



WORKPLACE CSA TOOLKIT

ABOUT FAIRSHARE CSA COALITION

Vision

FairShare CSA Coalition (*FairShare*) envisions a future where Community Supported Agriculture (*CSA*) is the backbone of a strong local food system; where all families have access to locally produced, organic food and have strong connections to their farms, food and community.

History & Work

FairShare CSA Coalition (*formerly the Madison Area CSA Coalition, or MACSAC*) is one of the oldest and most successful CSA organizations in the country. The organization began in 1992 as a consumer-farmer partnership to bring community supported agriculture to the Madison, Wisconsin area. Working together, the Coalition grew from a network of eight farmers serving approximately 1,000 individuals to a coalition of 53 farms serving over 13,500 households in 2017.¹ This remarkable market growth was due in part to the high standard of quality maintained by coalition growers and the effective leveraging of shared outreach and financial resources to reach target audiences.

FairShare's commitment to increasing the quality and availability of CSA shares is realized through farm and consumer education, community engagement, and increasing access to CSA shares for everyone in the community. FairShare's Partner Shares program makes healthy, locally grown fruits and vegetables affordable and available to low-income households. Events like the CSA Open House and Bike the Barns offer opportunities for consumers to learn about and connect with CSA farms. FairShare's Workplace CSA initiative connects CSA farms to businesses. Workplace CSA supports company wellness and sustainability goals and combines the community of farm membership with the convenience of workplace delivery. FairShare works with area health plans to provide rebates or wellness rewards to health plan members for the individual or family purchase of a CSA share. In addition, FairShare encourages workplace partners to offer incentives such as share discounts, payroll deduction, and FairShare cookbooks to employees. These programs encourage organic farming, keep local dollars in the community, and build a healthier Wisconsin.

FairShare works closely with its community of growers to develop and share resources, build skills, offer farm endorsement, and maintain a spirit of collaboration and camaraderie. Through its nationally marketed food books, *From Asparagus to Zucchini* and *Farm-Fresh & Fast*, FairShare helps consumers make the most of seasonal produce.

For more information about FairShare CSA Coalition and its initiatives visit www.csacoalition.org.



¹ Data gathered from FairShare's annual survey of coalition farms

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FairShare CSA Coalition owes its success to the many dedicated farmers and consumers who have been part of the Coalition over the past 26 years. The efforts of these pioneers have positioned FairShare as an example of what is possible when collaboration, camaraderie, and connection are shared among farmers and consumers. FairShare is thankful for the farmers and consumers who have made numerous contributions to the organization over the years.

FairShare thanks its grant partners who contributed to the review of the toolkits and provided input regarding the practical need and use of the toolkits. We appreciate the collaboration of the following partners in this effort:

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OVERVIEW OF THE FARMERS MARKET PROMOTION PROGRAM GRANT & TOOLKITS

As a leader among CSA networks, FairShare regularly fields inquiries from farms and emerging CSA coalitions interested in replicating its successful CSA marketing, education, and outreach programs around the country.

In 2015, FairShare began this project to create toolkits for several of its popular organization initiatives, and to create a CSA marketing survey to better understand consumer preferences. Working closely on these projects with four diverse farm networks from different regions at various organizational stages, will aid FairShare and partner CSA networks in devising targeted marketing efforts. This will help build consumer demand for CSA and increase sales of CSA shares, both locally and nationally.

The purpose of the toolkits is to provide CSA coalitions and farmer groups with the framework for several of FairShare's signature programs, so that they may jumpstart similar initiatives in their respective regions. Through this work, FairShare will continue to support the regional and national growth of the CSA market.

THANK YOU



HUDSON VALLEY CSA COALITION

Duluth CSA Guild

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About FairShare CSA Coalition	1
Vision	1
History & Work	1
Acknowledgements	2
Overview of the Farmers Market Promotion Program Grant & Toolkits	2

CHAPTER 1: CULTIVATING WORKPLACE CSA – FOR CSA NETWORKS

INITIATING A WORKPLACE CSA (WCSA) IN YOUR NETWORK 8

Tool: WCSA Program Checklist	8
Tip: Get Organized	10
Case Study: WCSA as an Outreach Strategy—FairShare’s Story	11

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS: INTRODUCING WCSA TO A NEW REGION 12

Tip: Targeting Businesses	12
Tip: The Importance of Buy-In	13
Case Study: Collaborative Marketing in a New City	13
Tip: Tools for Long Distance Collaboration	14
Tool: Template Email for Approaching Businesses	15

DECIDING WHICH FARMS ARE A GOOD FIT FOR WCSA 16

Pull-Out Box: The Precautionary Principle and WCSA	17
Tool: Farm Assessment Tool for Networks	17
Tool: Farm Spreadsheet Template	18

SERVICES A CSA NETWORK CAN PROVIDE TO FARMERS AND BUSINESSES 18

Tool: Assisting Farmers and Businesses with WCSA	19
Case Study: Two Onion Farm—Benefits of Working with a Coalition	20
Outreach & Marketing Strategy	21
Tool: Sample FairShare WCSA Program Flyer	22
Tool: Sample FairShare WCSA Brochure	23
WCSA Meet and Greet Events	26
Tool: Meet and Greet Survey Template	26
Tool: WCSA Template Press Release	27
Tool: Sample WCSA Social Media Posts	28
Branding	28
Tool: Workplace CSA Seal	29
Education & Veggie Empowerment	29
Evaluation	29
Tool: WCSA Site Organizer Evaluation	29
Tool: WCSA Farmer Evaluation	29

CHAPTER 2: CULTIVATING WORKPLACE CSA - A TOOLKIT FOR FARMERS

WHERE TO BEGIN WITH WORKPLACE CSA	31
Introduction: Advantages and Disadvantages of WCSA	31
Tips from a Successful Workplace CSA Farm	32
Tool: Farmer Self-Assessment Tool for Deciding if WCSA is a Good Fit for Your Farm	33
RECRUITING BUSINESSES FOR WCSA	34
Practical Tips for Finding WCSA Sites	34
Sample Communications Plan: Establishing a Relationship with New Workplace Sites	35
Tool: Communications Timeline	35
Tool: Sample Email	36
Business Communications Packet	37
How to Write a Press Release for Your Farm & CSA	38
Case Study: North Crawford School District - A Unique WCSA Program Model	39
PROMOTIONS & SUPPORT: FINDING AND MAINTAINING WORKPLACE CSA MEMBERS	40
Activities to Make and Maintain WCSA Connections	40
Presentation Suggestions	40
Tool: Sample PowerPoint Slides	41
Empowering Your CSA Members with Recipes	41
THE IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATION	41
Valuing WCSA Organizers: Working Together for Success	42

CHAPTER 3: CULTIVATING WORKPLACE CSA – A TOOLKIT FOR BUSINESSES

INTRODUCTION TO WORKPLACE CSA	44
Let's Begin with CSA	44
Why bring WCSA to your workplace?	45
FAQ for Workplace CSA Organizers	46
Case Study: Workplace Success at Aprilaire	47
Tool: Workplace CSA Tips from Aprilaire	48
Tool: Workplace Assessment	49
GUIDE TO SETTING UP A WORKPLACE CSA	50
Tool: Timeline	50
How to Grow a WCSA	51
Case Study: Madison Metropolitan School District Workplace CSA at Government Offices, Hospitals and Medical Clinics	53
	54

KEY



Tool



Case Study



Quote



Best Practices



Caution



Tip



Toolshed

WORKPLACE CSA TOOLKIT

PROMOTING CSA AT YOUR WORKPLACE	54
Best Practice: Is the CSA Model Right for You?	55
Example: Communications Plan at Aprilaire	55
Tool: Additional Ideas to Promote Employee Success with CSA	56
Best Practice: Keeping it Fresh – Maintaining and Growing Your Workplace CSA Program	57
EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES WITH THE CSA MODEL	57
CSA Member Retention	57
Best Practice: Additional Ideas to Help Employees Learn to Use their Shares	58
Tool: Anatomy of a WCSA Pick-up Site	58
Tool: FairShare CSA Coalition Food Books	60
EVALUATION	60
KUDOS TO YOU, THE ORGANIZER	60

THE WCSA TOOLSHED

Additional resources for CSA Networks, Farmers, and WCSA Coordinators

PROMOTIONAL INFORMATION	63
Tips on How to Find Local CSA Farms	63
The Benefits of Bringing CSA to Employees	63
Making the Most of Your CSA Share	65
Sample CSA Social Media Posts	66
Aprilaire WCSA video link	66
Quickstart Your WCSA	67
FLYERS AND INFOGRAPHICS	68
Tool: WCSA Announcement Flyer	68
Tool: Workplace CSA Lunch 'N Learn Flyer	69
Tool: Veggie Demo Flyer	70
Tool: CSA Food Preservation Demo Flyer	71
Tool: CSA Infographics	72
Tool: Anatomy of a WCSA Pick-up Site	72
Tool: FairShare CSA Coalition Food Books	73

ARTICLES	74
Article: Promoting Prevention Through the Affordable Care Act: Workplace Wellness	74
Article: Building Workplace Wellness and Employee Engagement with CSAs	74
EDUCATION AND VEGGIE EMPOWERMENT	75
Tool: CSA Menu Planning Resources	75
Tool: Local Food and Agriculture Book Club Suggestions	76
SURVEYS	77
Employee Survey to Gauge Interest in WCSA	77
Meet and Greet Survey Template	78
Tool: WCSA Organizer Survey	79
Tool: Mid-Season Survey	80
Tool: End of Season Survey	81
Tool: Non-returning Member Survey	82
OTHER (SAMPLES, TEMPLATES)	83
Sample Farmer Interview for WCSA Organizers	83
Sample Promissory Notes for Payroll Deduction	84
Sample Email for Approaching Businesses	85

**CULTIVATING
WORKPLACE CSA
FOR CSA NETWORKS**



INITIATING A WORKPLACE CSA (WCSA) PROGRAM IN YOUR NETWORK



If you are a staffer at a non-profit organization or a volunteer working on behalf of your local farms, you can make a real difference on your farms' behalf. *FairShare has found companies respond better to WCSA overtures from someone who is not perceived as profiting directly by forming that relationship—e.g., the farmer.* You are not selling anything beyond the benefits of CSA.

CSA is about relationships, and working with a business is also about forming a helpful, professional relationship with the person or persons at a company working to bring CSA to their colleagues. There are many ways an “expert” representative—*you!*—can help.

For example, you can:

- Reach out initially to the company
- Represent more than one farm from which the company can choose, supplying the company with detailed farm info in an easy-to-use spreadsheet to save time
- Assist a busy, stressed company representative so that they don't perceive the process as too daunting
- Share load-in logistics with your farmers to save them from making a trip to town
- Help brainstorm where to set up the employee CSA station
- Give presentations on behalf of, or with, your farmer(s)
- Support the workplace organizer during the season and assist with program evaluation



The following section provides tools for a third-party representative to facilitate WCSA connections.



TOOL: WCSA PROGRAM CHECKLIST

Before you begin

- Determine who is going to approach companies on behalf of farmers. FairShare recommends someone who is outgoing, a good communicator and knowledgeable about your farms.
- Choose which farms in your area would be a good fit for WCSA (see the Farmer Assessment Tool, [page 17](#)). Please work with your most professionally run, experienced farmers.
- Customize the materials in this toolkit; tweak the content to accurately portray CSA shares in your region; and ask your farms to fill out their information for the Farm Spreadsheet ([see page 18](#)).
- Combine farm information into one master spreadsheet for your region. Edit for style so it is consistent across all the different farm descriptions. (*You will later customize copies of this file for each company.*)



Outreach for WCSA

- Add information about WCSA to your website and push WCSA through your communication venues.
- Send out a press release offering to help businesses start CSA programs (this will be more effective if you can mention working with a business or two). *See detailed suggestions on [page 27](#).*
- Consider offering a Meet and Greet for farmers and WCSA organizers, or for experienced WCSA organizers and “new” wellness or HR professionals interested in WCSA. *See detailed info on [page 26](#).* A Meet and Greet is also an effective news hook.

Approaching businesses

- If you are working with farmers, offer to represent individual farms and have them send you contacts, OR, cold call and/or email businesses on behalf of farms in your region. *See Sample Email, [page 36](#).*
- See detailed suggestions for which businesses to approach on [page 15](#).

Begin working with a company

- Supply toolkit files for businesses in two batches to prevent overwhelm. Start with FAQ, Timeline, General Steps, How to Incentivize, Survey Template, and the Pick-Up Site Diagram (*all in the Business section, starting on [page 43](#)*).
- Offer to answer questions at any time. If you can meet the organizer in person early on, they will feel more comfortable contacting you. At that meeting, show them examples of CSA cookbooks and give them a copy of “Making the Most of Your CSA Shares” ([page 65](#)). Share farm brochures and CSA marketing materials for your region.
- The company should survey their employees to get an idea of potential participation. *See survey templates on [page 26](#).*
- Help the organizer determine the best place for box deliveries and setting up an employee pick-up station. Be prepared to photograph a complicated delivery system (several doors, stairs, elevators, security key, etc.) to send a description to your farmers.
- Supply a Farm Spreadsheet with several farms that fit their criteria (distance, events, share types, etc.). *See sample on [page 18](#).*
- Also try to match the farms’ minimum share requirements with what is projected for the business. No business will have 100 percent of the employees who expressed an interest in CSA actually sign up; it will typically be much less.
- Unless the site is very large (500+ employees), or you expect an extraordinarily high participation rate, it is better to have one farm per site rather than splitting the shares with a second farm.
- Some HR departments choose the farm; others offer their employees a vote.
- Once the farm is selected, offer to give a WCSA presentation with the farmer.



BEST PRACTICES

If you are working with farmers, offer to represent individual farms and have them send you contacts, OR, cold call and/or email businesses on behalf of farms in your region. *See Sample Email on [page 36](#).*



☆ TIP: GET ORGANIZED

Farms—In the master folder, include the Master Farm Information Sheet; create a subfolder for each farm that includes the farm’s information sheet, photos, their end-of-the-season WCSA survey results, etc.

Companies—Create a master folder by year; subfolders by company, and include each company’s interview notes, survey results, the farm spreadsheet you created for that company, photos of the businesses’ employee pick-up station and events, their promotional materials, and presentations you’ve given to their employees.

WCSA Documents—Documents to send to companies (see the tools under the *Workplace CSA for HR directors* section, [page 46](#)). Make a folder for your introductory contact and second contact; and a third folder for individualized files.

Tracking—Keep a file of who you’re working with—general inquiries, active relationships, etc. Include company name, location, contact, number of employees, etc.

Evaluation—FairShare sends out a survey at the end of the main growing season to all WCSA coordinators to get feedback on their experiences, including how satisfied they were with their farm (see [page 29](#)). Farmers are also surveyed to collect economic information and to assess their experiences with workplace coordinators.

