

FOOD FORWARD[®] FARMERS MARKET RECOVERY MENTORSHIP PROGRAM





Farmers markets are thriving hubs that connect local vendors with their communities. However, unsold fruits and vegetables often go to waste. At the same time, fresh and locally grown produce is often inaccessible to those experiencing food insecurity. That's where Food Forward steps in.

Since 2012, our volunteer-powered Farmers Market Recovery Program has collected over 5 million pounds of perfectly good, surplus produce from farmers markets in Los Angeles and Ventura counties. All fruits and vegetables recovered during our weekly gleans are shared with hundreds of organizations across Southern California—completely free of charge.

Here are important questions and answers to guide you if you're considering applying for our Farmers Market Recovery Mentorship Program:

WHO IS THIS FOR?

- 501(c)(3) organizations that are interested in partnering with local farmers markets to recover leftover produce at the end of the market day, but are unsure where to start.
- 501(c)(3) organizations that currently operate a food recovery project but haven't approached farmers markets yet.
- 501(c)(3) organizations that currently are working with farmers markets and looking to grow their gleaning program.

WHAT IS THE COMMITMENT?

We are seeking organizations who are dedicated to planning, implementing, and/or growing a consistent (i.e., weekly) farmers market recovery program in 2026 with the support of Food Forward. Organizations must plan to continue the program after Food Forward's mentorship ends.

This mentorship is through one market season, up to 9 months.

To ensure meaningful collaboration, Food Forward's Mentorship team is committed to providing 10 to 20 hours per month to build out this program within your organization.

WHAT WILL FOOD FORWARD PROVIDE?

The Mentorship includes 2-5 hours per week of customized virtual and in person support to implement this new program and bring it to fruition.

The Mentorship will cover volunteer recruitment and training, establishing partnerships with farmers, and all logistics.

WHERE CAN THIS TAKE PLACE?

Anywhere in the United States.

WHY SHOULD YOU APPLY?

If you see possibilities within your community because there is a thriving farmers market culture, and/or you want to expand your current programming and increase the amount of fresh produce donations toward hunger relief efforts.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IF YOU ARE APPLYING:

- Where is the farmers market(s) you would be gleaning?
- Are there other produce recovery initiatives at that market already? Are you competing with another organization if you implement this program?
- Where would the recovered produce be donated?
- Do you have multiple staff/volunteers to support this program?
- Do you have time and resources to invest in a new or larger program?
- Do you have funding that could increase with a new or larger program?

** This Mentorship is designed to empower organizations in creating and folding into their weekly programming a sustainable farmers market recovery program.*

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN JOINING THE FARMERS MARKET RECOVERY MOVEMENT?

Food Forward is launching a **free** Farmers Market Recovery Mentorship Program. If you're interested in expanding or implementing a program to recover produce from your local farmers market(s) to make a difference in your own community, you can learn more and apply for this program below.



READY?

FILL OUT THE INTEREST FORM!

Join us in our mission to fight hunger and prevent food waste by rescuing fresh surplus produce, connecting this abundance with people experiencing food insecurity, and inspiring others to do the same.

An important note: All recovered produce must be donated, not sold.

Not quite at this stage? Check out our [Start a Gleaning Project](#) resources to learn more about produce recovery programming.

For inquiries, please email us at betsy@foodforward.org.

Photography by: Eron Rauch, Towfiq Barbhuiya