

## The Farmer Direct Model

**Strategy:** The Farmer Direct Model provides schools with farm to school programming. Once relationships are established, CFJ will work with schools participating in farm to school programs to scale up their programs and utilize our emerging distribution models to purchase foods for their cafeterias.

**Operations:** The farmer direct model will work with local farms and schools to create farm to school programs that incorporate nutrition and agricultural messaging provided by the farm and CFJ.

### Objectives:

- Implement holistic farm to school programs beginning with innovative nutrition and agriculture based programs
- Adapt existing agriculture and nutrition education materials to deliver farm to school messaging.
- Provide hands on nutrition education.
- Expand innovative farm to school programs beyond cafeteria and school programs such as CSA subscriptions for parents, staff and families close to participating schools.
- Create experiential on-farm experiences for participating students and teachers.
- Utilize emerging distribution models (outlined above) to provide local foods for newly established salad bar programs.
- Increase community awareness of food production and food delivery systems.
- Build institutional awareness about local food purchasing programs.
- Assist institutions in the development of local food programs.

To participate in the development of these projects or for more information please contact Vanessa Zajfen at [vzajfen@oxy.edu](mailto:vzajfen@oxy.edu), 323 341 5092. [www.foodandjustice.org](http://www.foodandjustice.org)  
[www.cafarmtoschool.org](http://www.cafarmtoschool.org)



# Food Access & Distribution Solutions: 5 Strategies for Southern California

## Farm to Institution Distribution Mission:

The Center for Food & Justice (CFJ) works to promote a sustainable and socially just food system by improving access to fresh and healthy foods in all communities, particularly those where access is most limited. CFJ aims for social equity through food distribution by building farmers' capacity to increase their economic viability through the development of effective market strategies and practical tools of delivery.

Increasingly, the conventional food system is failing both consumers and food producers. In our efforts to develop a food-secure Los Angeles and support healthy farm economies across Southern California, CFJ has critically examined the systems by which food is produced and distributed. CFJ is designing new systems of food delivery to increase access to local foods in low-income communities and support local farm communities.

The mission of the CFJ's Southern California local food distribution work is to develop a greater variety of consistent,

verifiable and robust models of procuring and distributing locally grown foods to schools, institutions, and communities in need. CFJ believes that to increase the adoption and sustainability of farm to institution and other local food access programs there must be increased access to local foods through mainstream marketing channels. Therefore, CFJ's distribution priority for Southern California is to utilize groundbreaking strategies to develop the distribution capacity of farmers, private industry and other community-based organizations to strengthen our regional food system.

Through five models of distribution, CFJ bridges the urban and rural divide to create stronger programs that equally serve all communities. This document provides a brief introduction to the five models of distribution CFJ will help develop and implement throughout the next three years. The models and outlines of CFJ's implementation strategy and broader objectives for each are provided below.

## Local School Food

**Strategy:** The Local School Food (LSF) line is a concept for a new food product line to be carried by produce firms designed exclusively to market local foods to institutions and school food service directors.

**Operations:** The LSF line will feature local food items that have been selected to specifically address the critical institutional barriers of inadequate kitchen and processing facilities, food costs and labor. The LSF line will streamline food choices available to institutions and focus on select seasonal products that can meet institutions' requirements for quality, quantity, and price. CFJ has partnered with private industry to develop and deliver this product line in order to capitalize on tested business practices and utilize developed infrastructure at a minimal cost to consumers and farmers.

### Objectives:

- Develop a line of local food products to be sourced and distributed by multiple produce firms.
- Develop a LSF line that meets institutional food service needs, overcoming barriers to implementation of local food purchasing programs.
- Develop a brand and marketing campaign for the LSF line.
- Connect the LSF line directly to the California and National Farm to School campaigns.
- Provide supplemental nutrition and agricultural education materials and farm to school programming support to participating school clients.
- Act as a liaison between farms, produce firms and schools.
- Build institutional awareness about local food purchasing programs.
- Assist institutions in the development of local food programs.

## Women, Infants, & Children

**Strategy:** The Women, Infants, & Children (WIC) Harvest of the Month (HOTM) retail program is designed exclusively to market local foods to WIC-only customers and deliver local food to WIC-only stores in LA. WIC-only stores stock only WIC food items and serve only WIC customers

**Operations:** The WIC HOTM retail program will feature local food items that have been selected to specifically address the issues of perishability and high food costs. Every month the WIC HOTM retail program will showcase a single local and seasonal product that can meet retail storeowners' requirements for quality, quantity and price as well as provide consumers with quality and nutritious dense foods. This program will introduce local foods to a new customer based through an education based marketing campaign.

### Objectives:

- Develop a line of fresh, healthy and local food products to be sourced and distributed by multiple mechanisms such as farm direct, WIC delivery trucks or private distribution firms.
- Develop a WIC-only retail program that meets retail storeowners' food needs and provides WIC-only customers fresh, healthy and locally grown foods.
- Act as a liaison between farms, produce firms, WIC-only stores and the CA Department of Public Health.
- Build awareness about local food purchasing programs at WIC-only stores.
- Familiarize WIC-only customers with fresh, healthy and locally sourced products through an education based marketing campaign.

## Farmers' Market as Hub Model

**Strategy:** The Farmers' Market as Hub Model is an emerging model of local food distribution, which engages farmers' market associations (FMAs) and farmers' market managers to perform key organizing functions to distribute locally grown foods to institutions through farmers' markets.

**Operations:** The FMH model will utilize a central hub market for collecting, storing, grading and distributing food sold by the FMA or market manager on behalf of its member farmers. The ultimate goal of this project is to advocate for the development of permanent farmers' market structures with the infrastructure to facilitate wholesale and retail distribution as well as processing of local foods.

### Objectives:

- Build FMH model around existing management and association structure.
- Assist FMA and market managers in developing wholesale and specialty food programs.
- Connect multiple markets to the hub market.
- Develop the markets distribution infrastructure and processing capacity through resource development and sharing.
- Provide technical assistance and outreach to farmers in order to meet packing and grading standards.
- Provide incentives for produce firms to shop at farmers' markets.
- Build institutional awareness about local food purchasing programs run by farmers' markets.
- Assist institutions in the development of local food programs.

## The San Diego Growers' Project

**Strategy:** The San Diego Growers' Project will explore many possibilities to build sustainable regional food systems by building on-farm capacity, developing local distribution infrastructure, and creating healthy institutional food environments. The San Diego Growers' Project will assist a diverse group of farmers and distributors in developing their capacity to meet the needs of larger food purchasing institutions.

**Operations:** CFJ and Tierra Miguel Foundation Farm will work with farmers, private business and institutional food consumers to outreach, educate, coordinate and assist farmers working collectively to market their crops either through a formalized legal cooperative, a more informal collective of farmers addressing best management strategies, or by partnering with a third-party organization that markets, distributes, or sells food on behalf of the farm group.

### Objectives:

- Build capacity of farmers to meet institutions local food needs.
- Provide technical assistance and outreach in the areas of business planning, cropping systems management, value added processing and marketing.
- Convene diverse mix of horticultural crop producers.
- Support the development of an agricultural marketing collaborative or cooperative.
- Assist in the development of a localized model of food distribution.
- Enhance farmers' capacity to develop value added food products.
- Build institutional awareness about local food purchasing programs.
- Assist institutions in the development of local food programs.