- To ensure clarity and accuracy, the WCSA site coordinator should have the farmer review the share information prior to communicating with employees. This email should also mention the minimal shares needed to start the delivery.
- Businesses sometimes offer payroll deduction, sign-up incentives, etc. to increase participation.
- See examples of workplace communication plans to market CSA, promissory note templates, etc., [starting on page 35](#).

Following up during the season

- You might be asked to serve as an adviser and mediator if there are issues between the farm and the business during the season. (This should be rare.)
- Offer to provide workshops on how to best use shares or recommend local resources. See more on employee education, [starting on page 58](#).
- Send the organizer tips for their employees throughout the season; let them know of farm-to-table events or anything fun promoting local food. Consider them an ally; inform the business of your other events and volunteer opportunities.
- Encourage the business to promote their farm’s events.
- Send the company a “Mid-Season Survey” ([page 80](#)), and an “End-of-Season Survey” for their employees ([page 81](#)).

Post-season follow up

- Send the WCSA organizer a survey as well, to gather feedback on their satisfaction level with your assistance and the farm they chose, [page](#) . You need to learn which of your farms do a great job at WCSA.
- Survey your farmers to learn about their experience with the business, [page 82](#).
- Help the business make adjustments to their programs for the following season, if necessary.
- Consider approaching the business with your organization’s sponsorship information in the fall.





CASE STUDY: WCSA AS AN OUTREACH STRATEGY — FAIRSHARE’S STORY

Before 2013, FairShare dealt with businesses desiring partnerships with CSA farms through informal match-making: “Try this farm; good luck!” As an organization, FairShare lacked capacity to do more than maintain a spreadsheet listing businesses and the farms FairShare suggested for them.

In 2012, as part of a Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) to grow CSA membership in rural and non-Madison areas, FairShare listed WCSA as one of the options to explore, along with targeted outreach, regional CSA fairs, and tabling at public events near our farms, among others.

FairShare began by interviewing farmers and businesses experienced at WCSA. From those interviews, staff developed “best practices” to guide businesses and farms in forming successful WCSA relationships.

In October 2012, representatives from Aprilaire, the consumer division of Research Products, a Madison based manufacturer, contacted FairShare about starting an ambitious workplace CSA program as part of their Health Matters wellness initiative. During the 2013 season, FairShare tried several strategies, while continuing to pull together research and feedback to develop workplace WCSA tools. (See the Aprilaire case study, [page 47](#)). FairShare also shared these tools with new companies contacting the Coalition about WCSA.

In fall 2013, we held a public Meet and Greet for business representatives. The companies they represented became our “pilot companies” with whom FairShare worked to further hone our WCSA tools. In January 2014, FairShare received a Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin (BLBW) grant to explore incentive strategies. By that time, FairShare had determined that WCSA was the most powerful and efficient way to introduce CSA to rural areas and to attract new customers to our farms. Our first non-Madison area of outreach was in La Crosse, WI, a small city (pop. 51,000) about two hours northwest of Madison.

In 2014, FairShare received media coverage for WCSA that attracted more businesses and helped to grow our program. In the fall, we held a second WCSA Meet and Greet, this time for WCSA organizers to share best practices. That fall FairShare also started to develop WCSA sites in Dubuque, Iowa (pop. 58,000), in conjunction with farmer collaborators. *See a case study describing that collaboration on [page 11](#).*

In fall 2015, FairShare was awarded a Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) grant to fund the final tweaking of our WCSA tools and to create this toolkit.

HISTORY OF FAIRSHARE’S WCSA

YEAR	GROSS REVENUE	PARTICIPATING EMPLOYEES	SHARES	EMPLOYEES WHO RECEIVED CSA MESSAGING
2014 - 14/49 farms participated in WCSA at 14 companies	\$256,076	737	613	6,122
2015 - 19/53 farms participated in WCSA at 46 companies with 50 unique delivery sites	\$383,577	1,889	1,738	21,000+

☆ TIP: TARGETING BUSINESSES

Here is a suggested strategy for which businesses to contact regarding starting a WCSA program.

- **Larger companies** (because only a small percentage of employees will want to do CSA, it helps to start with companies with a large number of employees). This depends on your farms' minimum requirements to start a new site. If it's five shares, you can work with smaller companies. If it's 15–25 shares, you need to approach much larger companies. It is probably best not to invest time in working with companies with fewer than 25 employees.
- **Companies with wellness programs or wellness committees**
- **Companies actively trying to reduce their health care expenses** reflected by companies with wellness professionals on staff, companies that perform biometric screenings, and/or offer their employees wellness perks such as in-house fitness centers, bike commuting facilities, time off to exercise, etc.
- **Companies willing to make a commitment to CSA** such as dedicating staff time to market the program and manage the pick-up site; contributing dollars for CSA rebates or sign-up incentives; and/or adding WCSA as a payroll deduction option.

See a specific list of the types of companies to approach on [page 35](#).

☆ TIP: WHO TO CONTACT?

Approach the human resources director or wellness manager. You can also go straight to the top and contact the administrative assistant to the CEO, president, or a top manager.

COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIPS: INTRODUCING WCSA TO A NEW REGION

In FairShare's experience, WCSA is a good way to introduce CSA to a region where the CSA model is less familiar or prevalent. It is easier to gather and educate a group of CSA members from a workplace than a disparate group of citizens to form a new stand-alone pick-up site.

Outreach in a new area can be slow going. You must start by teaching people what CSA is, why it's in their best interest to join and how it benefits local farmers, and how CSA can support a robust local food system. Ways to do this include talks before citizen groups such as Rotary or Slow Food; tabling at public events such as health and Earth Day fairs; and, if you are lucky, through earned media (see "Promotions" toolkit).

Smaller populations in rural areas generally lead to low turnout at public events. You can wind up committing a lot of staff time and expense for a poor return. In addition, people in rural areas have more space to garden, or often have relationships with neighbors who garden and share their bounty. Thus, FairShare has found there is less demand for CSA in rural areas or in very small towns (with populations below 5,000).

The best place to grow CSA, in our experience, is in smaller cities (pop. 20,000 and up), and the most efficient way to do that is via WCSA.

In the case of a network or coalition, you can work by yourself, or collaborate with one or more of your farmers. The following tools explain how.

If you are working with two or more farms on WCSA outreach, you'll need to lay the groundwork ahead of time for how sites will be allocated. In our case, FairShare presents information about all the farms that are interested, and allows the businesses to choose with whom they want to work. All parties need to be in agreement ahead of time to prevent resentment or toxic competition between farmers. (It also helps if you are working with farmers who already have a good relationship. Even then, it can be challenging.) Your role is to advocate for both (or all) farms, and to be fair, honest, and transparent.

A comprehensive WCSA program can start where your network is located and where your farmers are already doing WCSA on their own. Once you've developed your tools and gained some experience, FairShare recommends beginning outreach to smaller cities near your farms. You can work alone on behalf of your farmers, or collaborate with your farmers to identify the best businesses to approach.

This section features tips for identifying businesses that might be receptive to CSA and making the initial contact.



CASE STUDY: COLLABORATIVE MARKETING IN A NEW CITY

In fall 2014, two FairShare farmers approached staff about working together to develop workplace sites in Dubuque, Iowa (pop. 58,000), where they both had existing pick-up sites for several years. Sales were flat. The populace was relatively unfamiliar with the CSA model.

FairShare agreed to collaborate, and shared documents and communicated via email and weekly conference calls. The farmers started by sharing what they'd done in the past. Where were their existing drop sites? Had they had CSA at Dubuque workplaces? What was successful? What wasn't? Had they noticed any issues/concerns/or language coming up with that population? No incentives, a much more fiscally conservative population, and lack of "local food" momentum in the city were cited as disadvantages. An advantage was the lack of competition—they were the only two CSA farms delivering to the city.

The farmers identified their members in Dubuque with business email addresses and wrote to those members asking who to approach at their company about setting up a CSA drop site. Everything was recorded in the supporting documents.

FairShare collectively searched Best Places to Work lists, largest employers, the Chamber of Commerce, business magazines, etc. for companies touted to be forward thinking or concerned with employee wellness, etc. All company info was listed in the supporting documentation.

Coalition staff reached out to the Iowa Extension office and connected with a passionate new employee focused on local food promotion, who connected us with staff at local hospitals and the area's wellness coalition.

Farms created a spreadsheet with their share info, and staff wrote emails and called companies in Dubuque, "selling" the concept of CSA. As companies signed on, FairShare mentioned their names as we reached out in subsequent emails to other companies. FairShare made the case that an exciting new concept was coming to Dubuque, in the hopes that other companies would want to jump on the bandwagon.

Staff set up two days of back-to-back meetings with wellness and HR staff, and was accompanied to some of those meetings by the Extension agent. Staff also gave a WCSA presentation to the Dubuque Wellness Coalition and at a local food fair.

Staff and farmers kept a running tally of all actions and their results in supporting documents. Every workplace site was given a spreadsheet with both farms' info.



THE IMPORTANCE OF BUY-IN

Be wary of a passionate employee working alone to bring CSA to their workplace—for instance, someone who is trying to bring CSA to their company without higher level support or someone who isn't in HR or wellness (a programmer, an admin assistant, etc). This can work okay in Year 1, but you could run into trouble in subsequent years if that person leaves and the company isn't committed to offering WCSA. From the start, encourage this person to line-up higher-level backing and to work with a partner.



TOOL: TEMPLATE EMAIL FOR APPROACHING BUSINESSES

Subject line: **Fresh, healthy produce for your employees!**

Dear XXX,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing today because I work for XXX, a coalition/network of XXX Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms in XXX. [Link your group's name to your network/coalition website.] One of our farms, XXX, is interested in forming a relationship with XXX to deliver fresh, healthy produce to your employees. [Link to the farm's website.]

Write something here about the quality of the farm and why it's a good fit for this workplace; then give the contact info for the farmer. [Tip: If it's more than one farm, mention the farm names, and provide detailed info in a Farm Spreadsheet instead of listing it below]:

FARM and FARMER'S NAME
WEBSITE
EMAIL
PHONE

With Workplace CSA [link to the WCSA page on your website], employees sign up to receive shares of a farm's produce in the spring, and then they receive produce deliveries weekly or every-other-week during the growing season. [Change this language to fit the CSA market in your area.] The convenience and freshness cannot be beat! It costs nothing for the company other than a limited amount of staff time to publicize the program and to organize the employee pick-up. Employees sign-up directly with the farmer. This can be an easy, no cost [or low-cost] component of your employee wellness program. Attached please find detailed information about how it works.

You could mention here that you are available to help facilitate the relationship, and mention if your services are free or if you charge a fee.

We can facilitate farm matchmaking and communication templates and other resources to make it as easy as possible for HR and wellness professionals to get a Workplace CSA program started.

We'd love to partner with you on this project. Please let me know your decision either way.

Sincerely,
XXX

Files to attach:

- Workplace CSA FAQ
- General Steps in Starting a CSA Prgm
- Initial Survey
- The farm's CSA brochure(s) if you're working on behalf of a particular farm
- Timeline
- Employee Incentives for WCSA
- Pick-Up Site Diagram



DECIDING WHICH FARMS ARE A GOOD FIT FOR WCSA

FairShare's Endorsement Committee, comprised of CSA farmers, reviews farm applications and selects which farms FairShare endorses. The requirements are stringent, including organic certification or transitional organic status. The committee reviews the farm's application, evaluates member communications such as newsletters, reviews a list of the previous season's shares and photos, and interviews the farmers.

For WCSA programs, FairShare identifies those farms that they believe will have the greatest chance of success in a workplace partnership. If a workplace has a negative experience with CSA, it can take years before that business is willing to offer WCSA again, and it can create bad PR for CSA in general in your area. FairShare recommends that your network vets which farms do WCSA by using the "[Farm Assessment Tool for Networks](#)," [page 17](#).

Once you've determined which farms will be offering WCSA, send out the Farm Information Sheet ([page 17](#)) for each farm to fill out, and then combine their responses into an Excel file to customize for businesses. The idea is to make it easy for the HR director to research the farms (e.g. clicking across columns to look at all the farm maps, all the websites, etc. in one handy document). You can group farms by those willing to deliver to a particular city; farms that have small minimum share requirements to start a site; etc. As you work with businesses you'll be combining the farm information into different iterations depending on the needs of that particular business.

Sometimes FairShare approaches a business at the request of one of our farms. Other times, a business will have already selected their farm and will contact us for tips on creating a successful program. When a business contacts FairShare at the beginning of their selection process, they survey their employees and determine a list of criteria that FairShare uses to list up to five farms that "match" and would be willing to take on their site. In advance of sending the Farm Information Sheet to the company, FairShare sends the farmers information about the business, including projected number of shares, whether the business offers incentives, and a map and load-in information. The farms let us know whether they want to be in consideration for the site. And then the business chooses their farm.



Most of the time, the site coordinator selects the farm for their employees; sometimes, they allow their employees to vote on which farm they want.

More than 35 CSA farms deliver to the greater Madison area. To narrow farm options, FairShare works with the HR director to determine which farms seem like the best fit for the workplace based on their initial employee survey. Workplaces with fewer employees will need to be matched with farms with smaller minimums. Some workplaces want farms that offer vegetables, plus a combination of add-ons such as fruit, or eggs or meat. Sometimes distance to the farm is a factor. As someone who knows all your farms and farmers well, you can supply background info and assurance as to the farms' professionalism.



TOOL: FARM ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR NETWORKS

This is an informational checklist for reviewing which of your farms might be best suited for workplace CSA.

“I have always viewed CSA as the ‘top shelf’ of marketing venues for farms, and see workplace CSA as the ‘top shelf’ of CSA ventures. I think the self exam should be pretty tough on the prospective farm.”

Landis Spickerman

Hermit Creek Farm, est. 1993 in Highbridge, Wisc.

How to determine if a CSA farm would be a good fit for Workplace CSA

Issues with WCSA can quickly tank CSA for all area farms and create CSA PR problems for your community. Please perform this assessment before recommending a farm to a business.

You should be able to answer “yes” to most of the following:

- The farmer has at least five years of experience managing their own CSA.
- The farm is highly organized and extremely reliable. They deliver shares on time without fail, keep excellent records, and members and HR can reach the farmer through several avenues such as email, texting, or phone calls. They return all communications within 24 hours.
- The farm’s member retention rate is at least 70% and the farmer quickly addresses any negative feedback from their members.
- The farm has complex systems and infrastructure in place to handle the vagaries of weather, disease, weeds, and staffing issues.
- The farm prioritizes filling their CSA shares above all other marketing outlets.
- Any one WCSA site will not represent more than 20% of the farm’s total CSA shares.
- The farmer is willing to give a presentation at the workplace and collaborate with an HR or wellness professional to market shares to the business if requested.
- The farms offer at least two share sizes: weekly and EOW or small shares [if offered in your area]. The farmer communicates well about the contents of their shares.
- The farmer washes their vegetables and delivers clean boxes.
- The farmer has accurate share descriptions and packing lists available to prospective members.
- The farmer has a stated “shared risk and shared reward” policy. The farmer keeps track of the actual value of delivered shares so that there is a risk/reward aspect to the contents.
- The farmer posts a weekly newsletter.
- The farmer utilizes some form of social media at least weekly during the season to connect with their CSA members.
- The farm offers at least one annual farm event.



THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE AND WCSA

Organization, reliability, punctuality, and responsiveness are important factors to consider when pairing businesses with farms for WCSA.

These aspects can be just as crucial as the quality of a farm’s shares.





TOOL: FARM SPREADSHEET TEMPLATE

This is an Excel file to gather information from your farmers to create Farm Information Sheets for businesses. You need to standardize the information from each farm so that it is easily comparable for the business. Please edit the file to reflect the CSA model and market in your area before sending it to your farmers. It is highly recommended that farmers list their shares by bushels (not saying “a grocery bag full”) so that it is easier for the company to compare share sizes.



Farm Name	
Farmer names and contact info	
Location	
Year farm established	
# of acres in veggie production	
% of sales via CSA	
Minimum shares required to start a new delivery to a workplace site in CITY NAME?	
Which areas of CITY NAME are you willing to add a workplace site?	
Website URL	
Facebook Account URL	
Newsletter link URL	
Share Info Online	
Large Shares (feeds a family of 4 adult eaters or 2 epic veggie eaters)	
Smaller Shares (feeds 2 adult eaters or families with young kids)	
Other Shares	
Add-On Options	
Payment Options (online, installments, etc.)	
Farm events	
References	

SERVICES A CSA NETWORK CAN PROVIDE TO FARMERS AND BUSINESSES

Working with a CSA network offers many advantages for both farmers and businesses.

Please see the stand alone tool, *Assisting Farmers and Businesses with WCSA*, [page 19](#), for a more complete discussion of this topic.

On the farmer end, a network can support the farmer by serving as a representative of the CSA concept. A network or coalition can introduce CSA as a wellness tool or an employee benefit. (A farm runs the risk of looking like it is just trying to sell shares.) FairShare’s farmers have mentioned the benefit of FairShare staff as prepping the site so that all they have to do is come in and formalize the relationship. You’re supporting the farmer by bringing them business and saving them time and work. FairShare has also found that when issues arise between a farmer and business, FairShare can serve as an intermediary to assist in problem solving and facilitate communication.

HR and wellness professionals generally like the idea of CSA but unless they have been a CSA member, the idea of connecting with a farm and starting deliveries can be overwhelming. Facilitating that relationship is a huge help for the workplace. The files you’ll supply will help to orient the HR person. You’re giving them customizable communication templates, sample communication plans, language for payroll deduction, ideas for incentivizing sign-ups, and tips and tools to help their employees succeed at CSA—and more.



TOOL: ASSISTING FARMERS AND BUSINESSES WITH WCSA

For Farmers

- Saves farmers time and brings business to their door
- Staff can prime the pump—the farmer will not have to explain the CSA concept, how it works, etc. Staff are not selling anything per se, so it can be easier to reach out to a business rather than a farmer trying to sell their shares.
- Network or coalition representative can check out the physical site for the farmer and send photos and a narrative describing the load-in situation, and information about workplace incentives, minimums, etc.
- If the network representative and the farmer do a presentation together, it adds legitimacy—you can vouch for your farmer. Typically FairShare staff introduces the CSA concept and how CSA works, and the farmer introduces his or her farm and shares, and takes a lot of questions.
- FairShare gives businesses a lot of information and support, so there is a greater chance they will carry through with starting a program.
- Tracking and evaluation - FairShare tracks farmer experiences with WCSA organizers, and share with farmers the results of their workplaces' end-of-the-season surveys. If there is an issue, it is more likely that a business will be honest with us than with the farmer.
- Downside: If a farm is one of several up for consideration at a workplace, a farmer could invest time (interview with workplace, etc.) and not be chosen for a site. It's better for the farm if they develop a lead at a business or choose a business for us to reach out to on their behalf.

Businesses

- A coalition or network representative can introduce the WCSA concept and broadly educate HR and wellness staff about CSA and how best to work with farmers (for example, warn them not to usurp the farmer-member relationship).
- Provide step-by-step assistance, along with tools, templates, and information. The idea is to make it as easy and efficient as possible for an HR person to start a WCSA program. HR professionals are often stretched to the max and their time is tight.
- Provide the business with information about the farm(s) in an easy-to-use format.
- Reach out to farms in advance to assure that all farms listed in the spreadsheet are willing to work with that business.
- The network representative can connect HR staff new to WCSA with organizers at other companies willing to serve as mentors/ answer questions, one HR person to another.
- The network representative can share anecdotes about what other companies have done, and how problems have been solved.



- The network representative can maintain a Google group for WCSA organizers to communicate with each other and share their flyers and handouts.
- Your network or coalition can offer best practice webinars and in-person Meet and Greets with other WCSA organizers/farmers.

“

The benefits of working with Fairshare were that Fairshare had more credibility as an “unbiased” nonprofit organization than we did as an individual business...

”



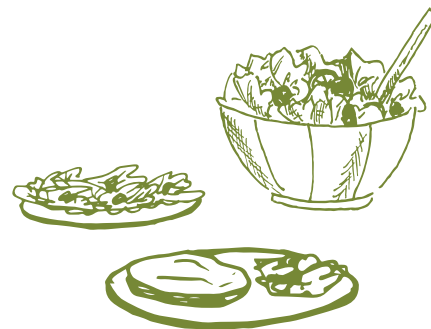
CASE STUDY: TWO ONION FARM—BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH A COALITION

Chris McGuire of Two Onion Farm, in Belmont, WI, writes about the benefit of working with a network while pursuing WCSA sites.

“Two Onion Farm has delivered CSA shares to several public (i.e., non-workplace) delivery sites in Dubuque since 2005. In our early years delivering there we recruited a small but loyal group of members. We had difficulty, however, growing the membership significantly over time. CSA is unfamiliar to many people in Dubuque. To reach more potential members we tried many times between 2008 and 2014 to approach workplaces in Dubuque and establish delivery sites there. At some of these workplaces we had personal connections and we were able to pitch our deliveries to high-ranking people within the companies who were initially receptive. In every case however we could not establish the site. Sometimes the workplaces said that they had policies barring them from helping other businesses to make sales to their employees. In the winter of 2014-2015 we worked with FairShare staff and Small Family CSA (another Fairshare-endorsed farm) and approached a number of workplaces, including some of the same employers whom we had previously approached alone.

Our success rate was extraordinary. We established four workplace sites in 2015 and added two more in 2016 as a result. The benefits of working with Fairshare were that Fairshare had more credibility as an “unbiased” nonprofit organization than we did as an individual business and that the staffer’s experience working with employers allowed her to address many of their concerns better than we would have been able to.”

Chris McGuire
Two Onion Farm, Belmont, Wisc.



OUTREACH AND MARKETING STRATEGY

As you develop your WCSA program, you'll need to enlist the support of your farmers, organizational partners, businesses, and media contacts to help get the word out.

Working With Your Farmers to Make WCSA Connections

- Ask your farms to comb their member email addresses for “business” emails; research those companies; if they are good candidates for WCSA, ask the farm to contact the farm member so that he or she might direct you to their HR or wellness director. Ask for an e-introduction. Word of mouth or a personal connection works best.
- Look for large businesses along your farms' existing delivery routes; see XXX tool for more suggestions for finding businesses that are a good fit for WCSA.
- Ask your farms to add a WCSA webpage to their farm website. See example at Vermont Valley Community Farm's website: <http://www.vermontvalley.com/workplace-csa/>
- Ask your farms to mention that they are open to starting workplace sites in their member newsletters and on social media

WCSA Events and Outreach as a Coalition or Network

- Offer a WCSA Meet and Greet; this will likely be a good news hook to generate some earned media. See pull-out box XX for details.
- Offer to give presentations about CSA to wellness coalitions/meetings in your area
- Partner with your local Extension agent working to increase sales of local food
- Offer to give a WCSA presentation for your local HR professional group. Better yet, enlist the assistance of one of your HR partners in giving the presentation.
- Solicit the assistance of local bloggers, Slow Food, and your organizational allies in getting the word out about WCSA.
- Ask your local sustainability organizations to promote WCSA.

WCSA Social and Earned Media

- Add a WCSA webpage to your network website.
- Include info about WCSA in your network communications (newsletter, social media)
- Create a WCSA brochure for sharing with businesses (see example)
- Send out a WCSA press release; the media will be more interested if it is tied in with a news hook such as an event like a WCSA Meet and Greet or a community-wide CSA fair. In the release, mention existing WCSA relationships with your network farms and include stats in the release.



WCSA MEET AND GREET EVENTS

- **Create a WCSA Meet and Greet** to get the word out about WCSA to local businesses.
- **Schedule the event** to fit into workday schedules, such as 8–10 am, or 11 am–1 pm
- **Ask attendees to RSVP** but don't require it.
- **Choose a venue that is centrally located, with good parking, and familiar** to a wide swath of your community. Choose a place where people will be comfortable. Serve light refreshments, especially good, seasonal food, if you can afford it.
- **Offer an overview of how WCSA works**, preferably with at least two experienced WCSA organizers (“Workplace CSA from the Business Perspective” — why do it?; how does it support employee wellness and morale?; how much work is it?) and from two farmers experienced at WCSA (“Tips on WCSA from the Farmer Perspective” — what does the farmer need from the organizer to create a successful program?; how best to work together?).
- **Print out your WCSA tools as hand-outs** at the meeting, and have resources such as veggie storage tips and CSA cookbooks on hand.
- **List farms** willing to do WCSA in your area, or have farm brochures available.
- **If you expect a very high turnout, consider inviting your farms to table.** Extend a limited invitation only to farms that are a good fit for WCSA.
- **Evaluate your event.**
See survey template, [page 26](#).

SAMPLE FAIRSHARE WCSA PROGRAM FLYER

Here is an example of a one-page flyer for WCSA.



WORKPLACE CSA WITH FAIRSHARE CSA COALITION

HEALTHY, FRESH LOCAL FOOD = A NEW EMPLOYEE BENEFIT!

FairShare CSA Coalition welcomes workplace Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) partners on a first-come, first-served basis for the 2018 season.

FairShare can help you develop a robust workplace CSA program that is the right fit for your business.

We offer program development services including (but not limited to!):

- Site logistics (pick up and delivery details)
- Employee outreach & communications - we'll help you make CSA fun with cooking resources and more!
- Farm selection and farmer relationship development -- find the right farm for your business!
- Access to **Workplace CSA Toolkit**, including:
 - Step by step "how-to" instructions and timelines
 - Templates for surveys, flyers, and outreach resources

Join us for a Workplace CSA info session on Nov. 15, 7:30-9 a.m. at the West Madison Agricultural Research Station, 8502 Mineral Point Rd. to learn more about this exciting opportunity and how FairShare can help you incorporate fresh food into your workplace, strengthen your community, AND support our local farms.

For details about Workplace CSA program development or to RSVP for the info session, contact FairShare at (608) 226-0300.

WORKPLACE CSA TOOLKIT

SAMPLE FAIRSHARE WCSA BROCHURE

This is an example of a more comprehensive WCSA brochure.



Fresh, Healthy Food = A New Employee Benefit!

WORKPLACE CSA

with  **FAIRSHARE**
CSA COALITION



Employees may visit their workplace CSA farm with their families.

"I was able to get my co-workers involved and everyone seemed thrilled about it. I think those who didn't participate will be more likely to do so next year because they saw how happy the rest of us were on Tuesdays when our CSA shares arrived!"

Meredith Cummings, BioFERM Energy Systems

"Working with the farms was great. I value what they are doing. I personally had a full season share and really enjoyed the fresh produce!"

Alexa Goss, Medical Associates, Dubuque, IA

"Being a site coordinator is not time consuming yet it provides the satisfaction of providing an employee benefit to those who choose to participate. It is low maintenance overall."

Amy Bublitz, Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District



SAMPLE FAIRSHARE WCSA BROCHURE—CONTINUED

WHAT IS WORKPLACE CSA?

Employees join a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm in the spring by paying a farmer up front for a share of their harvest during the growing season from June to October. When the season begins, the farmer delivers individualized boxes of produce to work, or “shares,” so that it is easy and convenient for employees to take home fresh food. Forming a relationship with a CSA farm helps your employees to eat healthy while also supporting a small family farm and the local economy.

What is a company’s role in workplace CSA?

Usually one or two people at the business will coordinate logistics with the farmer. Your job is to choose a farm, find a good pick-up location inside your facility, and market your company’s program to your employees. Many companies offer a lunch and learn with the farmer and sign-up incentives through their wellness programs to encourage enrollment.

Do employees sign-up through work or directly with the farm?

Employees usually sign-up directly with the farmer. However, if a business is offering payroll deduction, employees sign-up through work, and the company cuts the farm a check in the spring. Companies start deducting the cost of the shares from employee paychecks when deliveries start in June.

What can companies do to improve participation?

Companies often offer incentives such as a free CSA cookbook to encourage sign-ups. Some offer financial help for their employees via payroll deduction or a small stipend toward the shares. In the Madison area, several local HMOs offer rebates from \$100 to \$200 for CSA membership.

“It is important to offer employees easy access to fresh, nutritious food in order to make healthy eating an easy choice.”

Stefanie Spilde, UnityPoint Health



WORKPLACE CSA TIMELINE

Before you begin...

Secure administrative and facilities approval.
Survey your employees: What size shares? Do they want add-ons such as eggs? Do they plan to visit the farm? Does distance matter?

JANUARY & FEBRUARY

Research farms; figure out where deliveries will come in, and where your employees will pick up their boxes.

MARCH TO MAY

Select a farm. Invite the farmer to give a presentation about their shares. Advertise the program to your employees; offer incentives; encourage sign-ups!

JUNE

Create a plan for what to do when people forget to pick up their shares. Shares begin arriving.

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER

Survey your employees at the end of the season and tweak your program as needed.

During the growing season, you could hold a CSA potluck lunch, offer cooking and food preservation demos, and/or visit your farm.

SAMPLE FAIRSHARE WCSA BROCHURE—CONTINUED

“Our farm was awesome and very accommodating. Our employees seemed very satisfied with the quality of the produce. The FairShare team was great. Very helpful and supportive.”

Jeff Ver Voort, Morgan Murphy Media



INVESTMENT

Access to the basic Workplace CSA Toolkit is free. FairShare provides more robust support in developing a workplace CSA program on a fee-for-service basis. Please contact FairShare for details.

“FairShare did an awesome job of making sure we had everything we needed to promote and educate about the program. They also attended our health fair prior to starting the program and this really generated participation and interest.”

