

USDA Community Food Project Grant Overview

Summary

San Luis Obispo County produces enough fruits and vegetables year-round to provide every person with 7.5 pounds of food each day. The SLO County Produce Project creates systems to harvest this bounty and to distribute the produce to low income residents while increasing income for local growers. Project goals are to increase the availability and consumption of fresh produce by low-income residents while connecting local communities to agricultural producers; to increase the commercial viability of small agricultural producers by developing a program to link farmers with local institutional customers and assist them in negotiating contracts; and to enhance the work of the SLO County Food System Coalition by increasing the depth and number of cross-sectoral initiatives.

The SLO County Produce Project effectively addresses CFP objectives by:

- Expanding gleaning of fresh produce to meet the food needs of low-income communities;
- Increasing residents' self-reliance through employment training, gardening and food preservation workshops, education about eating and cooking with produce, and food safety and sales workshops in targeted communities; and
- Assisting local small farmers in establishing long-term institutional markets and food processing facilities.

The project promotes a comprehensive response to food system issues by working through the Food System Coalition to coordinate all efforts and engage county-wide stakeholders in the creation of infrastructure changes. Activities are based on the USDA-funded Hunger Free Communities plan developed by the Food System Coalition and will result in the implementation of many aspects of the plan.

Project Activities:

- Increased gleaning through GleanSLO
- UC Cooperative Extension will introduce Farm to School programs at Nipomo and Shandon Elementary (expanding from Oceano Elementary) and food preservation workshops in Nipomo, Shandon, Oceano, and SLO.
- Family nutrition education at SLO Salvation Army food distribution
- Bilingual community gardening workshops at the SLO Master Gardener demonstration site.
- Orchard Apprenticeships for Gryphon Society residents at SLO Creek Farms
- SLO County Public Health food safety workshops for home kitchen sales
- Central Coast Grown will work with institutions to increase local produce sourcing and with small farmers to increase processing capacity through a produce processing facility, food hub, or other means.
- Clerical support for the SLO County Food System Coalition

Resources

GleanSLO: www.gleanslo.org

SLO County Food System Coalition: slofoodsystem.org

SLO County Food Bank: slofoodbank.org (Click on *Food System Coalition* for "Paradox of Plenty" Hunger Free Communities Report)