

**King Conservation District Board of Supervisors Meeting**  
**Agenda Brief/Action Item AI 20-025**  
**Meeting Date: May 7, 2020**

**SUBJECT: KCD Regional Food System Program Response to Covid 19**

Utilization of Regional Food System Program Strategic Initiative Grant funding to support expanded farm to food bank efforts, specifically, Harvest Against Hungers' (HAH) King County Farmers Share (KCFS) project.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** This award would be funded using Regional Food System Strategic Initiative grant funds reserved at the end of 2019 as part of the 2019 Regional Food System program award cycle. The Strategic Initiative fund for 2019 currently is \$250,000. After awarding the staff recommendation, \$150,000 would remain. Note that this fund is separate from the fund used to support competitive 2019 Regional Food System Grant project awards, so no existing grant commitments would be impacted.

**POLICY CONSIDERATION:** As scoped in the 2015 ILA, the Regional Food System grant program had two components: a competitive grant pool and a pool for strategic initiatives. Under the terms of the 2015 ILA, competitive grants were awarded on a merit basis (with proposals being submitted through an open RFP process and then reviewed and ranked by a stakeholder committee for final approval by the KCD Board of Supervisors. In 2019 the KCD Board reviewed and recommended 8 projects for support, allocating a total of \$580,406 dollars for this work.

Under the 2015 ILA, funds earmarked for Strategic Initiatives have historically been used to develop programs and projects (identified through experience and interaction with partners and stakeholders and lessons learned from the competitive component of the program) that have been identified as having a systemic impact on the region's food system. Past strategic initiative projects include: the Local Institutional Food Team (LIFT), Regional Food Systems Metrics Project, Farmers Market Manager Support, and Identifying Direct Market Opportunities and Challenges for King County Farm Businesses.

These projects have been scoped and funds have been awarded on a rolling basis as needs have emerged and priorities have been established.

As such, consideration and award of strategic initiative funds as articulated in this proposal do not represent a policy change for KCD. Additionally, this funding recommendation is in line with Work Plan and budget decisions.

**STAKEHOLDER INTERESTS**

- Staff and board members of the King Conservation District
- Advisory Committee
- Regional Food Systems Stakeholders
- King County farmers, food banks, food pantries, and feeding programs

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**BACKGROUND**

As a result of the restrictions associated with the March 2020 “Stay Home Stay Healthy” order, farmers have lost most or all their markets and associated sales. Restaurant sales have largely dried up and farmers markets are closed. Some King County producers are working to expand CSA offerings, but that isn’t likely to be sufficient demand for them to recoup all lost sales. King County farmers are desperate for new sales channels.

At the same time, food banks are experiencing unprecedented growth in clients at a time when there is limited supply of fresh products. Food donations have also declined.

Additional support for farm to foodbank/food pantry efforts could provide much needed revenue for local farmers while simultaneously increasing the amount, variety, quality, and consistency of local produce made available to food-insecure King County residents who receive assistance from hunger relief programs.

KCD is currently supporting Harvest Against Hunger’s (previously Rotary First Harvest) King County Farmers Share Project through a 20XX Regional Food System grant. That project has laid significant ground work in facilitating connections between area foodbanks and local KC farmers (see attached annual report from KCFS). The project allows food banks/pantries to apply for funding to purchase produce directly from farmers. HAH facilitates the connections and provides funding to procure the product (KCD and WSDA dollars).

In preparing this proposal, KCD staff coordinated with King County DNRP Local Food Economy Manager Mike Lufkin and numerous other stakeholders comprising the Farm King County Technical Advisory Team on building a coordinated funding package for this work that includes PCC Community Markets’ Food Bank Program, Seattle Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance, the City of Seattle, and other partners so that this KCD investment can leverage and coordinate with additional resources to maximize the investment impact for farmers and food banks.

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Funder	Amount	Task/Element
PCC Community Markets	\$80,000 initial investment + \$25,000 additional from customers. The initial \$80K funding was already donated directly to NFM, and the remaining \$25K will be as well for this initial season. Our hope is that in future seasons, the PCC program funding can replace the KCD support of KCFS after this second and final year is completed.	100% of funds are to be used for food bank purchasing from farmers. PCC has 15 food banks they support, and NFM has its group of farmers that they want to engage. Some are King County Farms, some are outside King County. We're providing the backend logistical support (e.g. contract models, contract support, purchase tracking and donation tracking). It's a pretty big admin support lift, but we're looking to the future to build a more sustainable model that includes some admin support for us.
Seattle Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance	See above partnership with PCC	See above partnership with PCC
City of Seattle	TBD	I've reached out to them to determine if there might be any funding that could be earmarked for Seattle Food Committee members, since funds could come from the sweetened beverage tax initiative. Additionally, I'm asking if they might be interested in partnering on the Rotary District 5030 Global Grant to increase refrigerator/freezer capacity for handling perishable foods (produce, dairy, meat)
KCD	\$100,000	Direct purchase, prepayment of King County Farmers to supply food to area food banks. This program also provided the backbone support of an AmeriCorps VISTA member position that has been tasked

