

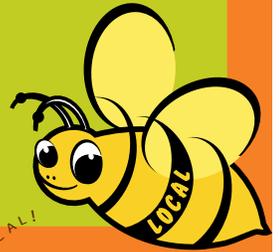
FARM FRESH WORKPLACE



The Carrot and Stick CSA shares

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B E E E E E E LOCAL!

FARM FRESH WORKPLACE TOOLKIT

For planning your
**Workplace
Community Supported
Agriculture (CSA)
Program**



What is a CSA?

CSA stands for Community Supported

Agriculture, where customers partner with a local farm to share the risk & rewards of growing the freshest local food around.

CSA members or subscribers generally sign up at the in the winter or spring for a share of the anticipated harvest. Once harvesting begins, they receive weekly shares of the bounty! Many CSAs focus on local produce like veggies, fruits and herbs, while many also can include cut flowers, honey, eggs, dairy products, meat and other locally crafted products.

The CSA model is a great partnership for both farmers and customers and is THE most direct way to support local farms and agriculture.



Ephraim from The Carrot and Stick delivering Workplace CSA shares

Why Become a Farm Fresh Workplace?



A Workplace CSA is a convenient offering within the CSA model where local farms deliver their customer's shares directly to a business or place of employment. Generally, a minimum number of shares (usually 5 or more) must be purchased in order for the farms to deliver directly to the workplace. However, smaller businesses often partner with other businesses nearby to reach the minimum number of shares required for delivery.

Every other year, Sustainable Connections conducts a survey regarding the Workplace CSA program. Noted below are some of the results from a recent survey:

- 95% of respondents found Workplace CSAs either very convenient (80%) or moderately convenient (15%)
- 90% of respondents cited the desire to eat more fresh local produce as a primary motivation for participating in a Workplace CSA

"My daughter and I enjoyed having fresh fruit and vegetables delivered weekly. It was almost like having our own garden without doing the work."

"It makes it so easy to eat well and the fresh produce is so delicious. It inspired us to eat more at home and try new recipes that were provided in the box."

Workplace CSAs are a great addition to any employee wellness program! Healthy eating habits = healthier employees

For every dollar spent on wellness programs, the average employer saves \$3.27 in medical costs. In addition, sick leave, health plan costs, worker compensation and disability costs decrease by about 25% per year with a wellness program in place. ^[1]

The evidence is widespread and compelling that investing in your employees and their wellbeing will pay dividends in terms of employee productivity, retention and loyalty. Additional positive benefits include:

- Facilitating a Workplace CSA program is a great way to show your commitment to our community and local economy.
- Employees who are subscribers to a Workplace CSA helps facilitate new peers connections while they discuss recipes, trade items with each other and share cooking stories.
- Many employers have seen increased camaraderie because a Workplace CSA can bring together employees from multiple departments, if even for a short period of time, who otherwise interact infrequently throughout the normal course of business.

How to Set Up a Workplace CSA



1. Send an email or memo to staff to gauge interest. Sustainable Connections has sample letters you can use.
2. Determine if you are able to offer payroll deduction to help incentivize your employees to participate.
3. Once you have 5 or more employees interested in signing up, select a farm to work with from the CSA Farm List generated by Sustainable Connections.
4. Contact the farm to talk through cost, payments, deliveries, products, etc.
5. Relay information to staff.
6. Sit back and enjoy fresh food being delivered to your workplace each week!

Logistics to Consider

Getting going with a Workplace CSA is pretty simple and once you have selected your CSA farm, the program generally runs smoothly. It's good to also consider the following as you evaluate your ability to participate in a Workplace CSA.

- **Determine your Workplace CSA lead or Workplace Champion:** It's good to have one internal point person who can organize the set-up and employee participation. A little upfront by your champion helps ensure your program runs smoothly once deliveries begin.
- **Participation:** Do you have 5 employees interested in signing up? If not, are there businesses nearby you can partner with to meet the minimum share requirements?
- **Delivery area:** You'll need to determine a space to receive and store the CSA deliveries. (Vegetables and fruits will generally hold up just fine without refrigeration if taken home at the end of the day, and farmers delivering meat or dairy products include ice packs or coolers, so a space is the main thing).
- **Cost & Cost Sharing Ideas:** Some businesses are able to help subsidize the cost of a CSA, or offer payroll deduction programs, where the employer pays for the CSA upfront, and is deducted from participants pay throughout the program. Sustainable Connections offers this perk to our employees and it makes it easier to participate for some staff.

The cost of CSAs usually run somewhere between \$15-\$45/week depending on size and package offerings. CSAs are a great deal for farm fresh produce compared with other avenues and is a cost effective and convenient way to purchase high quality food.

Setting up for Success

A change in food purchasing and cooking habits is an enjoyable journey if approached thoughtfully. A Workplace CSA may require some extra planning. Setting up clear policies at the outset of your Workplace CSA is an important component of a successful and long term program. Policies you may want to consider:

Set up a time frame in which individual shares must be picked up.

If an individual share isn't picked within the required time frame, determine the best option for redistribution.

Establish a policy for when employees are gone or on vacation.

How to Select Your Farmer

Ok, so you've decided that your workplace would like to sign up for a CSA -- great! But how do you choose a CSA Farm? Here are some tips to consider:

CSA Farms vs. Home Delivery model

A traditional CSA offers a selection of fresh seasonal produce items mostly from their own farm. Some CSA farmers also supplement with items from other farmers to add diversity. And there are also Home Delivery businesses that support local farmers and pool together lots of great local products. You get to decide which feels like the best fit for your office.

Add-On & Choose-your-Own Options

Most farms offer a selection of pre-packed fresh seasonal produce for their CSA boxes, but others have a mix-and-match or "farmers market style" system where members can select their own items for their boxes and have a degree of choice about what is included. Some CSA models also offer add-on options such as meats, dairy, fresh pasta, coffee and even flowers. Some farms allow members to pay monthly; though more common is a system of paying up front for the year.

Box Sizes

Many CSA Farms/Home Delivery businesses have different size options. This may be an important factor depending on who signs up. Some might want to be in on a "whole share" that feeds 2-4 folks, and others like a single adult

GET INVOLVED:

"Farm Fresh Workplace" Member Lunch

Learn more about getting a Workplace CSA set up at your office and meet local farmers too!
Thursday, April 7, 11:45-1
Sustainable Connections office

CSA Fair
Meet the CSA Farmers and learn more about their delicious offerings
Saturday, March 26, 2-4pm
Boundary Bay Beer Garden - free!

• **Contact our Food & Farming Team (Sara or Alex)** with questions or to request a presentation for your employees.



STAY Connected
FROM FARM TO FORK

The Eat Local First Campaign connects local food and farming businesses of all kinds, and connects our community with the freshest local food.



Left: Steven Roll and Jeanne Dinehart of Roll Organic Farm offer individual CSA shares as well as workplace CSAs.

Contact Sustainable Connections



Cedarville Farm sells produce at the Bellingham Farmers Market and offers CSA shares.

Becoming a Farm Fresh Workplace is a convenient and rewarding way to enjoy better nutrition and support your local farmer. By using the resources Sustainable Connections provides, setting up a Workplace CSA at your business can be an expedient process that is a great benefit to both employers and employees.



Watch our movie, *Staying Connected From Farm to Fork*, highlighting local farmers who provide CSAs. Click on the photo above or watch it here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwrCSH-PSbl>

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