

Background

The **Local Food Purchasing Assistance Program** (LFPFA) was a federally funded initiative designed to uplift the profile of historically underserved farmers to strengthen regional food systems. In California, a majority of the funding was managed by the Farms Together program, jointly run by California Food Banks®, Fresh Approach, and Community Alliance with Family Farmers. Farms Together administered \$78 million in funds to food banks and community-based organizations in 35 counties to procure food from small and mid-sized historically disadvantaged farms and suppliers between December 2023 and June 2026. Through the program, 23 million pounds of fresh produce were provided to communities in need. This included 159 varieties of produce.

Between June 2025-January 2026, California Food Banks conducted interviews with **13 food banks, 5 food hubs, and 3 community-based organizations** participating in the LFPFA program. These interviews demonstrated the program's far-reaching impact.

LFPFA expanded access to fresh, varied foods, strengthened food assistance programs, created opportunities for local farmers and food hubs, and improved the well-being and dignity of the communities served through food distributions.



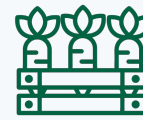
By the Numbers: Farms Together Participation in California



**34 Food
Banks**



**18 Community
Based Organizations**



**42 Food
Hubs**



**888
Farms**

Delivering Exceptional Fresh Produce

Food banks said LFPFA made it possible to source fresh, high-quality produce otherwise hard to come by—often arriving within days, or even hours, of harvest.

“We were just really proud of being able to offer that beautiful, local, organic, fresh picked [produce]. We’re like, ‘this was picked this morning, or this was picked two days ago.’”

—Abi Smith, Program Development Specialist, Yuba-Sutter Food Bank

Expanding Food Variety and Cultural Relevance

LFPFA funding increased the variety of available foods, including premium produce like berries, avocados, and mushrooms, while supporting distributions that better reflected the traditions of diverse communities.

Strengthening and Growing Food Assistance Programs

Several food banks offered fresh produce year-round for the first time due to LFPFA funds, driving stronger client engagement and participation. Others used the funding to expand or extend the life of existing programs.

Supporting Local Food Systems and Farmer Growth

LFPFA created economic opportunity across the local food system. Food hubs invested in infrastructure like delivery trucks and expanded institutional buyer relationships, bringing more farms—including socially disadvantaged producers—into their networks. Farmers gained reliable sales that supported growth, asset purchases, and, in a few cases, better pay and benefits for workers.



“We have great stories of people being able to expand their farm and being able to buy assets, like tractors. In our case, we were able to buy a whole new truck.... It speaks to how consistent institutional sales could be a real anchor for a small business.”

— Veronica Mazariegos-Anastassiou, Co-owner/Farmer, Coastside Local Food Hub/Brisa Ranch

Improving Client Satisfaction, Dignity, and Wellbeing

Clients responded with excitement and gratitude for fresh, locally grown foods. Access to high-quality local food helped clients feel respected and valued. Some even reported improvements in their health or well-being.

“I just hear so much gratitude, like a woman saying to me, ‘I lost 45 pounds’... And then another woman saying, ‘this is a lifesaver for me...I can’t afford to buy the fruits and vegetables that I’m supposed to buy for my condition.’”

— Hester Parker, PhD, Executive Director, Everyone’s Harvest

Overall Impact

LFPFA was more than a food purchasing program. It has strengthened local food systems, expanded market opportunities for farmers, grown food bank capacity, and connected families to nutritious, culturally relevant food. Food banks, food hubs, and community-based organizations alike shared a strong desire for continued funding of LFPFA so that these impacts would be sustained.