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		with expanding both the program reach and our own capacity to bring the program to scale with additional funding.
OTHER PARTNERS: Rotary District 5030 + NEW TODAY: Potential opportunity to work with Port of Seattle to leverage some excess short-term storage for KCFS, PCC and F2FP partners.	\$52,000	Rotary District 5030 Global Grant to increase refrigerated capacity. Rapid response grants administered by HAH to provide up to \$1,000 to help food banks and meal programs purchase enhanced temp controlled storage or transportation.
Project Total	\$257,000 (initial estimate - may be more if City of Seattle participates and Port of Seattle (in-kind value) can be used.	

#### RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that KCD award \$100,000 from the 2019 Regional Food System Strategic Initiative fund pool to offer expanded opportunities for food banks and feeding programs to receive funds through the KCFS Project specifically to purchase produce from King County farmers. Outcomes expected through this investment include (see attachments):

- Increased funding to King County farmers
- Increased number of King County farmers participating
- Increased number of food banks participating
- Increased emergency feeding programs participating (e.g. Fare Start)
- Leveraged funding support and access to new farm and food bank participants through partnerships with Seattle Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance, and PCC Community Markets' Food Bank Program

HAH has developed a system to divide KCFS farm purchasing funds based to food banks on program capacity, services provided, and populations served (unemployment %, poverty rate, etc.). This system would be used to guide equitable allocation of additional KCFS funding among newly participating agencies. In the first year of the project, HAH worked with 10 partner agencies, 23 farms, and 1 local distributor. Like partner agencies, participating farms are spread out across King County from Vashon Island, to Enumclaw, Woodinville, Redmond, Fall City, Carnation, Kent, and Tukwila (see attached 2019 HAH annual report for more specific detail).

Food banks/pantries apply for funding to purchase produce directly from local, King County farmers. This is currently done through 3 contract models, pre-harvest, fresh sheet, and post-harvest. HAH facilitates the connections and provides funding to procure the local product. In 2019, 62 types of

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producer were purchased, totaling 20,592 pounds (see attached 2019 HAH annual report for more specific detail).

Increasing the number of food banks with funds for farm purchasing will naturally favor increasing the number of farmers selling through this program. Already, HAH has additional connections to King County farmers not previously participating in KCFS through Seattle Neighborhood Farmers Markets (NFMA), who contacted HAH regarding guidance on arranging farm-to-food bank purchasing to support their own new partnership with PCC Community Markets' Food Bank Program.

Earlier this spring, FareStart, a Seattle-based anti-poverty nonprofit whose services include school and community meals, reached out to HAH with interest in partnering in hunger relief and food recovery efforts. Additional funding would allow HAH to add FareStart as a KCFS agency to support scaling up of their emergency meals production in response to COVID-19.

Additionally, HAH would need some of the supplementary funding to support administrative costs associated with scaling up current efforts (staff time in outreach and onboarding new participating agencies and farms, expanded record keeping, etc.) and produce distribution costs associated with health directives (boxes, paper bags, etc.). Funding for these supplies could be incorporated into the amount allocated to each agency so that they are proportional to distribution need.

Strictly for the \$100,000 additional funding, it is estimated that at least 80% (\$80,000 more) would be used for purchases, 10% for administrative support, and 10% for additional supplies. Participants haven't been surveyed with respect to what additional packing costs might be incurred, but those have typically been incorporated into the fresh-sheet reduced wholesale purchase price.

#### **EFFECTIVE DATE:**

- Award would be effective immediately. Note that next steps would be for staff to move to scope and budget contracting with awardee.

#### **MOTION**

\_\_\_\_\_ Moved, \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded; Passed a motion to adopt staff recommendations for the Regional Food System Program Strategic Initiative Grant awards.

The logo consists of a stylized white hand holding a white fork, positioned behind the text. The text is in a bold, white, sans-serif font, arranged in three lines: "HARVEST", "AGAINST", and "HUNGER".