Lori Niebuhr, Kwik Trip

WHY CHOOSE A FAIRSHARE ENDORSED CSA FARM?

FairShare farms are vetted by a committee of growers, and are certified organic or in transition to organic certification.

WHAT CAN FAIRSHARE CSA COALITION DO FOR YOU?

FairShare CSA Coalition can help you develop a robust workplace CSA program that is the right fit for your business. We offer program development services including:

Site Logistics

Pick-up and delivery details

Employee Outreach & Communications

We'll help you make CSA fun with cooking resources and more!

Employee Presentations on CSA

We can introduce the CSA concept to your employees.

Farm Selection & Farmer Relationship Development

Find the right farm for your business!

CSA Toolkit

Access to the complete Workplace CSA Toolkit, including step-by-step “how-to” instructions and timelines, and templates for surveys, flyers, and outreach resources

Contact us to learn more about this exciting opportunity and how FairShare can make it easy for you to incorporate fresh food into your workplace, improve employee wellness, AND support small family farms.



Visit WWW.CSACOALITION.ORG
Write INFO@CSACOALITION.ORG
Call (608) 226-0300



TOOL: MEET AND GREET SURVEY TEMPLATE

WCSA Meet & Greet Survey Template, EVENT DATE

1. **Overall:** On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with today's Meet & Greet? Please circle a numeral below.

1 2 3 4 5

2. **Presentation:** How useful to you was the information in XXXXXX's presentation? 1 is lowest; 5 is highest.

1 2 3 4 5

COMMENTS:

3. **Content:** Did you get the information you needed at this event? If not, what would you have preferred to learn/hear about? Please circle:

Yes

No

COMMENTS:

4. **Facility:** Did you like this meeting location?

Please circle:

Yes

No

COMMENTS:

5. **Follow-Up:** What are the chances you will start a workplace CSA program for the XXXX season? 1 is unlikely, 5 is very likely. Please circle:

1 2 3 4 5

COMMENTS:

6. **Would you like assistance developing your company's workplace CSA program?** If yes, please list your name and contact information below.

7. **Is there anything else you'd like to add?**

WORKPLACE CSA TOOLKIT

WCSA TEMPLATE PRESS RELEASE

Here is a Workplace CSA press release template. This is bare bones; you will need to customize it for your program and area.

Try to keep this to one page; add links; and email it to media contacts in the body of an email, not as an attachment.

CONTACT:

- YOUR NAME and CONTACT INFO, including email, cell and office numbers
- SOMEONE WITH WHOM YOU'RE WORKING — a farmer or someone at a business; the reporter needs contacts to put together a story
- Time sensitive — *add Meet and Greet date and time here, if applicable.*

[YOUR GROUP'S NAME] Bringing Workplace CSA to XXX Region

(YOUR CITY) — [YOUR NETWORK'S NAME], a nonprofit organization (*or network, or however you define your group*), is working to begin (or expand) deliveries of fresh local food to area workplaces. Workplace CSA programs offer employees the opportunity and the convenience of receiving fresh produce at work, with the added benefit of supporting a small family farm and keeping their family's food dollars in the local economy.

In the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model consumers and farmers work together. Farm "members" pay an upfront fee in the spring for a "share" of the season's harvest, which is delivered weekly during the growing season.

"We're excited about.....Add a quote here that sounds like spoken language, not written," said NAME, TITLE, of [YOUR GROUP'S NAME]. "Workplace CSA is a way for businesses to help support small family farms, employee health, and a robust local food system."

[YOUR GROUP'S NAME] works with companies, free of charge, to help determine site logistics and assist with farmer relationship development. [YOUR GROUP'S NAME]'s Workplace CSA Toolkit includes step-by-step instructions and templates for surveys and employee outreach to make it as easy as possible to start a Workplace CSA program.

In YEAR XXXX, [YOUR GROUP'S NAME] worked closely with XX companies. [COMPANY NAME], concerned with lowering their health care costs, has created a robust workplace CSA program as part of its wellness initiatives. ADD DETAILS ABOUT THE PROGRAM or COMPANY HERE.

"QUOTE FROM BUSINESS REP," said [NAME], [TITLE]. "CONTINUE QUOTE."

In YEAR XXXX, [YOUR GROUP'S NAME] will expand Workplace CSA support to companies located in XXX, XXX, XXX.

OPTIONAL: To learn more about Workplace CSA, attend the free Workplace CSA Meet and Greet, TIME, DATE, and PLACE. Describe the event here. RSVP at XXX.

For the past XX years, [YOUR GROUP'S NAME] has acted as a vehicle for organizing farms, training farmers, educating the community, and recruiting new farm customers to keep farms economically viable.

For more information about workplace CSA opportunities, please contact [NAME] XXX.

SAMPLE WCSA SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

See the "Promotions Toolkit" for more information on media and outreach.

Here are a few sample WCSA social media posts:

Post with an image from one of your worksites or use those supplied by FairShare. Photos of shares, or photos of employees unpacking shares are recommended.

“

When our employees ask me how they can lose weight, I tell them to eat all the vegetables in their CSA box. I tell them it's nature's nutri-system

”

[YOUR GROUP'S NAME] is starting a Workplace CSA program. We help businesses connect with local farms that deliver healthy, fresh produce to employees. How easy to take your veggies home with you?! Learn more at XXX.

GROWING A BETTER WORKPLACE CULTURE: Bring CSA to your workplace and take home a box of fresh produce each week! Learn about our Workplace CSA program at XXX.

Explore how you can receive produce at your work via our new Workplace CSA program that connects farms with businesses. Fresh, healthy food = a new employee benefit! Contact XXX.

Connect your employees to the building blocks of good nutrition! Workplace CSA brings fresh, healthy produce to area workplaces directly from nearby farms. Learn more at [WEBSITE] contact XXX.

Does your company have an employee wellness program? Do something concrete to support employee health. Bring Workplace CSA to your business at low or no cost to your company. It's easy to start a Workplace CSA program! Contact XXX.

“When our employees ask me how they can lose weight, I tell them to eat all the vegetables in their CSA box. I tell them it's nature's nutrisystem,” said Emily Moenck, wellness manager at Research Products. Help your employees get healthier! Learn how to bring deliveries of fresh, healthy produce to your company. Contact XXX.

BRANDING

Consider creating a web seal for businesses to use to publicize their program to their existing and potential employees. It can link to a page on your website that lists local businesses offering WCSA and the benefits to employees, farms, and the local economy. Recognizing your WCSA partners with this visual designation serves to formalize and reinforce the relationships that you have cultivated. It can also help connect new people to your organization, so that they can access the resources you have to offer.

A seal, or other form of branding, can also be a nice way to recognize the hard work and contributions of the family farms within your coalition or network (see the WCSA seal examples in the following tool). From the business perspective, branding your WCSA Program can help recruit new CSA members at the office, as they may see the branding element on the company website or other company materials and be interested in learning more.



WORKPLACE CSA TOOLKIT



TOOL: WORKPLACE CSA SEAL

This is a customizable seal to share with your WCSA businesses. Businesses can link the seal to your organizational website's WCSA page.

EDUCATION AND VEGGIE EMPOWERMENT

As a coalition, you can support your farms and partnering businesses by offering introductory CSA presentations and tips for CSA box triage (“How to Make the Most of Your Shares”). In addition, you can connect businesses with a list of local resources, such as Master Food



Preservers willing to give demos, and/or chefs and cooking instructors who champion local and seasonal eating. And if you live in an area with a vibrant local food culture, you might want to list businesses providing alternate products through community supported shares. In Madison, that means salmon, bread, honey, flowers, coffee, etc. Once businesses begin partnering with a produce CSA, they might want to take “local” to new heights by expanding their partnerships with additional local producers (deliveries from local orchards, for instance) and switch their catering from a corporate restaurant to one that’s locally owned and buys direct from farmers.

Look in the Business section of this toolkit (*starting on page 43*) for customizable flyers for employee Lunch and Learns and educational workshops.



★ TIP: EVALUATION

It’s important to gather program feedback from your farmers and WCSA site organizers. Businesses need feedback from their employees as well. Surveys can uncover conflicts or situations that need addressing. You might hear from a disgruntled employee or discover that a farm has communicated poorly with their workplace sites over the season. When negative feedback arises, it’s important to deal with it as quickly as possible. Below are two survey tools you can use as a template evaluation form. All employee surveys are in the Business section of the toolkit, *page 43*.

WCSA Site Organizer Evaluation

See the Google Survey at: <http://www.google.gl/forms/O4fT29F88O>

WCSA Farmer Evaluation

See the Google Survey at: <http://www.google.gl/forms/C4eGBmrcRb>



CULTIVATING WORKPLACE CSA: A TOOLKIT FOR FARMERS

SECTION 1: WHERE TO BEGIN WITH WORKPLACE CSA

It is not unusual to hear a FairShare farmer say something like this during spring promotion season:

"There's a business I'm thinking of approaching about Workplace CSA, but I don't know who to talk to or what to say."

or

"I talked with a company about Workplace CSA, but they said they can't promote a specific business; it's against company policy."

This section addresses issues that commonly occur for farmers as they work on developing Workplace CSA (WCSA) sites on their own. A regional CSA network can be a great partner in developing your WCSA program. If you don't have a network, we'll give you tips and resources from the farmer perspective, so that you can do it on your own. For more detailed information, you may also want to review the information in Chapter 1, Cultivating Workplace CSA— For CSA Networks, as well as the resources in the *Toolshed*.



TOOLSHEd: DON'T MISS THE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES LOCATED IN THE TOOLSHEd.

Let's start by examining the pros and cons of taking on WCSA sites.

Advantages

- Lots of new members in one place; recruitment and logistics are usually simple.
- WCSA introduces the CSA concept to mainstream eaters; some of them will grow to be passionate and committed CSA members over time.
- You can establish contact with these members ahead of the season by tabling at the business, giving presentations, etc.
- All the members are accessible in one place, versus members of the general public who will pick up their shares at a neighborhood site.
- You have the support of the WCSA coordinator at the business; that person will help market your shares.

- The WCSA coordinator can provide feedback during the season. What's the buzz? What are people saying about your shares?
- WCSA can be an effective (*and fast!*) strategy to grow your farm.
- A close relationship with a business can result in volunteers and other types of assistance or business for your farm.
- HR directors talk to each other. A successful site at one workplace can bloom into additional WCSA sites via good word of mouth.

Disadvantages

- WCSA members can be less committed than "regular" CSA members. They might have jumped on the bandwagon at work and participated due to peer pressure or at their colleagues' behest, rather than because they want fresh, local produce.
- Some farmers feel less in control of their workplace sites. For instance, a farmer might be concerned the coordinator will communicate inaccurate information about the farm. WCSAs add another layer of communications—you must communicate with the business, not just individual members.
- Businesses have high expectations; they will be much less forgiving of poor communication or light shares.
- A workplace site can be a financial risk if you are a small farm. A substantial new workplace site that increases your membership in one year but disappears the next can be a financial hit for your farm – especially if you scaled up to accommodate the influx of new members in year one.
- It can be a big challenge to replace a workplace delivery site. It may be easier to shift or replace a neighborhood drop site than it is to find a new WCSA site.



☆ TIPS FROM A SUCCESSFUL WORKPLACE CSA FARM

An interview with farmer Lindsay Zastrow at Wholesome Harvest

What has been the arc of your big-picture success with WCSA?

“Since the start of Wholesome Harvest, we have had at least one, but usually several, workplace sites as mainstays for our farm. One of our initial sites that helped our early membership flourish was American Family Insurance. We have delivered to their national headquarters for over 10 years now and also deliver to a smaller regional facility.

Around 2010, our workplace sites started to become a bigger percentage of our farm membership. We have continued to grow each year. By 2016, our workplace sites equaled roughly 60 percent of our total CSA pick-up locations.”

YEAR	TOTAL WORK-PLACE SITES	EMPLOYEES ONLY	OPEN TO PUBLIC
2012	19	13	6
2014	27	19	8
2016	34	22	12

What advice would you give to another farmer about how to grow their workplace sites? Any tips?

“We believe many different factors have impacted the success of our workplace sites, so it’s hard to pass along specific advice. FairShare has helped tremendously in gaining ground in workplaces around Madison and the greater surroundings. Word of mouth between our sites and our membership has generated a fairly good amount of new sites plus countless other interested workplaces have contacted us that could be potential new workplace sites down the road. The CSA movement as a whole has also helped our farm generate new workplace sites. As more and more people hear about CSA programs, workplaces contact us to see if CSA would be a good fit for them. Once we became somewhat established as a farm and our CSA program grew, our workplace sites started to increase almost every year. Our farm’s positive reputation continued to generate interest.”

What have you learned about working with WCSA site coordinators? How do WCSA coordinators differ from a neighborhood coordinator, for instance?

“The most common denominator with most, if not all, workplace site coordinators is that promoting CSA is usually part of their actual job description, which helps in setting aside time for working on the CSA program. They are able to put a fairly good amount of time towards developing and marketing the CSA program at their facility. This helps the farm tremendously because you have one person with whom you communicate who can then communicate with hundreds, if not thousands, of people. During the season, they usually are able to do things with the program to benefit the workforce as a whole. An example is a vacation sign-up where non CSA members can get a box when a CSA member is on vacation and gifts it to a fellow employee.”

Any pitfalls or things to watch for?

“I think most farms will have success if their food is of high quality, their communication is timely, and they are professional.”

Lindsay Zastrow is the office manager at Wholesome Harvest near Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. Lindsay farms with her brother, Chris Zastrow.

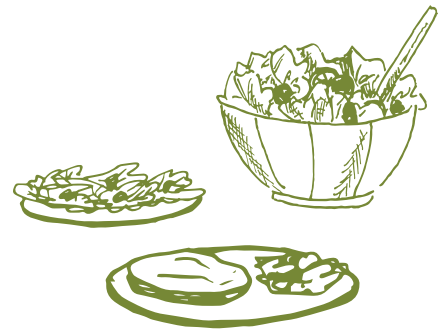




TOOL: FARMER SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR DECIDING IF WCSA IS A GOOD FIT FOR YOUR FARM

Issues with WCSA can negatively impact CSA for all area farms and create CSA PR problems for your community. Please perform this self-assessment before approaching a business to set up a WCSA drop site. You should be able to answer “yes” to most of the following:

- I have at least three years of experience managing my own CSA.
- My farm is highly organized and extremely reliable. I deliver shares on time without fail and keep excellent records.
- My member retention rate is at least 60% and I quickly address any negative feedback from my members.
- Our farm has systems and infrastructure in place to handle the challenges of weather, disease, weeds, and staffing issues.
- I prioritize filling my CSA shares above all other marketing outlets.
- Any one WCSA site will not represent more than 20 percent of my total CSA shares.
- I wash my vegetables and deliver clean boxes.
- Members and HR can reach me through several avenues such as email, texting, or phone calls. I return all communications within 24 hours.
- I am willing to give a presentation at the workplace and collaborate with an HR or wellness professional to market shares to employees if requested.
- I communicate well about the contents of my shares.
- I have accurate share descriptions and packing lists available to prospective members.
- I have a stated “shared risk and shared reward” policy.
- I post a weekly newsletter.
- Our farm offers at least one annual farm event.
- I utilize some form of social media at least weekly to connect with my CSA members.



