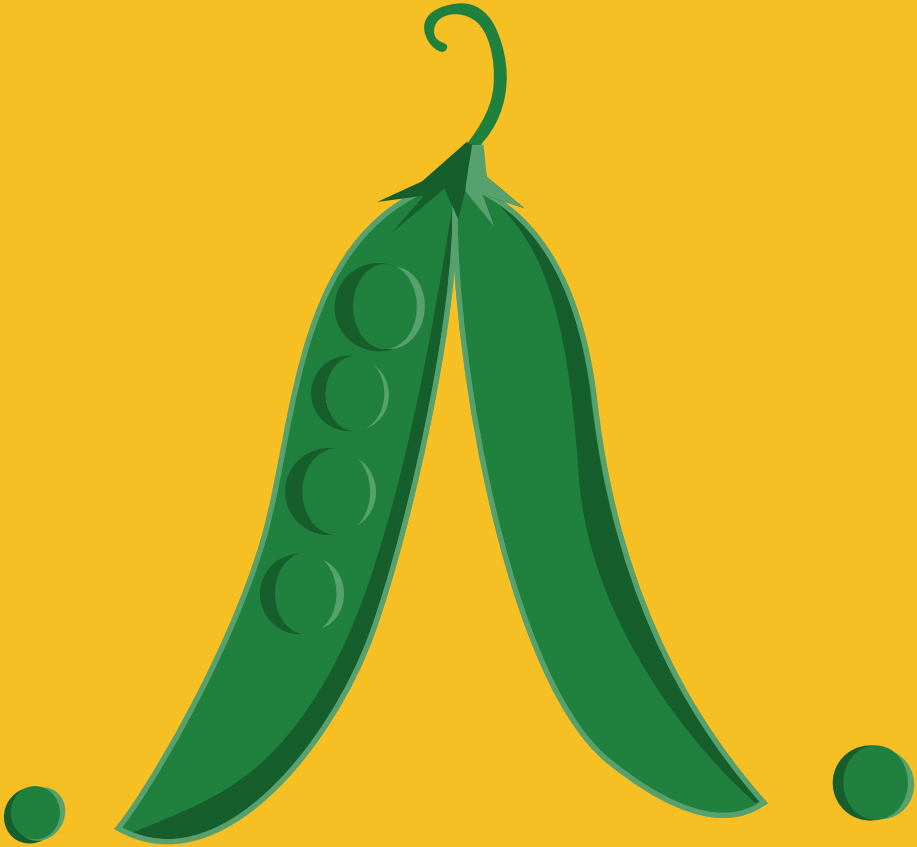


We're excited you're thinking about starting a program  
to recover food and help your community.



# INSPIRE OTHERS



Agency  
Partnerships

## Introduction

When Food Forward started in 2009, we donated homegrown citrus to one local food pantry. As the organization's work grew, the number of hunger relief agencies we were able to serve also grew. As of 2020, through our three programs, we directly donate fruits and vegetables to over 358 agencies directly, some of which then distribute to other agencies across eight counties in Southern California.

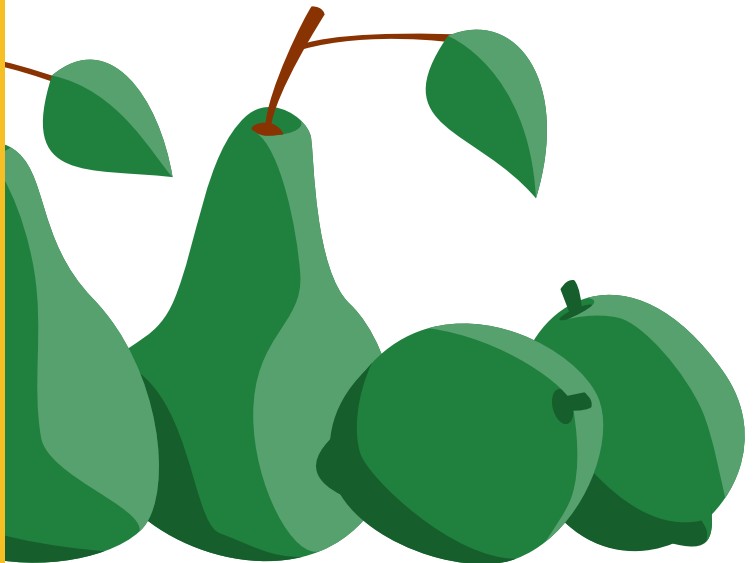
Expanding to serve more agencies was the result of creating highly efficient logistics systems, cultivating strong relationships with produce donors and agency partners, and providing a free source of high-quality, nutritious food.

Primarily, Food Forward's model is to donate all produce to hunger relief agencies, who then distribute that produce to the individuals they serve. We also collaborate with community partners on a small number of produce giveaways directly to individuals and families.

## Questions to consider

- Which agencies are providing food to people in your community?
- Is there a group or organization recovering surplus food for these agencies already?  
Or is the agency doing its own food recovery?
  - It is common for large food banks to participate in food recovery.
- What types of food do these agencies provide (fresh produce, shelf-stable items, meats, dairy, etc.)?

- Do agencies in your community need more food? If so, what types of food do they need?
  - Some agencies may not be able to take highly perishable food.
  - Ensure that your food donations are appropriate for the population you serve. For example, whole, uncooked foods are sometimes donated to unhoused people, which may be difficult for them to prepare.
- Do the agencies you want to work with have storage or refrigeration if necessary?
- Are you interested in providing food directly to individuals instead of working with agencies?
- How frequently do you expect to provide individuals or interested agencies with food?
  - Many agencies benefit from reliable donations of produce to supplement their regular food distributions.



## Steps for getting started with agencies

1. Identify potential partner agencies, and create an avenue for new agencies to reach out to you
  - Initial considerations may include location, agency's need for food (perishable versus shelf-stable), frequency of distributions (regular versus one-off), and other logistics (pickup versus delivery or refrigeration needs)
2. Establish an agency onboarding process, (how do agencies become a new partner?)
  - Survey/initial information collection
  - Meeting or phone call
3. Form an agreement or memorandum of understanding
4. Identify a point of contact for agencies
  - Who, both from your group and from the agency, will coordinate donations from food recovery events?
5. Create a workflow for donations
  - Coordination of donations to the agency
  - Tracking/data
  - Feedback and regular communication
6. Begin donations!
7. Maintain and grow the relationship
  - Visit the agency regularly if you can
  - Assess your relationship and opportunities for growth
  - Pursue opportunities for cross-promotion and storytelling

## Who receives produce from Food Forward

The produce recovered by Food Forward reaches those experiencing food insecurity, which spans all ages and backgrounds, across virtually all social service sectors: food banks, domestic violence shelters, transitional youth homes, veteran services, after-school programs, LGBTQ+ teen/adult/senior services, college student assistance programs, programs serving people experiencing homelessness or disabilities, and many more. You can see the agencies Food Forward works with [here](#).

## Tips

- Consider where there may be gaps in service in your community.

Are there areas with high food insecurity that do not have access to food distributions?

Are there agencies in these areas you could partner with to establish a new distribution?

Are most distributions on weekdays during normal business hours, when working people may be unavailable? Even if the distributions are open to anyone, are the majority held at one location where some folks may feel unfamiliar or uncomfortable? Examples might include a religious organization or a group that typically serves a particular age or gender.

- Think about whether the food you'll provide is culturally appropriate.
- We recommend starting with only one or two agencies so you can better support their work and build strong relationships.
- Understand the agency's quality standards and how it will use the food you provide.

For more booklets visit  
[foodforward.org](http://foodforward.org)