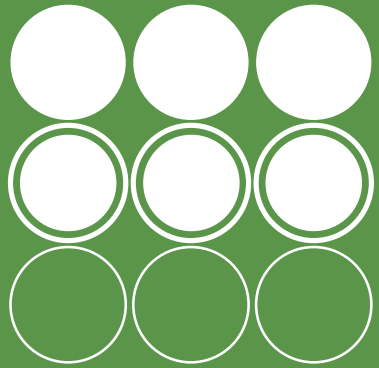
# HARVEST AGAINST HUNGER

King County Farmers Share  
2019  
annual report



utilizing a grant from the  
King Conservation District,  
relationships between  
farmers and food banks  
are developed to both  
support farmers and to  
increase access to healthy,  
fresh foods in food  
insecure populations

develop



develop contract models for program sites to use in purchasing produce from farmers

alleviate



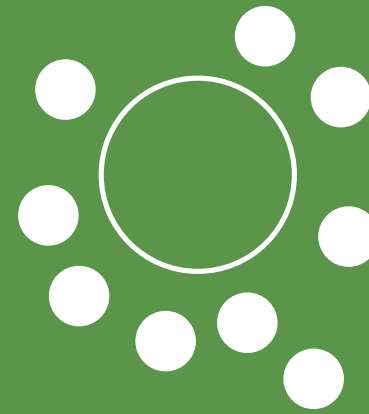
alleviate hunger in food insecure King County communities

partner



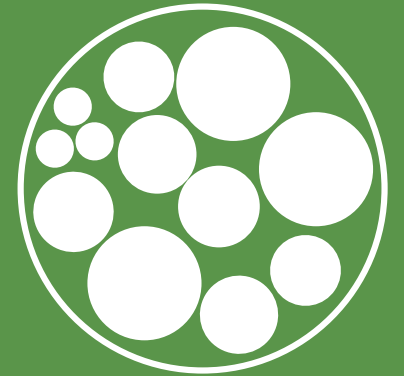
partner between food banks and King County growers

access



increase access to healthy, fresh produce in food insecure populations

support



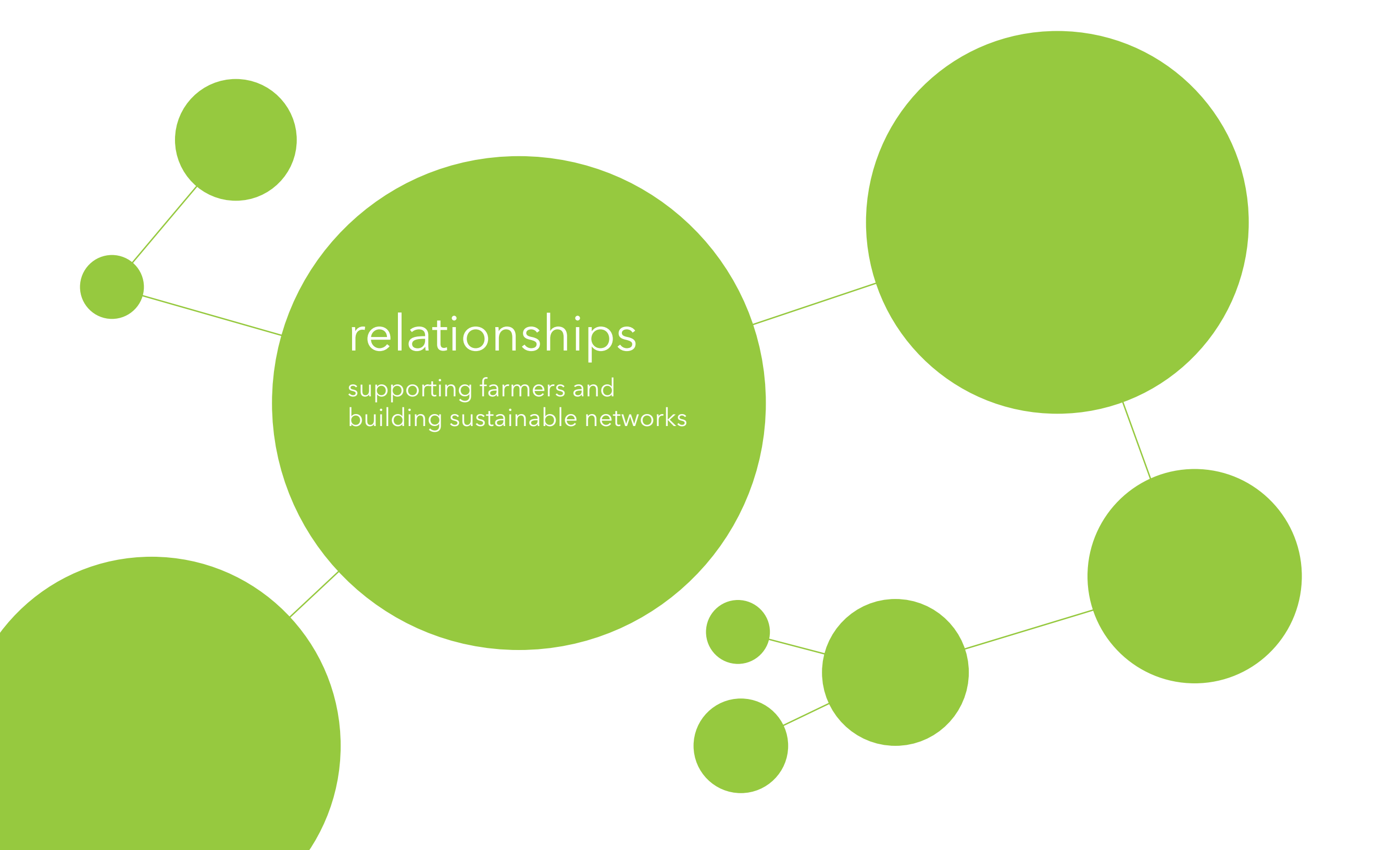
support farmers by providing a consistent outlet for their produce





flexibility

different agencies  
have different needs



# relationships

supporting farmers and  
building sustainable networks



## filling a gap

offering produce that is  
not often available and is  
nutrient dense to people  
who don't typically  
have access to it