“I have always viewed CSA as the ‘top shelf’ of marketing venues for farms, and see WCSA as the ‘top shelf’ of CSA ventures. I think the self-exam should be pretty tough on the prospective farm.”

Landis Spickerman

Hermit Creek Farm, est. 1993
in Highbridge, Wisc.

☆ PRACTICAL TIPS FOR FINDING WCSA SITES

Use multiple venues for communicating, primarily through membership and your normal communication methods, including word of mouth at farm events or delivery sites, farm newsletter, social media, website, etc. If you sell products in other ways (like farmers markets), make sure those locations are integrated into your marketing plan.

Some tips:

- **Look through your members' email addresses for "business" email addresses** (for example: company, university, hospital email addresses). Contact those members and ask their opinion about reaching out to their workplace about starting a CSA drop site, and ask them to recommend an initial contact.
- **Don't bother approaching a business with fewer than 25 employees**, since you will likely have difficulty getting enough people to participate to make the site worthwhile.
- **Mention in your farm newsletter that you are open to starting WCSA sites**, and list your requirements (e.g. workplaces with 25 or more employees).
- Some farms add a WCSA webpage to their website listing their requirements for a WCSA site and answering frequently asked questions (view screenshot to left, or visit [Vermont Valley's WCSA webpage](#) for an example).

SECTION 2: RECRUITING BUSINESSES FOR WCSA

In general, the best companies to work with are those recognized as forward thinking, employee oriented, and a great place to work. Businesses known to have a commitment to their employees' work/life balance and wellness are good bets. Look for companies with a wellness professional on staff, an on-site gym or health clinic, or a bike commuting program. You want a company with skin in the game.

Search for companies willing to subsidize shares or offer sign-up incentives. Investing money and staff time into the project demonstrates commitment, and in return, they make your commitment to the company a good investment of your time. A company in which someone outside of HR initiates the WCSA can work too, but it always helps to have the support of top decision makers.

Don't bother approaching a business with fewer than 25 employees, since you will likely have difficulty getting enough people to participate to make the site worthwhile. The highest initial sign-up rate for WCSA, in FairShare's experience, was 24 percent of employees; and those employees had a \$200/rebate per share.

Consider businesses convenient to your farm or to your current or projected delivery route. Businesses with multiple locations are also a good option as they might add WCSA to their other locations over time. Some businesses may consider opening their site to the general public; others will not be able to, due to security issues.



Contacts can also be found through research in your community. Look for:

- **Top employers** on chamber of commerce websites; locally based companies are easier to work and have less red tape and regulations than a local branch of a national corporation.
- **“Best Places to Work” listings** in local business magazines; reach out the top companies with an emphasis on wellness, innovation and work/life balance.
- **Businesses with high-paid, professional employees;** think accounting, legal, biomedical, software, engineering, etc.
- **Colleges and universities,** including community colleges; FairShare has found WCSA to be popular among employees in higher education.
- **Companies that tout their sustainability efforts** or use renewable energy.
- **Workplaces with a strong culture of wellness;** for example, companies providing medical screenings or bicycle commuting facilities.
- **Businesses in cities earning points toward Well City or Healthy City designations.**
- **Businesses represented in your area’s wellness or healthy living coalition.**
- **Employers in large industrial parks and business parks;** sometimes you can combine smaller drops at multiple businesses in close range to make it worthwhile to add smaller sites.
- **Employees at municipal offices** and state agencies; in Madison, there is strong support for CSA through the Dane County Supervisor’s office; three county offices offer WCSA.

Sample Communications Plan: Establishing a Relationship with New Workplace Sites

Knowing the right time of the year to begin reaching out to businesses and knowing the right kind of sales language to use with HR departments are just a couple of topics that are addressed in this section. This sample communications plan has everything you need for reaching out to new workplace sites including a communications timeline, sample email, business communication packet, and sample press release. Start by reading through the communications timeline, come up with an outreach plan, and schedule key dates into your calendar. Then take a look at the example email in this chapter and edit to suit your needs. Finally, start developing your business communications packet for the first several times that you meet with or email a potential new worksite partner.

You can use any combination of the tools provided in this next section, or add your own. It is up to you to determine how many of the tools you would like to include in your initial communication. These documents should be limited, with the goal of immediately addressing pressing questions.



TOOL: COMMUNICATIONS TIMELINE

It’s best to start reaching out to businesses in the off season or in late autumn if you’re in a northern climate. FairShare has found HR to be interested in talking about CSA as early as October for the following year. Approaching businesses November-February works for FairShare’s season in southern Wisconsin. January is prime marketing season, as people are setting their work goals and focusing on their personal health and lifestyle resolutions.

Late fall—Conduct your research, plan who to reach out to, how much of your business you’d like to be WCSA, etc.

Late fall/early winter—Start contacting businesses and “selling” WCSA.

Late winter/early spring—Offer to help the businesses get the word out to employees by giving presentations or tabling at employee events. Together with the WCSA coordinator, work on a communications plan to promote the farm. Provide marketing materials.

During the season—Communicate with your farm members through newsletters, social media, and other means. Encourage the WCSA site to implement practices that help promote the farm, such as a try-a-box program for the extra boxes that remain when people go on vacation or can’t pick up their box.

Mid season—Contact the WCSA coordinator and ask how it’s going. Consider a mid-season evaluation form. Ask the WCSA coordinator if they want you to plan a special event for employees to visit your farm (they would handle event planning, transportation, and any costs associated with the event, such as serving food you would be the host/tour guide).

Late season—Offer to meet with the WCSA coordinator to review the season and plan for next year. If there are issues and you want to keep your site, make sure the WCSA coordinator feels “heard,” and tell them how you will change things for the following season to address the issues. Distribute evaluation forms to membership, collate, and distribute the results. As the season winds down, clearly communicate any changes.



TOOL: SAMPLE EMAIL

Begin by reaching out by email. Please see the example below. Link to your farm’s website and please feel free to link to [FairShare’s WCSA webpage](#).

Subject Line: Healthy, fresh produce for your employees!

Dear Ms. Avery,

I hope this email finds you well. I am reaching out to you today as a farmer at Red Barn CSA Farm, located in Cambridge, to discuss the possibility of bringing CSA produce shares to your employees. My longtime farm member, Anne Peterson, (reference contacts) also an employee at your business, recommended that I contact you. We believe a CSA site at Business Acuity would be a great addition to your Workplace Wellness Initiative.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) at workplaces is a growing and popular trend across the nation. With CSA, consumers invest in a farm in the spring and receive weekly boxes of fresh produce throughout the 20-week growing season, a weekly farm newsletter, and invitations to farm events such as potlucks and U-picks. It’s a way to learn more about how food is grown as well as providing access to very fresh, healthy produce. Since the boxes are delivered to employees at work, the convenience of this model can’t be beat.

Companies that have started WCSA programs find employees appreciate this opportunity. It boosts employee morale when people open their boxes together and share produce; it brings together people from different departments. WCSA is also seen as a concrete way to contribute to employee wellness programs at a low cost to the employer. It does require some staff time to help organize and market the program in the spring, but once deliveries start, the time commitment is minimal.

Please see attached information about Workplace CSA. I’d love to discuss this with you further.

All the best,

Jacob Anderson
Farmer, Red Barn CSA Farm

Files to attach:

- Workplace CSA FAQ
- Farm Brochure

WORKPLACE CSA TOOLKIT

Business Communications Packet

The following tools provide a sample of the types of information to share with worksite partners. Be careful not to flood your recipient with too much information early on. Many of these materials are provided in the *Toolshed*; a few are in Chapter 3.

Initial Contact

- FAQs for Workplace CSA Organizers
(*Chapter 3*)
- Farm Brochure (*Provided by farmer*)
- Quickstart Your WCSA
(*Toolshed*)

Second Contact:

- Timeline and General Steps, “How to Grow a WCSA”
(*Chapter 3*)
- Employee Survey to Gauge Interest
(*Toolshed*)
- Example of employee pick-up site (*provided by farmer, or use FairShare’s “Anatomy of a WCSA Pick-up Site”*)
(*Chapter 3*)
- Additional Ideas to Promote Employee Success with CSA
(*Chapter 3*)
- Workplace CSA Tips from Aprilaire
(*Chapter 3*)

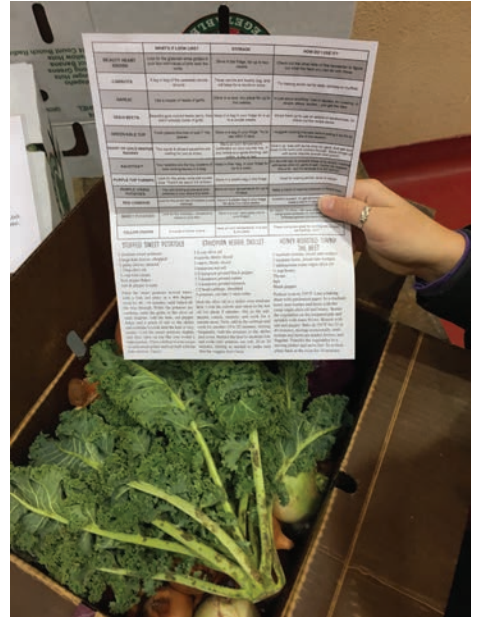
Later Contacts:

- Farm spreadsheet
(*Chapter 1*)
- Communication and Marketing Examples
(*Toolshed*)
- Sample CSA Box Contents (*provided by farmer*)
- Making the Most of Your CSA Share
(*Toolshed*)
- FairShare CSA Coalition Food Books
(*Toolshed*)



BEST PRACTICE:

Complete early planning in fall so you'll be ready to start selling your CSA during the winter marketing program.



**LOOK FOR MANY OF THESE REFERENCES
IN THE TOOLSHED.**

HOW TO WRITE A PRESS RELEASE FOR YOUR FARM & CSA

For instructions on writing press releases, working with the media, and getting free publicity for your farm, please visit the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition for a free, downloadable Communications Toolkit.

Here's a sample WCSA press release, using an example format.

— FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE —

CONTACT:

Red Barn CSA Farm
meg@redbarnfarm.com
262-123-4567

Shirley Avery
(Contact info for the business as well).
Wellness Director, Business Acuity LLC
shirleyavery@businessacuity.com
608-987-6543

This should be a zippy headline which highlights a newsworthy story.

Jacob and Meg Anderson Contact information is important, since the news source may need to speak with you.

Well Workplace Initiative Brings Farm-fresh Produce to Madison Area Business

Madison, WI – Red Barn CSA Farm and Business Acuity, LLC have formed a unique partnership to bring healthy, fresh produce to employees during the 2018 growing season. Your lead sentence should provide some punch and also give a summary of what you'll discuss in the press release.

In Community Supported Agriculture, or CSA, people join a farm in the spring to receive deliveries of farm-fresh food weekly or bi-weekly during the growing season. Workplace CSA brings farm-fresh produce to area workplaces, adding convenience to a long list of other benefits.

Avoid marketing language. This should read like a news story and have a formal, objective tone.

Description of CSA here—keep it basic.

"We are so excited to be working with Red Barn Farm to establish a CSA delivery site at our business. This is a great match with our company's new Well Workplace Initiative, as it brings fresh produce directly to our employees," said Shirley Avery, Wellness Director at Business Acuity. "Well employees help us reach our full potential as a business."

Language in quotes can sound informal, more like spoken English.

The business also offers a payroll deduction for the local YMCA, and has created an incentive program to support employees as they transition to healthier lifestyles.

[Business Acuity, LLC](#) is located on the West Side of Madison. Founded in 1990, it provides business services and logistical support to Wisconsin businesses. It now has over a hundred employees.

Add in links throughout the release

Include linked information to your/their website.

[Red Barn CSA Farm](#), located in Cambridge Wisconsin, is operated by Jacob and Meg Anderson and their two teenaged daughters. Certified organic since 2015, the farm grows 75 different varieties of 25 different kinds of vegetables. During a 20-week season which begins in early June, the farm provides vegetables, eggs, and maple syrup to over 100 Madison area families. Business basics for both workplace and farm.

“Building relationships around good food is the lifeblood of our farm,” said Anderson. “At one point we sold to a wholesaler, but it wasn’t the same. There’s just something so great about seeing our customers every week. We take pride in offering only the freshest organic vegetables. Our specialty is heirloom tomatoes from our greenhouses.”

Quote from the farmer here; this is the best place to work in biased/non-objective info.

The delivery site at Business Acuity is the third Madison location that Red Barn has added during the last few years. They also deliver to Health Systems Inc., and First National Bank of Cambridge.

Additional information and contact info here.

Remember many people may not read to the end of the article, so place the most important information first. Try to keep the length to one page, if possible.

For more information, contact the farm at redbarnfarm.com, or call 262-443-5512.

####

End with several of these. This signals the end of your release in a professional manner.



CASE STUDY: NORTH CRAWFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT – A UNIQUE WCSA PROGRAM MODEL

North Crawford School District in rural Crawford County in southwestern Wisconsin is known for their commitment to fitness and healthy living. North Crawford began offering Workplace CSA to their teachers, staff and parents in 2013. The school district partnered with Driftless Organics in Soldiers Grove, Wisconsin. The farmers were school alumni, as were many of their employees. Driftless Organics created a discounted “school year” share just for North Crawford that was delivered bi-weekly from September through February. For parents who experienced a hardship in picking up their family’s share, the school sent the shares home via their children’s school bus. The farm tables each spring at North Crawford’s “Let’s Move!” wellness event. Farmers Mike Lind and Josh and Noah Engel are pleased to be feeding their local community. The success of the project is due to a number of factors, including a change in delivery season, flexible pick up options, contacts in the local community, and a workplace already interested in health and wellness.





SECTION 3: PROMOTIONS & SUPPORT: FINDING AND MAINTAINING WORKPLACE CSA MEMBERS

Actively advertising your farm and CSA to workplaces can be a critical component of your success. The word “active” is key, since having a face and a story to associate with your farm business can make a big difference to consumers. You must be willing to put the time in to marketing your farm at the workplace. You’ll need to visit the company to meet with HR and discuss the location of the pick-up site, and likely come back to give presentations about your farm to employees or table so that employees can ask questions about your farm and shares.

Likewise, providing educational and practical support to WCSA members once they sign up is correlated to member satisfaction and retention. Unlike your typical CSA members, new WCSA members are being launched into unfamiliar territory. They may be less familiar and comfortable with the variety and quantity of produce, and less motivated to make this new eating model work for them. Short presentations on the CSA model, the story of your farm, and tips on how to use their veggies are a great way to engage new WCSA members and empower them with the knowledge and tools to make their first CSA experience a success.

