

# Healthy Food, Healthy People, Healthy Economy



Note: Not all organizations who signed on in support have logos. The list at the end of this letter is comprehensive.

February 19, 2015

The Honorable Shirley Weber, PhD  
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee  
State Capitol, Room 6026  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: California Nutrition Incentives Act – Support**

Dear Assemblymember Weber:

The undersigned 129 agriculture, anti-hunger, rural, faith, labor, anti-poverty, food policy council, economic development and farmers' market organizations respectfully urge the leadership of the Assembly Budget Committee to support the establishment of the Nutrition Incentive Matching Grant Program through the 2015-16 state budget. This budget proposal has multiple common sense co-benefits of maximizing California's share of federal matching funds, improving the health of low-income Californians, and supporting California's farming communities and small business owners.

A modest investment of \$5 million per fiscal year in the Nutrition Incentive Matching (NIM) Grant Program is built on four years of evidence-based success through California Market Match, a pilot that doubles the value of nutrition assistance benefits when beneficiaries purchase fruits, nuts and vegetables at more than 100 farmers' markets across the state. Securing general fund monies for NIM leverages new federal matching funds under the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) provision of the Farm Bill. Only \$69 million of FINI's \$100 million remains and California should maximize its share considering the state's unparalleled agricultural bounty, vast network of farmers' markets and entrenched poverty.

A statewide incentive program would also unlock FINI dollars more equitably, to areas in California a Market Match program has never existed. Despite regaining its status as the world's 8<sup>th</sup> largest economy, California still tops national rankings as the state with the highest poverty rate. Limited resources for purchasing food has a dramatic impact on health and the risk of developing chronic diseases, like diabetes. This disproportionately impacts communities of color and is a critical factor in widening racial and ethnic health disparities. The NIM grant program would serve as an anti-poverty and anti-hunger measure by addressing the economic factors driving food disparities while simultaneously increasing access to affordable, healthy produce. By making healthy foods more affordable and readily available, the NIM grant program could help control rising healthcare costs for many Medi-Cal enrollees.

Scaling up this program, with the support of FINI, also directly benefits our state's small- and mid-sized farmers. The inclusion of a pilot for small retailers will only expand the reach of this incentive model to those without access to a farmer's market. A 2013 evaluation of California Market Match reported a six-fold return, and is a local economic development strategy for farming communities and small business owners up and down the state. It's a win-win for California's people and its local businesses.

We urge you to build for the future by scaling up this evidence-based nutrition incentive program of the present. A \$5 million NIM Grant Program, matched with \$5 million from USDA, could boost healthy food access to \$45 million for almost 300,000 families and generate hundreds of new farm jobs.

Sincerely,

Ecology Center  
Hunger Action Los Angeles  
Latino Coalition for a Healthy California

Public Health Institute  
Roots of Change  
San Diego Hunger Coalition

ACT for Women and Girls  
Agricultural Institute of Marin  
Alchemist Community Development Corporation  
Aroma Orchids  
Avitua Farms  
Bernard Ranches  
Bill's Bees  
Bloomfield Organics  
Buon Gusto Farms  
Buenrostro Farms  
Burkart Farms  
Cabral's Farm  
California Alliance of Farmers' Markets  
California Association of Food Banks  
California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF)  
California Convergence  
California Food Policy Advocates  
California Food Policy Council  
California Immigrant Policy Center  
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network  
California Partnership  
California Teamsters Public Affairs Council  
Cardenas Farm  
Castellanos Farm  
Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Center for Food Safety  
Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture (CUESA)  
Certified Farmers' Market Management  
Charles R. Drew University of Medicine & Science  
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations, Inc.  
Coleman Family Farm  
Community Health Councils, Inc.  
Community Services Unlimited  
Contra Costa Certified Farmers' Markets  
Echo Park Gathering of Elders and Caregivers  
EnrichLA  
Etheridge Farm  
Farm to EVERY Fork  
Feldyee Horse Farm  
Finley Farms Organic  
Flora Bella Farms  
Food Chain Workers Alliance  
Food for People, Inc.  
Fresh Approach  
Friends in Deed  
Friend's Ranches, Inc.  
Full Belly Farm

Gama Farms  
Garcia Organic Farms  
Gaytan Family Farm  
Gean Farm, Inc.  
Grace Gonzalez (individual)  
Ha's Apple Farm  
Haussler Organic Farms  
Her Produce  
Inland Valley Hope Partners  
Inner City Struggle  
Jack Balderama (individual)  
Jewish Family Services of Los Angeles  
Jimenez Family Farm  
JF Organic Farms  
JJ's Lone Daughter Ranch  
Kennedy Farm  
Ken's Top Notch Produce  
Los Angeles Community Action Network  
Los Angeles County HIV Drug & Alcohol Task Force  
L.A. Green Grounds  
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank  
Maggie's Farm  
Maria Durazo (individual)  
Mar Vista Farmers' Market Association  
Maternal and Child Health Access  
MAZON  
Milliken Family Farms  
North Coast Growers Association  
Novy Ranches  
Ocean Breez Int.  
One Generation  
Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association  
Pama Valley Citrus  
Phat Beets Produce  
PolicyLink  
Polito Family Farms  
Prevention Institute  
Project Angel Food  
Project Plateful  
Rair Hills  
Raphael Cardenas Farms  
R.C. Farms  
Regier Family Farms  
Rincon del Mar Ranch  
Rivas Farms  
Rock Canyon Vineyards  
Rodriguez Family Farm  
Russell Family Farms  
Santa Monica Democratic Club  
Santa Monica Farmers Market

Schaner Farms  
Sebastopol Farmers' Market  
Slow Food California  
Social Justice Learning Institute  
Spring Hill Cheese  
Sprouts of Promise  
St. Anthony Foundation  
Strategic Alliance  
Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles (SEE-LA)  
Sycamore Hill Ranch  
Tamai Family Farms  
Thai Community Development Center  
Thao's Farm  
The Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture (CUESA)

The Children's Clinic  
The Farmers Guild  
The Garment Worker Center  
The LA Human Right to Housing Collective  
The Wellington Square Certified Farmers Market  
Trevino Farms  
Valley Center Growers, Inc.  
Western Center on Law & Poverty  
Windrose Farm  
Women's Council of the California Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers  
Women Organizing Resources, Knowledge & Services (WORKS)  
Wong Farms LLC

cc: Todd Bland, CDSS  
Martha Guzman-Aceves, Governor's Office  
Secretary Karen Ross, CDFA