# supporting farmers through market stability



## **seconds produce**

support farmers by providing a consistent outlet for their produce

## **pre-season contracting**

farmers get funds upfront to help in traditionally lean winter and early spring months

## **post-season contracting**

often used when there is an abundance of a particular in season crop that farmers need to sell quickly



farmer partner  
pounds of produce  
donations  
types purchased

oxbow  
1,159 lbs  
10% discount  
beets, chard, kale,  
peppers, winter  
squash, green  
beans, parsley,  
carrots, collards,  
beans, radishes,  
celery, parsnips,  
leeks

# white center food bank

"we've been able to offer beautiful,  
fresh produce to our customers at a  
time of year when we typically don't  
have much a great selection"



# vashon maury food bank

"our island foodbank serves many people who may not have access to locally grown, low carbon footprint, organic produce. part of our mission is to get the food we grow to as many people as near to our farm as possible no matter their current financial situation. as a farm still working to be financially sustainable we cannot afford to donate food in the large volumes most useful to our foodbank. we are grateful to this program that lets us meet in the middle on pricing - we get to reach more folks in our community and the foodbank gets discounted locally grown, organic food"

farmer partners

**northbourne farm  
matsuda farm  
forest garden farm  
provo farm**

pounds purchased  
types purchased

**745.5 lbs  
salad mix, broccoli,  
tomatoes, peaches,  
garlic, cucumbers,  
turnips, chard,  
kale, onions**

pounds gleaned  
types gleaned

**397 lbs  
nectarines, toma-  
toes, green beans,  
kale, cucumbers,  
cauliflower, lettuce**

# spotlight agency

## vashon maury food bank

### building relationships

funding provided by the King County Farmer's Share has fostered the creation of new relationships between the Vashon Food Bank and island farmers. each summer, island gardeners inundate the food bank with donations of enormous, overgrown zucchini and small quantities of high quality produce. our organization serves 200 clients weekly, many of whom represent large families.

four island farms were delighted to provide produce at prices and in quantities that allowed all food bank customers to take their share. Forest Garden Farm, Northbourne Farm, Provo Farms, and Matsuda Farm were delighted to provide food-insecure islanders with plentiful access to salad mix, turnips, onions, tomatoes, kale, peaches, garlic, and broccoli, totaling 745.5lbs.

as the summer progressed, farmers began reaching out with gleaning op-

portunities and donations of produce that were harvested, but unlikely to sell. Northbourne Farm invited Harvest for Vashon to glean 15lbs of kale and 55lbs of cherry and heirloom tomatoes. Matsuda Farm provided 100lbs of harvested cucumbers and 45lbs of harvested cauliflower, and two gleans yielding 70lbs of kale and 40lbs of green beans. Provo farms frequently added an extra 10lbs of tomatoes and peaches for free at pick up.

additionally, a fifth island farm attempted to participate in the program and ended up donating the contracted head lettuce for free due to a crop deficiency discovered during harvest. many local farmers have utilized the Vashon Food Bank to feed their families during the winter, and all of our participating farmers have expressed pride in providing prime, healthy produce to Vashon's underserved families.



# university district food bank

"this program brought local produce into the food bank that wouldn't have been included otherwise. it was used to help launch our new pantry at Magnuson Park which reaches 100 families per week as well as supplement the produce we used for the 185 families on our home delivery program"

farmer partners

Farmstand Local Foods  
Steel Wheel  
Oxbow  
Sound Vegetables  
Alki Market Garden  
Faith Beyond  
Summer Run

pounds purchased  
types purchased

2,666 lbs

radishes, zucchini, fava  
beans, rhubarb, peas,  
turnips, fennel, broc-  
coli, beans, cucumber,  
squash, tomatoes, green  
beans, garlic, jalapeno  
peppers, onions, blue-  
berries, lettuce, poblano  
peppers, chard, cauli-  
flower, bell peppers,  
cabbage