Activities to Make and Maintain Workplace CSA Connections

There are a range of activities you can undertake to forge and maintain WCSA connections. The tools in this chapter, and in the *Toolshed*, are simply suggestions meant to provide a launching point for your first foray into WCSA. The materials can also provide you with a creative base for developing your own presentations.

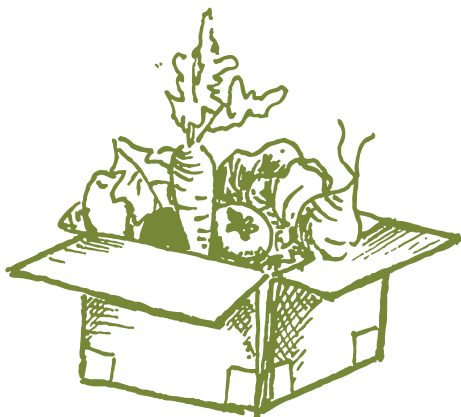
FairShare has found that it works best to listen carefully to the needs and interests of your customers, and then tailor your promotions and presentations to address these areas.

Presentation Suggestions

Here are some ideas for presentations you can offer to your WCSA sites

- Introduction to you, your farm, your CSA model.
- What’s in the Box? Getting Familiar with New Fruits and Veggies
- Meal Planning: How to Make the Most of Your Share
- Sustainable Farming 101: What it Means to be An Organic CSA Farm
- Using ALL Your Produce: Canning, Preserving, and Pickling

☆ **TIP: TELLING YOUR FARM’S STORY IS THE FIRST STEP TO SELLING YOUR WCSA.**





TOOL: SAMPLE POWERPOINT SLIDES

This is a sample PowerPoint presentation and instructions that present the basics of CSA and allow you to introduce your farm and shares.

Empowering Your CSA Members Through Recipes

Picking up a share is an exciting experience, and can feel like opening up a gift that was packed just for you. Once a farm member arrives home, though, they may worry about how to effectively use everything in the box. Some items may be entirely foreign – so how does a member know how to store the vegetable, let alone prepare it? Also, some veggies may be provided in a quantity that is larger than the imagination of that person – they might need creative help in learning new ways to cook or otherwise use some of the items.

Provide your CSA family with the right tools to keep them in the fold. Veggie cookbooks, and in particular, those that are tailored to CSA, can be a huge help in providing your members with the tools to successfully utilize their shares. Cookbooks and recipes can be a key factor in keeping member retention high from year to year.

FairShare CSA Coalition has two food books developed specifically for CSA members. They are known as food books because they contain information about the history, proper storage, and use of the vegetables featured within the recipes, in addition to offering several hundred seasonal, veggie-centric recipes. The food books can be purchased for CSA members, growers, or by the workplace as a sign-up incentive. Alternatively, you could establish a cost sharing agreement with the HR department, sell them directly to your CSA members at a discount, or simply advertise the cookbooks as an option for purchase.

Please see the [Toolshed](#) for a flyer advertising the FairShare cookbooks, or on the [FairShare website](#)

For more examples, see recipes on [Vermont Valley's blog](#).



SECTION 4: THE IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATION

Perhaps the most important thing you can do to ensure the success of your WCSA partnership is to provide both CSA member and coordinator evaluations, and to respond as effectively as possible to the feedback. An evaluation provides a formal avenue for your members to both cite their concerns, and share what they love about your farm and shares. Instead of guessing about your customer's needs, you can collect valuable information in one efficient sweep to improve your processes and capitalize on the aspects your members enjoy.

Although it can sometimes be easy to let this administrative piece slide during the pressure of the growing season, we must emphasize the importance of allowing your WCSA members and organizers the opportunity to formally make their voices heard. We recommend two evaluations per season. Send out the first survey midway through the growing season to allow yourself time to make adjustments and respond to your customers in a timely manner. Send out the end-of-the-season survey before you deliver your last box, while you still have your members' attention.

Use the evaluation to respond to your customers' concerns. This might mean making adjustments such as moving your pick-up location to a shadier area or providing more recipes in your newsletter. At other times, you may need to invest energy in educating your members about CSA. For instance, you may receive complaints about receiving "weird" vegetables or members wondering why you don't pack lettuce throughout the season.

Demonstrate that you take your members' concerns seriously and that you have the capacity to make changes, and you'll go a long way toward retaining your customers. Check the [Toolshed](#) to find a midseason and end of season survey for farm members, as well as a survey for WCSA site organizers.



TOOL: VALUING WORKPLACE CSA ORGANIZERS - WORKING TOGETHER FOR SUCCESS

WCSA coordinators and organizers are your most valuable connection at a worksite. They see the pick-up site dynamics first-hand each week, are privy to an enormous amount of anecdotal feedback about your shares, and provide an avenue of communication between you and your members. For this reason we recommend that you connect with your WCSA coordinator several times throughout the year by phone or in person. It is crucial that you let your coordinator know they are appreciated and that you're in this together.

Meet with your coordinator pre-season to set up a logistical plan and create a marketing timetable. Once the delivery season starts, call your workplace coordinator a few days before the first delivery and the day after the first delivery. The two of you can jointly problem-solve any hiccups that might have occurred. Contact the coordinator again mid-season (around the mid-season survey) to check in and make sure they are satisfied. As the season wraps up, meet in person with your coordinator to evaluate the season together and make plans for the following season. Listen closely to your coordinator's feedback and demonstrate your willingness to respond to their feedback. A survey is included so that the coordinator has a formal chance to provide an evaluation. Unlike surveys completed by your regular farm members, this one won't be anonymous, but it still has value as a formal summary of what you've talked about during the season.



Listen closely to your coordinator's feedback and demonstrate your willingness to respond to their feedback.



BEST PRACTICE:

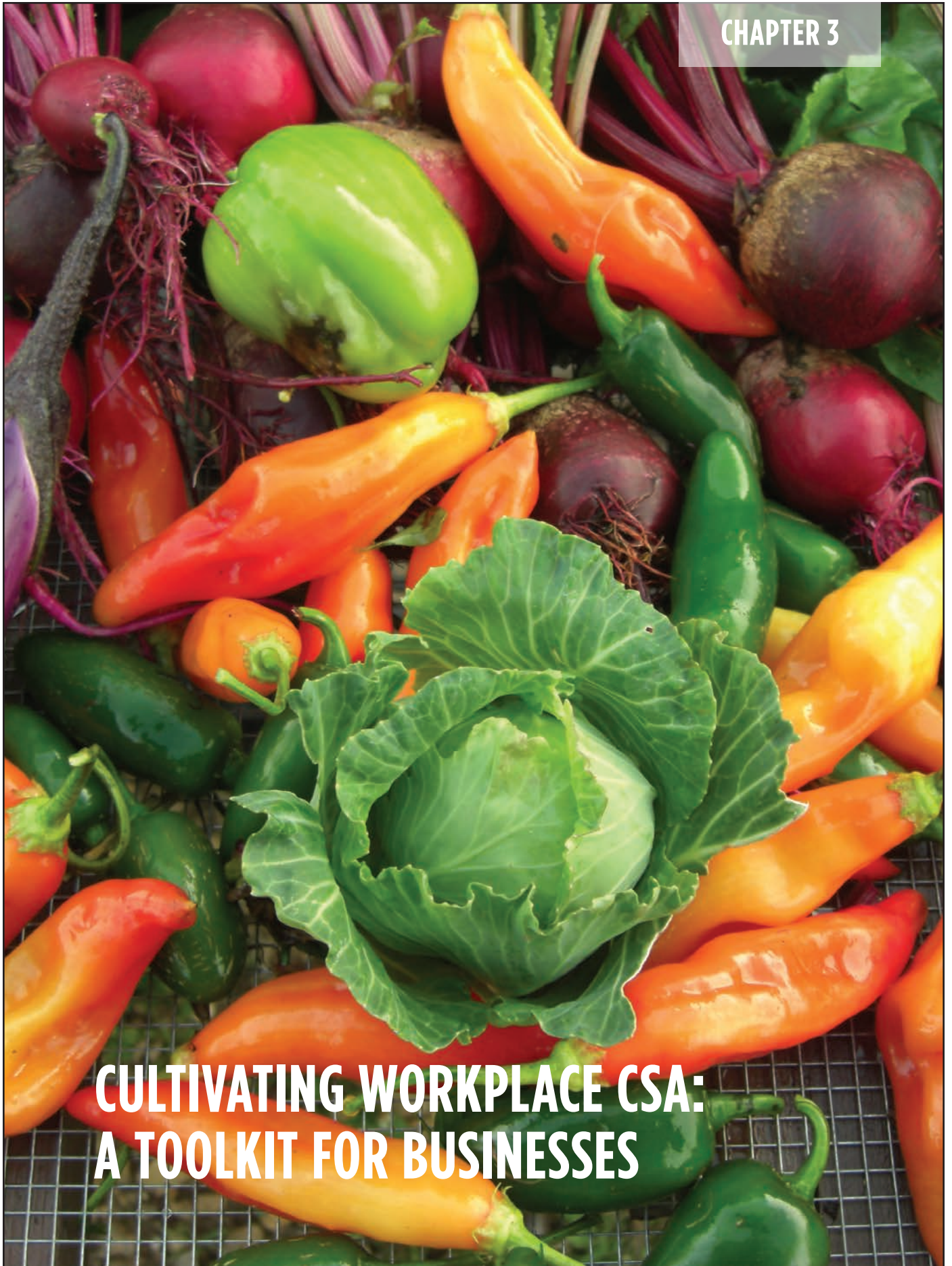
Offer ample opportunities for members to evaluate the program, then effectively communicate how you will make changes.



CHECK THE TOOLSHED FOR SURVEYS.



**CULTIVATING WORKPLACE CSA:
A TOOLKIT FOR BUSINESSES**



SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO WORKPLACE CSA

You may have a few questions. What exactly is Workplace Community Supported Agriculture (WCSA) and how does it work? Why should I bring it to my workplace? This toolkit will not only provide you with the answers to those questions, it will also:

- Help determine if WCSA is a good fit for your business.
- Provide tips on getting started and finding a farm.
- Equip you with tools to promote the program to your employees.
- Prepare you to evaluate your program and improve it every year.
- Provide additional resources, located in the *Toolshed*.

Let's begin with CSA

In practical terms, CSA is similar to purchasing a subscription. Consumers or “members” of a CSA farm buy a share of the farm’s harvest in advance, committing to the farm for the season and helping to cover the initial costs of that season’s crops. In return, members receive boxes of the farm’s produce throughout the growing season. The typical CSA season in Wisconsin runs from June to October, about 20 weeks. Farm members connect to the land and experience how local food is grown by reading the farm’s weekly newsletter and visiting the farm.

As a response to farm members’ needs, farms now offer a diversity of share options. For example, in addition to regular-season shares, many farms have separate shares for spring, late fall, and winter. Farms also offer a range of share sizes—extra small or “personal”, regular, and large, appropriate for multiple households or preserving. Deliveries can be weekly or bi-weekly. Shares may include a wide range of items, from produce to fruit, eggs, flowers, coffee, canned goods, cheese, meat, and bread.

Farmers and farm members benefit equally from CSA. Farm members receive a great value—exceptionally fresh, great tasting, nutritious food. CSA farmers generally use sustainable and organic methods to reduce the environmental impact of agriculture. This provides added value to CSA members who care about sustainably raised food. For farmers, CSA creates a dependable market, enabling them to concentrate on raising their crops during the growing season. They also receive a fair price, upfront at the beginning of the season, for their products. Everyone benefits from a strong local food system with small family farms.



“a community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland becomes, either legally or spiritually, the community’s farm, with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production.”



**CHECK IN THE TOOLSHED
FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
AND TOOLS.**



WORKPLACE CSA TOOLKIT

Why bring CSA to your workplace?

In short, because employees love CSA and eating lots of fresh produce will make them healthy, productive employees. If your workplace emphasizes employee health and wellness, offering CSA is an additional tool to assist them in making healthier food choices. According to a survey of almost 2,000 current CSA members in Wisconsin, 88% agreed that because of CSA, they eat healthier. The WCSA opportunity is a concrete demonstration of your commitment to employee wellbeing. In end-of-season surveys, it is routine for employees to mention how much they appreciate their companies making WCSA available.

Best of all, WCSA is a cost-effective employee benefit. Employees sign up directly with the farm. Aside from staff time to coordinate with the farmer and market your CSA program to your employees, there are few additional expenses. WCSA often works best if it's part of the job description for one employee, such as a wellness director. But the responsibilities can be shared between several employees as well.

Offering CSA at work reinforces it as a company benefit, and it's easier for your employees than fighting traffic to get to a neighborhood pick-up site or the grocery store. Employees enjoy the excitement of receiving their share in the middle of the work day – on surveys, they often write something along the lines of, “opening my box feels like Christmas!”

“Poor nutrition is linked to five of the six major chronic diseases plaguing our nation’s adults. Worksite wellness professionals are working diligently to implement programming and initiatives to provide resources to help employees improve their nutrition and overall health. That is where establishing a WCSA benefit can serve as a win-win for both employers and employees.”

Emily Moenck

Wellness Manager, Aprilaire

“Being a site coordinator is not time consuming yet it provides the satisfaction of providing an employee benefit to those who choose to participate. It is low maintenance overall.”

Amy Bublitz

Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District

“WCSA helps to create community at work. It brings together employees from different departments. And, when employees go on vacation or receive a vegetable they don’t particularly like or something they don’t know how to cook, their colleagues are there to take their beets or to share a recipe. Shared experiences in the workplace create opportunities for employees to talk, connect and create a culture. WCSA is a shared experience for employees. Participants talk about what they get each week in their box, connect on how they are preparing meals for their families, and share in the experience of having this great benefit at their workplace.”

Emily Moenck

Wellness Manager, Aprilaire



¹ Data from a survey conducted by FairShare CSA Coalition and funded through a USDA grant. FairShare worked with researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Wisconsin-Extension. Individuals were surveyed between November 2016 and February 2017. A total of 3,227 individuals responded to the survey.

FAQ for Workplace CSA Organizers

How does it work? Do our employees sign up with us or with the farmer?

From about January to March, in a northern climate, you will promote workplace CSA to your employees. *They will sign up directly with the farm.* The farm will add your site to their CSA sign-up form. Your employees will read about the farm and its CSA share options on the farm's website. When they sign up, they will select your company's location for their pick-up site on the farm's sign-up form. If you offer payroll deduction, you will collect the sign-up forms, and send the forms and a company check to your farmer.

How big are the boxes? How much space are we talking about?

