribe a fresh produce CSA share to their low-income patients as a way of treating and preventing chronic diet-related disease. Biweekly CSA shares are picked up at a designated clinic site and patients are provided with simple, low-cost and seasonal recipes, cooking and preparation tips and general nutrition support. The Wellness Manager uses the farm donated share to give patients a “tour” of the produce and teaches them about how to store and prepare the vegetables. Samples are provided which help members understand how to use new or unique share offerings. A past grant supplied participating patients with basic cooking utensils such as cutting boards, knives, crock pots and cookbooks.

Patient participation and data is collected and tracked by the primary physician and the program manager with follow-up conversations adding support which build towards health care goals. Periodic surveys keep track of benchmarks reached for both the healthcare provider and for the farms.

Would like to continue CSA share into next season	Ate more vegetables	Cooked more from scratch and introduced new foods into diet
92%	70%	82%

Patient engagement is high for this exciting program. The last patient survey showed 70% reported eating more vegetables now that they are CSA members. 92% of respondents indicated they would like to continue with their CSA for the next season. 82% also commented that this program encouraged them to cook from scratch and introduced new foods into their diet. The survey also estimated that at least four times the number of patient participants benefit from this CSA program (approximately 300 people), including the CSA patients’ families and friends who share meals with them as well as other patients and families at the clinic pick-up sites that learn about the program, try samples and take recipe cards.

Participating farms are also excited by the Prescription for Wellness Program. In a rural area, finding and then distributing to potential CSA members is a continuous challenge for these small farms. This program has created a reliable “block” of returning CSA members and furnishes a simple delivery site for distribution. Some of the work of CSA education and support of new members is provided by Northlakes Community Clinic and a general atmosphere of community support is naturally created in a health clinic.

For more information about produce prescription programs, see [Wholesome Wave](#).



DOUBLE DOLLARS

Improving food access in Madison & Dane County



CASE STUDY: DOUBLE DOLLARS

Double Dollars at farmers' markets will end for the season on December 19th, 2017. Madison Area Farmers' Market Double Dollars is a program for SNAP/FoodShare users. The program offers a dollar for dollar match for all SNAP transactions up to \$25 per market day. As the weather gets colder, you can still get Double Dollars at the following indoor farmers' markets: Saturday's Dane County's Farmers' Market, Eastside Farmers' Market, and Northside Farmers' Market.

Details

In order to receive Double Dollars, SNAP/FoodShare users bring their EBT card to the farmers' market EBT or information booth. The shopper decides how much they would like to withdraw from their account. For every dollar up to \$25 that is withdrawn, the shopper receives twice that amount in market dollars. If a shopper wants to withdraw more than \$25, they may do so, but they will only receive \$25 in Double Dollars.

The market money and Double Dollars can be spent at any vendor's stand selling SNAP-eligible products. This includes bakery, fruits and vegetables, meat, fish, dairy products, and seeds and plants to grow food. Market money cannot be used to buy nonfood items (like flowers or wreaths), hot foods (like those served at food carts), and alcohol.

Double Dollars can be redeemed through December 19th or until funds remain available. They can only be issued or redeemed at participating markets, listed above.

And don't forget you can also get Double Dollars at the Willy Street Co-op! Contact Customer Service to learn more.

Go to [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.



CASE STUDY: WEST MICHIGAN CSA TO PANTRY PROGRAMS

In western Michigan, two different programs have sought to link CSA farms to food pantries so that low income residents can access CSA while learning more about eating good food.

Access of West Michigan

A CSA to Pantry program was initiated in 2015 by the nonprofit organization Access of West Michigan. In this program, CSA farms deliver to food pantries. The families who receive the produce are able to participate in classes, which teach them the basics of food preparation and storage, as well as the big picture of food systems and how they impact their neighborhoods. The program also distributed \$23,000 of donated produce from local farms during the past year. During 2015, the program purchased 13 shares for distribution through four different pantries. Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) was a collaborator.

Ottawa Food

In Ottawa County, six different food related projects received grant funding in 2017, including CSA to pantry. The programs were administered through Ottawa County Food Policy Council (OCFPC). Michigan State University Extension oversaw the management of the CSA to pantry program, including the purchase of CSA shares and educational efforts.

In the Ottawa County program, grant funds were used to purchase 60 CSA shares from two local farms, each serving the needs of one of two pantries. MSU nutrition educators developed cooking classes to hold at the food pantries. Though some challenges were noted, the program also had successes. For example, 82% of respondents said that they received about the right amount in their shares, and 90% said that they improved their food based skills (cooking, storage, etc.) In the second year of the program, grant funds will continue to support the program while a secondary source of support will come from clients as they use their SNAP benefits and Double Up Food Bucks on point-of-sale equipment at the pantry.

For more information contact [MSU Extension](#), or see the PowerPoint presentation "[Improving Healthy Food Access and Farm Viability with CSA](#)" in the Toolshed.



The WCSA Toolshed

UWEX FoodWise

Describes resources of FoodWise, a UW-Extension nutrition education program that helps limited resource families and individuals choose healthful diets, purchase and prepare healthful food and handle it safely, and become more food secure by spending their food dollars wisely.

Wholesome Wave

A network of 1400+ farmers markets, grocery stores, corner stores, farm stands, CSAs, hospitals, clinics and more, empowering underserved consumers to make healthier food choices by increasing affordable access to fresh, local food.

Massachusetts

CSA Program Offers SNAP Recipients Healthy Options

Describes a Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) 2017 pilot program in which an automatic debit system is set up for CSA payments--without using an EBT terminal or vouchers.

EBT/SNAP/HIP/WIC With Farmer Dave's

Overview of how to use programs such as SNAP, HIP, and WIC at Farmer Dave's. A good example of how to present information on a farm website.

Healthy Incentives Program (HIP)

Describes a program that matches, dollar for dollar, purchases of fruits and vegetables at CSAs, farm stands and farmers markets.

North Carolina

Veggie Van - A Sliding Scale Program

Veggie Van is a sliding scale mobile market connecting North Carolina farmers to Durham residents with limited income or access to affordable healthy food. Veggie Van is a program of Community Nutrition Partnership (CNP), a nonprofit organization based in Durham.



FOOD ACCESS TOOLKIT

Oregon

[Oregon Snap CSA Farms Training Guide](#)

This handy training guide and webinar for farmers will take you step-by-step through the process of becoming a SNAP Authorized Retailer and provides tips on how to design your SNAP CSA program.

California

[Apply to Accept CalFresh for Your CSA and/or Farm Stand!](#)

Two page flyer with basic information on accepting SNAP on your farm.

[Enjoy Fresh Fruits and Vegetables with Mobile Farmers Markets and CSAs](#)

Bi-lingual (English/Spanish) brochure on CSA with EBT information and resources.

[Community Supported Agriculture Strategies and Policy](#)

An overview of CSA organizing, including workplace CSA, CSA open houses, EBT, and CSA Policy.





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