# south seattle college

"many students personally thanked us for bringing this amazing produce to them! students had expressions of wonder and delight, and many of them were introduced to new, healthy foods to cook at home"

farmer partner

frisky girl farms  
cascadia greens  
tonnemaker farms

pounds of produce  
donations  
types purchased

927.5 lbs  
\$137.5 discount  
prize Choy, purple mizuna,  
vitamin greens, carrots,  
apples, pears, kale, chard,  
broccoli, potatoes, acorn  
squash, butternut squash,  
kabocha squash



farmer partner  
pounds of produce  
matching funds  
types purchased

clean greens farm  
1,375 lbs  
\$2500  
asian radishes,  
hakurel turnips,  
bok choy, purple  
mustard greens,  
turnip greens,  
romaine lettuce,  
mustard greens,  
broccoli, collard  
greens, kale, rain-  
bow chard, lemon  
cucumbers, green  
beans, melons

# rainier valley food bank

"when clients expressed preferences  
or that they liked a specific produce  
we would re-order" by "building rela-  
tionships with local farms"



# plateau outreach ministries

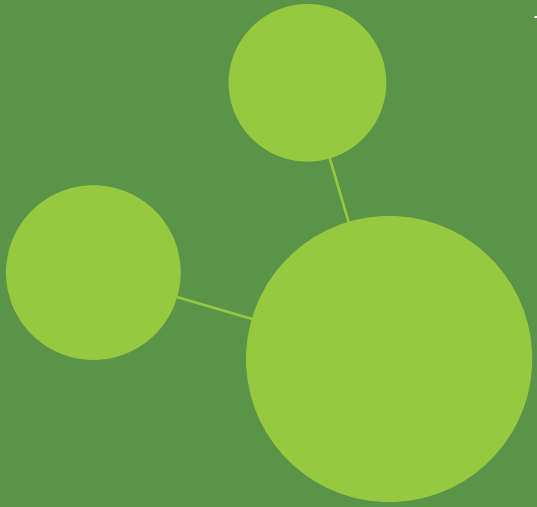
"it was great being able to buy foods from local farmers and support those who grow food locally. i loved being able to provide blue berries to our food bank clients a food that is usually to expensive for our client to budget in"

farmer partner

pounds of produce  
types purchased

**lily's fields farm**  
**small blessings farm**

**883.75 lbs**  
**Kale, Collards,**  
**Lettuce, Turnips,**  
**Kohlrabi, Peas,**  
**Chard, Green On-**  
**ions, Blueberries,**  
**Tomatoes, Greens,**  
**Squash, Carrots,**  
**Peppers**





# pike place food bank

"we loved purchasing fresh produce from a local farm! one week that was especially memorable was the week where every visitor got to take home a pint of fresh cherry tomatoes. we received wonderful feedback from our clients"

farmer partner  
pounds of produce  
matching funds  
types purchased

lee's fresh produce  
2,591 lbs  
\$2038  
peas  
zucchini  
pea vines  
green beans  
tomatoes  
beans  
cucumbers



farmer partner  
pounds of produce  
donations  
types purchased

oxbow  
2,000 lbs  
10% discount  
romaine lettuce,  
squash, beans,  
kale, cucumber,  
carrots, zucchini,  
beets, peppers,  
celery, radishes,  
collards, parsnips,  
leeks

# jewish family services

"having a dedicated fund for locally  
produced vegetables, really helped  
our overall budget and allowed us to  
use funds to purchase other essen-  
tials for our food bank program"



# hopelink

“we were able to strengthen our gleaning partnerships with the KCFS funding and well as provide food to other local food banks, including the Snoqualmie Valley Food Bank, the Issaquah Food Bank, Holy Innocents Catholic Church Food Bank, and other organizations such as Plateful and Praisealujah”

farmer partner

oxbow  
carnation farm  
local roots  
steel wheel farm

pounds of produce  
matching funds  
types purchased

6,649 lbs  
\$8388.16  
Cabbage, Cauliflower, Radishes, Beans, Beets, Carrots, Braising Mix, Parsley, Squash, Kale, Leeks, Collards, Parsnips, Radicchio



# spotlight agency hopelink

## flexibility to support farmers

with the King County Farm Share grant Hopelink has been able to build stronger relationships with local farms in the area by buying produce directly for our food banks. this has been helpful for Hopelink, but also has proven useful for the farmers as well.

on tuesday october 24th of 2019, the Snoqualmie Valley was flooded after intense rainfall. usually the farmers have more notice, but nature, as always, is unpredictable.

the monday before the flood it was all hands on deck for the farmers along the Snoqualmie River. many were out harvesting whatever they could until dusk fell. the forecast predicted that the flooding wouldn't reach its height until tuesday afternoon. while this was true for many farms further down the river, Steel Wheel Farm, being the first farm after Snoqualmie Falls in Fall City, was not so lucky. the night before the flood, Ryan Lichttenegger, owner and farmer, and

his team were out all day harvesting and saving what they could, but he went to sleep thinking he would have more time the next day. Ryan's field flooded tuesday morning, completely covering and destroying almost all his 7 acres under production. this was a huge blow to the farm. losing crops means losing revenue and this can mean life or death for small farms. thankfully Steel Wheel was able to save enough food and had enough savings to ride out the flood damage.

using Hopelink's farm purchasing power thanks to King County Farm Share, we were able to place orders with Steel Wheel, and other local farms such as Local Roots Farm and Oxbow Farm in Carnation, to help mitigate the costly effects of the flood. our farm partners were able to move along perishable excess produce that was harvested because of the flood and our food bank clients were able to take home gorgeous organic produce. it was a win-win that strengthen our community and farmers.