A regular-size share box is a waxed cardboard produce box, about 15.5 inches wide by 12 inches tall and 9.5 inches deep. Some farms deliver in plastic cartons, others in bags. The space required for the boxes is usually not a problem. It will depend on your farm and how many people sign up. Many workplaces also set up a table near the boxes where their employees can transfer their items from the farm's box into their own bag. Check out the photo of a pick-up station; please look for "Anatomy of WCSA Pick-up Site."

Your farmer will likely meet with you in advance to go over load-in logistics. Some farms use a hand truck to wheel their boxes inside through a front, side, or rear door. Others deliver in trucks with hydraulic lifts that can be raised to align with a loading dock. If your entry system requires a security key or code, consider if you want to give the farmer a card for the season or if you will arrange to have someone meet them for deliveries.

We have a non-solicitation policy at our workplace. How can I offer WCSA?

Offering WCSA as a wellness benefit to contribute to your employees' wellbeing is not the same as promoting a specific business. FairShare has worked with many companies with these policies and have not had an issue with offering WCSA. If desired, you can select more than one farm and have employees vote on which one they want.

What about liability insurance?

Almost all farms have liability policies. You may request that your farmer provide a certificate of insurance (COI). This is a document issued by the insurance company or broker verifying the existence of their insurance coverage. It contains information on the types and limits of coverage.

What if we offer payroll deduction and someone leaves in the middle of the season?

Your employees will sign an agreement regarding payroll deductions that will stipulate what happens if they leave the company mid-season.

What about insects? Do the boxes attract rodents?

The FairShare office has been a drop site for three farms for the past four seasons; we have not experienced ANY problems with insects or pests. Nor have we heard of any of our 70 workplace partners having a problem.

Is this messy? What about cleaning up the employee pick-up site?

Boxes need to be flattened and stored until the farmer picks them up the following week. Occasionally, corn silks or a lettuce leaf might need to be swept up. Overall, clean-up should not be an issue. This can be covered by the regular janitorial staff or employees can take turns monitoring the pick-up station.

What do we do when someone doesn't pick up their box?

You need to communicate clearly to your employees what will happen to their share if they don't pick it up during the allotted time period, and there are a number of options. Some workplaces may have a refrigerator or cooler where a box can be stored overnight, or it might be OK to just leave the box in the pick-up area. Some companies maintain a list of employees who want to try CSA for a week, and distribute a unpicked-up share to a person on that list. Others donate the box to a soup kitchen, homeless shelter, day care program, elder care center, etc. Create a plan in advance and let everyone know.



CASE STUDY: WORKPLACE CSA SUCCESS AT APRILAIRE

Our decision to offer WCSA to employees was part of a larger health and wellness initiative at Aprilaire called Health Matters. We saw WCSA as more than a “program” -- we thought it qualified more as an employee benefit. As such, we wanted employees to feel the same way. Therefore, in the research and development stage, we visited farms, interviewed farmers and made sure we found the right fit for our employees.

We found that fit in Wholesome Harvest, located in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. In the first few years of our program we learned a lot, and during that time we set up processes to make sure members felt supported. This was very important for both new and seasoned CSA members. We established a One Week Free Trial for members who would be gone for a week and would not be picking up their share. This offered up a “Free Trial Share” for an employee who maybe didn’t sign up in the current year but was considering being a member in the future. We also put out a Swap Box in our pick-up station for employees to donate produce they didn’t like so others could take it home.

Over the years we have continued to offer support to employees who are CSA members by offering cooking and canning classes. We also connect new members with more seasoned members so they are not initially overwhelmed by their share. It is all about creating a culture in the workplace where we are focusing on improving our nutrition, health and wellbeing, together.

We revisit the WCSA benefit on an annual basis, just as we would any other benefit, making sure we keep it fresh, fun, easy and visible. We keep our ultimate goal in mind of providing a unique, fun and desirable benefit to not only our employees, but also to their families.

Emily Moenck is the Wellness Manager at Aprilaire, the consumer division of Research Products, located in Madison, Wisconsin. Aprilaire was the first piloting company to work on WCSA with FairShare. Nearly a third of their workforce participates in their WCSA program.

Our farm was awesome and very accommodating. Our employees seemed very satisfied with the quality of the produce.”

Jeff Ver Voort,
Morgan Murphy Media



★ TIP:

A “swap box” is a box in which farm members can trade vegetables with each other. This provides more flexibility and options.





TOOL: WORKPLACE CSA TIPS FROM APRILAIRE

This is a list of tasks the employer will need to complete during the first year. It's a great summary of the main points for a beginner.

- Designate an on-site coordinator.
 - Should be a member; if you are getting the food, you can see what is happening first hand.
- Identify the pick-up site area and ensure it is accessible for the farmer and the employees.
 - If you can, situate the pick-up site in a common area, or an area where there is more employee traffic.
- Set up the pick-up area - It is critical to members to have an easy, quick pick up.
 - The area needs to be welcoming, appealing, well lit, clear of clutter, and easily accessible to employees (no security access issues).
 - Set up a table for members to inspect their share.
 - If you provide a swap box, have it on the table.
 - If you are offering onsite composting for members, have a bin or bucket set up with instructions to help people know "what is compostable."
 - Provide a bulletin board with a copy or multiple copies of the farm's newsletter, updates from the farm or upcoming farm events (Bike the Barns, Farm visit, gleaning days, etc).
 - Make sure to keep the area clean—critical to gaining and maintaining support of the program.
- Wipe down table(s) and sweep area.
- Empty swap box.
- Make sure the composting bin is picked up.
 - Remove outdated printed materials.
 - Manage unclaimed shares - this happens most weeks.
- Provide "an out" for members.
- CSA is happening in the summer months June - August, popular vacation months.
- We offer a "One Week Free Trial" to help employees unload a week or two of produce.
- Get info from members on "How's it going?" before the end of the season.
- Don't wait until October 31st to ask, "How's it going?"



Notes:

☆ TIP:

Get started the fall before you plan to offer a WCSA. Fall is a great time to visit area farms, when you can still see crops growing.



TOOL: WORKPLACE ASSESSMENT

Now that you know more about WCSA, use this checklist to determine whether it is a good fit for your business. You should be able to answer yes to most of the following:

- WCSA fits in with our company's workplace culture.
- WCSA is in alignment with our company's wellness goals.
- Upper management is in support of the program.
- Our facilities manager is on board.
- Our employees have been surveyed and they seem interested in CSA.
- We have a place where we can set up a pick-up location.
- We have one person who can serve as a lead coordinator and others who could provide assistance in case that person is not available, or needs extra help.



CHECK IN THE TOOLSHED FOR MORE SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO FIND CSA FARMS IN YOUR AREA.



SECTION 2: GUIDE TO SETTING UP A WORKPLACE CSA



TOOL: TIMELINE

The following timeline is for a northern climate. The process of establishing a WCSA program is the same for anywhere in the U.S., but the timing will depend on your region's growing season.

★ TIP:

Get started the fall before you plan to offer a WCSA. Fall is a great time to visit area farms, when you can still see crops growing.



VISIT THE TOOLSHED FOR MORE BOOK CLUB SUGGESTIONS.

October through January: Planning Tasks

- **Consider your priorities.** Do you simply want food delivered to your workplace for your employees to pick up – e.g. giving them the convenience of a CSA delivery on-site – or, do you want workplace CSA to be part of your larger wellness program?
- **Secure administrative approval.** We encourage you to have a conversation with the leadership of your company to increase buy-in for your initiative. Spend some time discussing the basics of WCSA. Then describe logistics and costs, including staff time. Ask for the coordinator role to be added to someone's job description. Open a discussion about the possibility of offering payroll deductions and added incentives.
- **Survey your employees.** You need to know your likely minimum/maximum number of shares when reaching out to potential farmers. You also need to know what is important to your employees as you select a farm. For example, maybe your employees want a farm that offers an egg share.
- **Review site logistics.** Decide where the boxes will be delivered and where your employees will pick them up. Discuss with your facilities manager.
- **Research potential farms.** To facilitate your search, work with FairShare on farm matching to receive a spreadsheet of four or five farms that have been told about your site and are willing to accept it. Or if you want to do a search, there are a number of different websites which offer information on local farms, and a complete list of online resources appears in the *Toolshed*.

January-April: Getting Everyone to Jump on Board

- **Market your program and encourage sign-ups.** Some companies offer payroll deductions as they might for a gym membership. Communicate the sign-up deadline and make sure employees know the program will not be offered unless you meet the minimum requirement for shares.
 - **Consider some optional activities to generate interest.** For example, you could offer a discussion group or a book club using a popular food book such as *In Defense of Food*. See *Toolshed* for book list.
- **Select your farm.** Some companies allow employees to vote; others make the decision for their employees.
 - **Encourage early sign ups.** Farms will start signing up members as early as December and continue until May or June when deliveries begin. However, many farms begin to fill up by the middle of April.
 - **Offer a way for people to learn more.** Host a WCSA Lunch and Learn, presented by FairShare staff member, employee CSA member, and/or ask the farmer to come in and discuss his or her program. If you live in an area without a CSA coalition, ask the farmer to introduce their farm.

June through Fall: Delivery Season

- Once deliveries begin, you could offer a tasting, cooking contest, cooking demo, etc. to generate interest.
- In mid-August, survey your employees to see how it's going. Provide initial feedback to farmers.
- Survey your employees at the end of the season (late October) to measure satisfaction and to gauge renewals.
- If there are any issues with your farm, you will need to work with the farmer to resolve them or find a new farm for next season. Plan to complete this process by November.
- Start planning the next season, including setting a new membership goal and communications timeline.

HOW TO GROW A WCSA

This guide is meant to be used with the timeline on the previous pages. The timeline follows a sequential format; the guide is organized by topic, and provides more detail.

Establish Goals

Choose a focus for your CSA. Be clear on why you want to offer a CSA pick-up for your employees and define your goals; choose your farm accordingly. For some companies, CSA augments wellness goals. For others, it is primarily a community-building endeavor.

Survey your employees. The survey results can guide your farm search and determine how to get buy-in for your program. Informal discussions are just as important. It's crucial to determine at an early stage whether there is enough interest to begin CSA.

 **LOOK IN THE TOOLSHED FOR AN EMPLOYEE SURVEY REGARDING WCSA.**

Early planning tasks

Set a membership goal. All farms will require a minimum commitment to establish a new delivery site. Different farms have different minimums; the smallest minimum is usually the equivalent of five weekly shares. You will need to collect and provide information to the farm regarding the total number of employees and your projections for participation, the size and number of shares.

Determine if your WCSA will be open to the public. Is your program going to be an "open site," where the public could pick up shares, or will it be private, accessed by employees only? Are there any relevant security issues?



BEST PRACTICE:

Offer support to your farm members as they embark on their eating adventure.



Establish Good Communications

Find a WCSA organizer. The coordinator should be invested in the success of the project, well organized, and a skilled communicator. Later on, consider adding a second person for some of the hands-on tasks during the delivery season.

Keep communicating. Once the WCSA is launched, farm members will have a direct relationship with the farmer. Once the deliveries begin, WCSA organizers have duties that include sending reminder emails (“don’t forget to pick up your share tomorrow from 1-4 p.m.!”). The organizer will communicate with the farm regarding pick-ups and how the program is going.

Talk to your farmer. Please ask your farmer to proof your initial employee communication whether it’s an email, newsletter article, or flyer about the farm and shares. It’s important not to spread misinformation that later needs to be corrected by you or the farmer; it will save you headaches and time.

Plan a Pick-up Site Location

Scout for locations. The best WCSA pick-up locations are ones that can be accessed easily by farmers and all farm members; will stay cool in the summertime, and feels welcoming. Deliveries are typically one day per week, and the pick-up area typically needs to be open for 3-4 hours.

Plan logistics with your farmer. Ask for their preferences, which might include access to a loading dock or an elevator. For secure locations, you may need to give them a key card, or arrange for a staff member to meet them on delivery day. Every WCSA site is a little different.

Plan for leftovers. Create a plan in advance for what you will do with shares that are not picked up. For example, you can donate the box to a food pantry, open the box and distribute the produce in the employee break room, or keep a list of employees who want to try a share and send the box home with someone.

Choose Your Farm

Research the farms. Consider the size of the farm, share types, and what kind of relationship you want with your farm. Look into the style, frequency, and method of communication from the farmers, as well as farm events. Analyze the farm’s strengths and weaknesses.

Investigate the types of food the farm provides. Request the previous season’s packing lists or check the farm website to access the last season’s newsletters. Ask for the size of the delivery boxes and typical early, mid and late season deliveries. Investigate optional shares such as egg shares.



SAMPLE FARMER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ARE LOCATED IN THE TOOLSHED.

Don’t compare farms simply by price. There are many differences between farms, such as delivery frequency, share size, on-farm events, and other factors that add value to farm memberships. When you do compare the price of shares, use the share price divided by the number of weeks. For example, if one farm’s regular season share costs \$500 and lasts 20 weeks, and another farm’s regular season share costs \$600 and lasts 24 weeks, both shares cost \$20 per week.

Market the Farm

The farmer needs your help. In a CSA farm, membership works to support the farm enterprise. This is a little different than most business models, but the farmer really does need your assistance to connect with your employees.

Engage employee support. Asking for people’s opinions and feedback is a powerful tool for engaging their support. The more involved they become, the more excited they’ll be about continuing. As enthusiastic employees emerge, ask for their help.

Upper management leads the team. It’s essential that the CEO or another upper management employee is on board. By creating an overarching culture of wellness and lending their support, they increase effectiveness. Make sure they join the farm, too!



CASE STUDY: MADISON METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

In 2014, the Madison Metropolitan School District collaborated with FairShare CSA Coalition to bring WCSA or a “Farm to Cubicle” program to the MMSD Doyle Administration Building. In the first year, more than 25 staff signed up for a wide variety of options including four-week spring shares, weekly and every-other-week summer produce shares, and flower and egg shares. MMSD elected to work with Sprouting Acres - a small, certified organic family farm located 20 miles southeast of Madison. By working with the same farm each year, we continue to build a relationship with both the farm and family and learn about new developments on the farm through a newsletter provided with each share.

Our WCSA program connects employees with fresh, local food and builds community at our site, allowing participants to connect with their co-workers as they learn about the contents of their boxes together and share recipes and ideas. Participants receive a box of local produce conveniently delivered directly to the building’s staff lounge each Thursday afternoon. As an incentive, a number of our district’s health insurance providers offer CSA rebates for individuals and families.

Not only do employees receive a box of farm-fresh produce regularly, but they also gain the satisfaction of knowing that their food dollars are funding sustainable growing practices, staying in the local economy and supporting a family farm. Employees have the opportunity to form a relationship with their farmers and learn how their food is grown.

Now in its third year, the program continues to enjoy success and we have seen an increase in the number of participants from the first to second year, with the number remaining the same in our third year. After this season we plan to take a closer look at the program in order to examine our successes while also looking for areas where we can improve. We look forward to strengthening our relationship with Sprouting Acres and finding ways to ensure the success of the program for years to come.

