



Farms to Food Banks Program Food Lifeline Project Description - 2009

Food Lifeline (FLL) is a non-profit hunger relief agency that distributes food to over 300 food banks, meal programs and shelters in western Washington. When the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) offered out the Farms to Food Banks contracts, FLL was very excited to become involved in supporting local, sustainable agriculture while providing nutritious, fresh, organic produce to food bank clients who do not usually have access to that type of product through regular donation streams.

With the funding received, Food Lifeline is able to purchase locally-grown produce from smaller farmers in the King, Pierce and Snohomish county areas. This grant has allowed FLL the opportunity to see the wealth of resources in our own back yard. Through the development of purchasing relationships with local growers, FLL hopes to add dimension to the community of the sustainable food movement. In addition, Food Lifeline hopes to develop donation relationships with the vendors in order to continue providing to the Seattle food banks when the funding for purchases has been spent.

For this pilot project, Food Lifeline distributes purchased product to 25 Seattle food banks. FLL aims to work with 13 local farmers in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties. The Cascade Harvest Coalition helped FLL identify farms that would be good partners for this program.

Because of the timing of the grant funding, only one purchase was made before the end of the growing season in 2008. FLL purchased 15,000 pounds of organic beets from Full Circle Farm in Carnation. FLL plans to make several more purchases before the end of June which marks the end of the grant period. However, to maximize the variety and quality of produce purchased, FLL will use the majority of the remainder of funds to purchase CSA "shares," a model developed to help contractors spend their funding on time while being able to access the peak of the growing season. Produce that is at the top of Seattle Food Committee's list for purchase through Farms to Food Banks includes blueberries, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, greens, melons, pears, plums and squash.

Food Lifeline hopes for continued funding of the Farms to Food Banks program in order to expand to serve more agencies and to provide business to more local farms. FLL is honored to have the opportunity to provide

nutritious products to those in need while stimulating the economy of local farms.

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