A stylized map of South King County, Washington, is shown in the background. A red circle is drawn on the map, centered over a specific area, with a line extending from it towards the bottom right of the page.

# south king county food coalition

"i think the most important part of this program is being able to establish long-term relationships with farmers where they have the opportunity to grow financially"

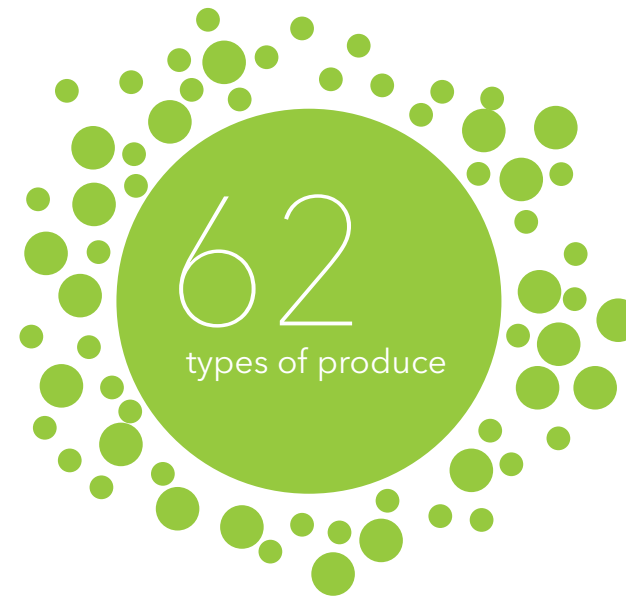
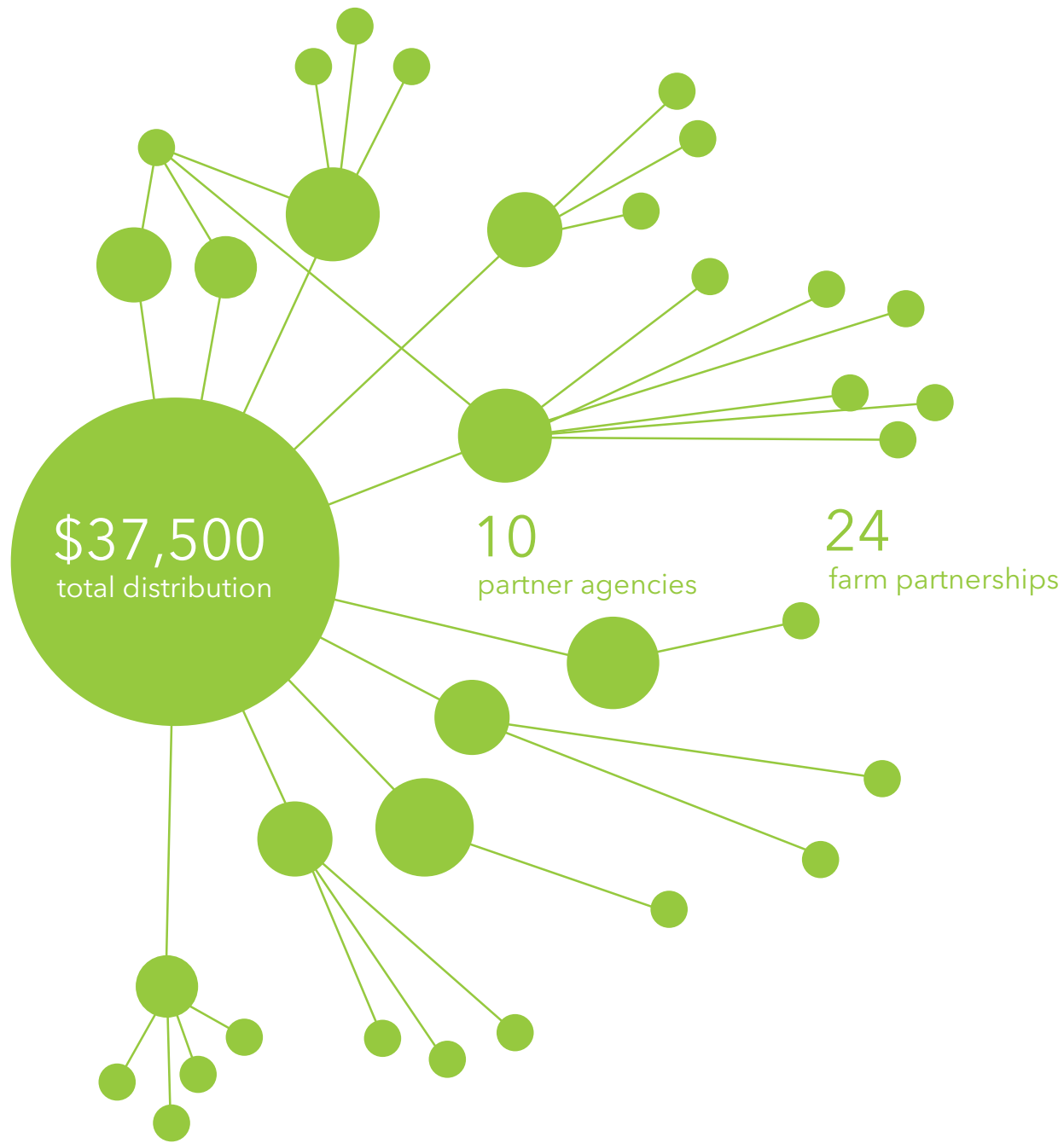
farmer partner

windy acres farm  
namuna farms  
faith beyond farm

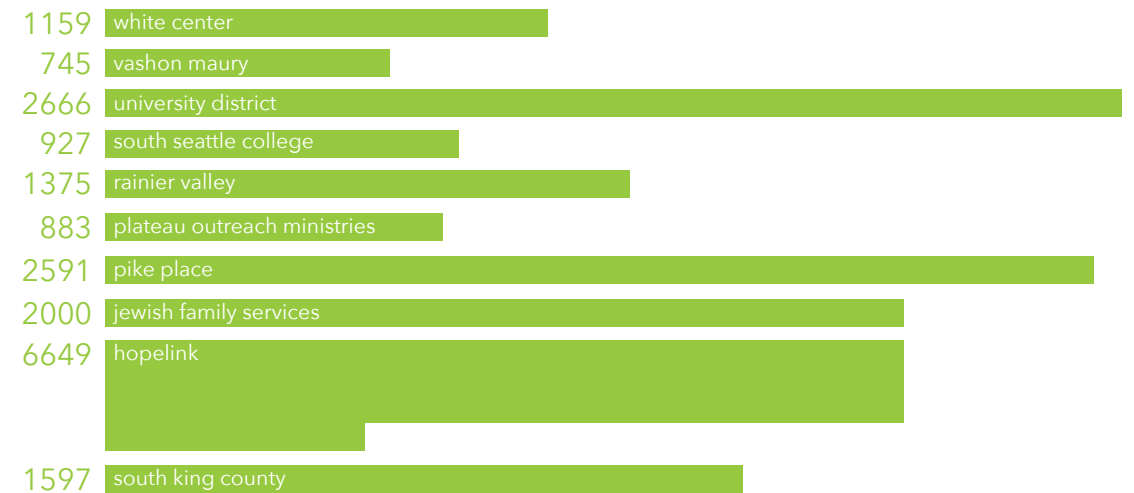
pounds of produce  
donations  
types purchased

1,597 lbs  
\$1600  
brussel sprouts, kale, collards,  
chard, peas, cabbage, zucchini,  
green beans, red kale, pota-  
toes, basil, spinach, cilantro,  
carrots, acorn squash





20,592 lbs  
total produce purchased



# takeaways from the inaugural year

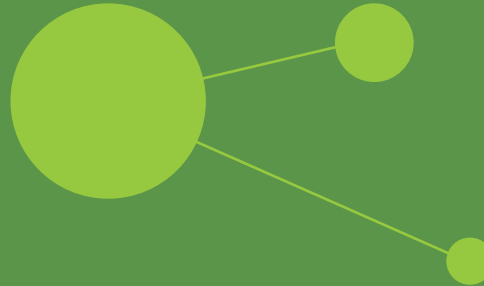


## **nutrient density**

as hunger alleviation agencies seek to optimize their resources, tools such as nutrient density calculators help give relevant information.

easy to use infographics help illuminate the major variables of price, nutrient density and client preferences.

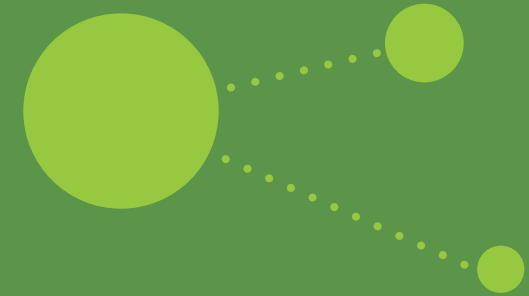
future work at Harvest Against Hunger will focus on further development of tools that help agencies make determinations of how to best use available resources



## **direct relationships**

it is important for agencies to have direct relationships with farmers versus utilizing a produce aggregator

the direct link between the farmer and the agency has been shown to work best to form deeper bonds that are mutually beneficial



## **transportation**

farmers are not always able to make deliveries to agencies and agencies are not always able to pick up produce at farm locations

this creates a transportation gap between the agencies and farms and is a barrier to expanding the program Harvest Against Hunger will examine possible solutions to overcoming this challenge

Made possible with the generous funding from

# KCD

## King Conservation District

King County Farmers Share  
2019 Annual Report

prepared by Harvest Against Hunger  
in association with AmeriCorps VISTA

Gayle Lautenschlager | program coordinator  
David Bobanick | executive director

1201 First Avenue S, Suite 327  
Seattle, WA 98134

[kcfs@harvestagainsthunger.org](mailto:kcfs@harvestagainsthunger.org)





## Request for Funding

Getting fresh produce into the emergency food system is an increasingly important part of hunger-relief efforts in communities across King County. Since its creation last year, the King County Farmers Share (KCFS) program has improved the capacity of local hunger relief agencies to support the King County Local Food Initiative goals<sup>1</sup> to:

- Expand our local food economy to ensure job growth and economic viability for King County food businesses and farms.
- Improve access to healthy, affordable food in low-income communities.

The rapid spread of the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) throughout King County since February 2020 has highlighted the importance of supporting physical health among disadvantaged populations to support long-term health equity. Efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 highlight the interconnectedness of the local food economy, as closed restaurants and farmers markets have left many King County farmers without anticipated early-season income. Closed schools and places of employment are increasing demand for emergency food assistance in King County, with supply lagging behind. As KCFS partners reported in late March:

### Food Banks

- *“Many of our member agencies are seeing not only about a 25% increase in clients during this pandemic, but also a fairly significant decrease in food donations.”*
- *“Our supply right now for produce and fresh items is down about 50%, while the demand for food is up 30-40% just last week. We suspect this number to increase as we see more unemployment and food insecurity.”*

### Farms

- *“We were planning to bring produce to Tukwila [Farmers Market] and possibly Enumclaw and have lost I would estimate about \$1000 in sales if those markets do not open. The farmer that we support through my org [International Rescue Committee's New Roots program] will lose at least \$6K in sales if Tukwila market does not open.”*
- *“Restaurants accounted for ~60% of our sales last year. We expect that sales channel to disappear. We can make up for it by growing our CSA, but that leads to other challenges. We don't think we can recoup all of our lost revenue through growing our CSA alone.”*

Therefore, Harvest Against Hunger (HAH) seeks to expand the amount of funding available in KCFS in 2020. An additional \$100,000 of funding will expand the program's impacts in the following ways:

- **Increased funding for farmers**

1. [Local Food Initiative](#), King County Executive Office

For the most part, KCFS agencies will continue purchasing from the farms they partnered with last year to continue supporting these established relationships. With the same amount of purchase funds available as last year, an agency could not partner with additional farms without decreasing the amount they could buy from a farm they already have a partnership with. Therefore, increased funding would allow agencies to establish purchasing relationships with additional farms and even increase purchasing from their current farm partners.

- **Increased number of food banks**

Last year, HAH developed a system to divide KCFS farm purchasing funds based on program capacity, services provided, and populations served (unemployment %, poverty rate, etc.). We would use this system to guide equitable allocation of additional KCFS funding among newly participating agencies.

- **Increased number of farmers**

Increasing the number of food banks with funds for farm purchasing will naturally favor increasing the number of farmers selling through this program. Already, HAH has additional connections to King County farmers not previously participating in KCFS through Seattle Neighborhood Farmers Markets (NFM), who contacted HAH regarding guidance on arranging farm-to-food bank purchasing to support their own new partnership with PCC Community Markets' Food Bank Program.

- **Increased number of feeding programs**

Earlier this spring, FareStart, a Seattle-based anti-poverty nonprofit whose services include school and community meals, reached out to HAH with interest in partnering in hunger relief and food recovery efforts. Additional funding would allow HAH to add FareStart as a KCFS agency to support their scaling up<sup>3</sup> of their emergency meals production in response to COVID-19.

Additionally, HAH would request some of this supplementary funding be directed toward the following functions needed to support expanding the King County farm-to-food bank network:

- **Administrative Costs**

Expanding KCFS will require additional staff time from HAH in outreach and onboarding new participating agencies and farms to the program as well as expanded record-keeping and other management activities related to expanding the scale of the program.

- **Produce Distribution**

KCFS agencies have reported that upkeeping recommended safety measures<sup>2</sup> in distribution of emergency food has increased their need for the following supplies:

- Boxes
- Paper bags

Funding for these supplies could be incorporated into the amount allocated to each agency so that they are proportional to distribution need.

2. [COVID-19 \(Novel Coronavirus Disease\) Prevention Practices for Food Pantries](#), Washington State Department of Agriculture

3. [Responding to COVID-19](#), FareStart