Marla Peterson is a Communications Specialist and volunteer WCSA Coordinator for the Madison Metropolitan School District in Madison, Wisconsin.

☆ TIP:

It’s a good idea to have someone at the pick-up site for the first two weeks to answer people’s questions and show them how to break down their boxes.





WORKPLACE CSA AT GOVERNMENT OFFICES, HOSPITALS AND MEDICAL CLINICS

WCSA can really move the CSA movement forward in your region. WCSA is widely accepted in the greater Dane County area in Southern Wisconsin. It's offered in four Dane County office buildings around Madison, and at the headquarter offices of multiple state agencies. You'll find WCSA at municipal buildings in smaller towns and at school district offices (in Madison and LaCrosse, Wisconsin, and in Dubuque, Iowa). All Madison hospitals offer WCSA and/or on-site farmers markets. UnityPoint-Meriter, UW Health, and Group Health Cooperative offer WCSA at more than a dozen clinics. Upland Hills Health, a hospital in Dodgeville, Wisconsin, offers a WCSA site that is accessible to both employees and community members.

SECTION 3: PROMOTING CSA AT YOUR WORKPLACE

- Best Practice: WCSA coordinators need to join their company's CSA program to have credibility when promoting CSA.
- Deciding to start a WCSA program and logistical planning is half the battle when you're starting a workplace CSA program. Just as important is promoting CSA and encouraging employees to join the farm. FairShare has developed several graphic templates to help, located in the *Toolshed*. In order to have a truly successful WCSA, you will need work effectively with your farm.
- Most workplaces create a marketing plan for rolling out their program. Some start as early as the previous fall with a general CSA presentation or lunch and learn, combined with an employee survey to gauge interest. Invite FairShare or your farm to table at your employee wellness fairs to explain the CSA concept.
- Invite the farmer to give a presentation or table where your employees can meet him or her and ask questions. You'll want to do this before the farmers are hard at work in their fields. In a northern climate, mid-January to mid-March is ideal. Flyers posted around your facility, emails, and even kick-off events all help to create a buzz around signing up. If you live in a northern climate, photos of farms and fresh veggies can also be very appealing and uplifting when the landscape is still frozen and gray.
- Some workplaces create an intranet site or Facebook group for employees to share recipes and list veggie cookbooks and cooking resources. HR departments can also keep a list of employees who are looking for a partner with whom they can split a share.

"Working with the farms was great. I value what they are doing. I personally had a full season share and really enjoyed the produce!"

Alexa Goss
Medical Associates

★ TIP:

Waste Not, Want Your Veggies

Some vegetables last a long time in the refrigerator, while others are more perishable. To prevent wasting your vegetables, sort your box and plan your meals around eating the most perishable ones earlier. Of course, in cooked dishes, things are often combined, but you can still make a general plan.

Salad Mix/Broccoli—eat during the first part of the delivery week

Head Lettuce/Kale/Chard—eat next

Fruiting vegetables like tomatoes, eggplant, peppers—middle of the week

Root vegetables, cabbage—leave for the end of the week.

And so forth...

For sample recipes, see [Vermont Valley's blog](#).





BEST PRACTICE: IS THE CSA MODEL RIGHT FOR YOU?

by farmers *Dennis Fiser and Anne Drehfal*
at *Regenerative Roots, Jefferson.*

In our many years of working on other CSA farms and through offering our own CSA shares, we have observed what sort of members seem to be the most pleased with their boxes. CSA seems to work best for people (and families) that identify themselves as someone who:

- Enjoys having a personal connection to where their food comes from.
- Likes to eat vegetables and fruits.
- Is an adventurous/creative cook.
- Is a flexible eater.
- Gets excited about trying new recipes and reading news about farm happenings.
- Can get to their pick-up site consistently each week.

Example: Communications Plan for Aprilaire

This is the 2014 CSA Communication Plan for Aprilaire/Research Products in Madison. It was their second year of CSA and they planned the following items for internal communications.

Feb. 11 begins the first in a series of communications to employees.

1. **Subject:** New Farm/New CSA
 - a. 2014 Farm Partnership with Wholesome Harvest
 - b. Info on Wholesome Harvest and link to website
 - a. Possibility of signing up for an egg share, in addition to produce shares
 - b. Meal planning tips and resources

Feb. 18

2. **Subject:** Buy Fresh: Weekly Menu Planning Service
 - a. Wholesome Harvest is including Local Thyme for their members, adding value to their shares
 - b. Information about Local Thyme, a local CSA menu-planning service

Feb. 20

3. **Subject:** Summer Produce: What You Get and When
 - a. Produce chart
 - b. Emphasize bountiful shares



BEST PRACTICE:

To meet your membership goal, plan promotional activities for January-March.



★ TIP:

New employees who begin work after the season starts can sometimes still join—check with your farmer. Fall or extended season shares also provide a way to jump on board later in the year. Or, have the new employee split a share with someone who feels overwhelmed by the volume of produce.



LOOK IN THE TOOLSHED FOR EXAMPLES OF PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS.



TOOL: ADDITIONAL IDEAS TO PROMOTE CSA AT YOUR WORKPLACE

- Offer payroll deduction: Begin taking money out of employee paychecks when the food deliveries start. (With this option, the employer pays the farm upfront in early spring, spreading the payments from employees over a longer period of time.) Or, start the deductions in January so that you have collected enough funds to cover the farm memberships by the time shares start. See examples of payroll deduction agreements in the *Toolshed*.
- Offer incentives via your wellness or sustainability program(s) such as a free CSA cookbook for signing up. Some companies print special bags for employees to take the produce home.
- Offer a monetary amount toward the cost of a share (\$50 off the share price for example).
- Offer a drawing for a chance to win “\$100 off” the share price.
- Blog regarding your search for a farm and/or your experiences with offering CSA at work; offer guest blogging options to your employees once the share deliveries start.
- Buy a company share and hold a drawing each week; split the share between two or three non-members to entice more employees to sign up for CSA the following year.
- Serve as a matchmaker/facilitator – Keep a list of single employees who want to split a share.

Feb. 24

4. **Subject:** Meet the Farmers
 - a. Info about the farmers
 - b. Announce introductory meeting with farmers
 - Will transition from a presentation style format to a meet/greet in a casual, informal setting
 - c. Facebook link to the farm, Wholesome Harvest

Feb. 27

5. **Meeting with Farmers**
 - a. Booth: set up in lunch areas
 - b. Distribute information on membership options and cost
 - c. Supplemental material on nutrition and sign-up give away (cookbooks or dish towels)
 - d. Sign-up begins

March 3

6. **Subject:** CSA Sign-Up and Membership Options
 - a. Sign Up: How/Timeline
 - b. Membership Options and Cost

March 14 - Sign-up Ends

I was able to get my co-workers involved and everyone seemed thrilled about it. I think those who didn't participate will be more likely to do so next year because they saw how happy the rest of us were on Tuesdays when our CSA shares arrived!

Meredith Cummings
BioFERM Energy Systems

SECTION 4: EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES WITH THE CSA MODEL

Building community around CSA in the workplace can be a valuable asset for employers. WCSA contributes to a company's culture and goals concerning health, community, and sustainability.

Tools that equip employees for success as CSA members are vital for ensuring the long-term viability of WCSA. Providing resources and opportunities for employees to engage with the farm, one another, and company leadership contribute to increased sign-ups, repeat participation or retention, and overall satisfaction with CSA at the workplace.

This section includes vetted tools and resources that make it easy for employers to support participation in WCSA, and make it fun for employees to join. Please check the *Toolshed* for additional items.

CSA Member Retention

Here are the most common reasons people drop out of CSA, and some practical solutions:

Challenge: Veggie guilt – They receive more produce than they can eat; the veggies go to waste, and they feel guilty.

Solution: Offer a swap box in which they can donate unneeded produce. Make it clear that they leftovers will go to a good home, so they can feel good about that.

Challenge: Money – They worry that CSA is not a good financial move if they are wasting their vegetables, and they may not be used to spending money on fresh vegetables.

Solution: Provide them the tools to learn how to make the best use of their shares. The value of a share can often be appreciated in terms of quality, including freshness and taste.

Challenge: Lack of knowledge – “I don't know what to do with the vegetables.”

Solution: Provide cookbooks for sale, cooking demos, mentoring.

Challenge: Hectic schedules – “I don't have time to cook.”

Solution: The Farm Fresh and Fast cookbook provides meals that can be made quickly, in one hour or less. Most vegetables can be eaten raw for a “fast food” treat.

Challenge: Out-of town travel – Some families travel a lot during the summer growing season and cannot pick up, or keep up with, their shares.

Solution: If farm members are going on vacation, offer the box to a potential member as a “free trial.”



BEST PRACTICE:

Keeping it Fresh - Maintaining and Growing Your WCSA

In an effort to keep employees engaged and connected to the WCSA benefit, at Aprilaire, we focus on keeping it fun, easy and visible. This means we have CSA kick-off events at the beginning of each year to get people interested, excited and signed-up early. The events are fun, full of energy, and remind employees what a great experience it is to be a CSA member. We also focus on making the sign-up process easy for employees. We provide sign-up packets and allow employees to pay for their share via payroll deduction. Above all we keep it visible. We conduct many presentations at department meetings, we post promotional materials, and we send email blasts and personal messages to past members. It is a strategic effort that makes a difference in maintaining the momentum of our WCSA benefit.

Emily Moenck

Wellness Manager, Aprilaire/Research
Products, Madison, Wisconsin



BEST PRACTICE:

Additional Ideas to help employees learn to use their shares

- Invite a Master Food Preserver to discuss food preservation techniques. Contact your local Extension office.
- Offer a CSA cooking demo.
- Hire a chef and offer a CSA kick-off /educational demo at the start of the growing season to teach your employees how to strategize using their shares.
- Offer menu planning sessions for spring, summer and fall boxes.
- Hold a cooking contest.
- Facilitate a potluck meal at work, with employees making dishes from their share; invite non-CSA members to the meal.
- Initiate “Share Bites” - Cook a dish once a month with the veggies available in the CSA box and offer “bites” to ALL employees - a good TGIF activity.
- Volunteer at the farm together; if your company offers paid time off to volunteer, consider allowing employees to “count” time volunteered at the farm.
- Hold an employee potluck on the farm or a Saturday morning farm tour and breakfast picnic; invite family members.
- Host a program. FairShare offers “How to Make the Most of Your Share” presentations.

Challenge: Veggie averse – Members discover they don’t like vegetables as much as they thought, or they prefer a very narrow range of vegetables.

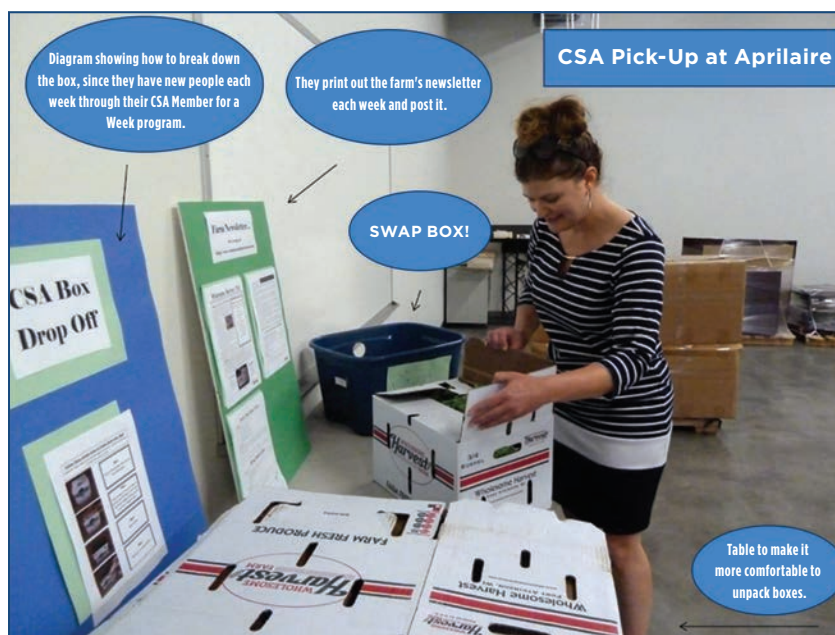
Solution: Find an experienced farm member who can provide mentoring. People often make dietary changes slowly, but for some, social support really helps.

Challenge: Lack of choice/control – Going with the flow of what’s in the box each may be difficult for those who like to carefully plan their meals.

Solution: Reinforce the choices that they do have, such as the swap box or splitting shares. Emphasize that this is a chance to be creative.



TOOL: ANATOMY OF A WCSA PICK-UP SITE



MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR CSA SHARE

by Erika Jones, FairShare Executive Director and Longtime CSA Member and Foodie

The following is an outline for a presentation given by FairShare staff, and gives an example of a presentation that could support farm membership.

Goal

- Help you feel confident and get excited about using the produce in your CSA share!
- Key: Understanding seasonality – gives us something to look forward to!

You've Got Your Box...Now What?!

- Unpacking your box: This is an important step & you can make it fun!
- Sorting is a critical step to get your veggies to your plate and not in the compost!

Making Meals

- What do you like to eat?
- Tricks & Tools for some "Go-To" dishes
 - Salad spinner
 - Roasting
 - Pesto, presto
 - Wok – Stir Fry
 - Soups
 - Raw/Snacks/ Salads/Crunch
 - Thinking outside the box

Preserving the Harvest

- Freezing
- Drying
- Canning
- Fermenting

Year-Round CSA Eating

- Saves you money!
- Tastes yummy
- Use pickles/salsa as ingredients
- Pantry staples

Resources

- Books
- Online
- Magazines
- Farms



KUDOS TO YOU, THE ORGANIZER

Congratulations! You've made it to the end of this toolkit, and possibly through the end of your first season of CSA. You've given your employees the opportunity to feed themselves and their family healthy, fresh, local food. You've made it more convenient for them to make positive food choices. And you've kept thousands of dollars in your local community and helped to support a small family farm. **Your hard work and determination have made a difference.** Thank you! You are an important partner in the good food movement.



TOOL: FAIRSHARE CSA COALITION FOOD BOOKS

Evaluation

FairShare recommends that you conduct both a mid-season and end-of-season evaluation to gather feedback from your employees, and then share the survey results with your farmer.

Collecting feedback half-way through the season provides a great way for both you and the farmer to evaluate how things are going. There will still be plenty of time to smooth out any bumps, so you can increase the possibility your employees will be satisfied and return the following year. A mid-season survey is optional but recommended.

An end-of-season survey is crucial to your program's success. Please survey your employees, even if you think you know the "buzz" about your program, and even if your farm also sends out an end-of-season survey to members. Your employees will be more forthcoming on your survey, and you need this end-of-year feedback to adequately plan for the following season.

In most cases, the survey results will be positive. But if they are not, you will want to share the feedback in as soon as possible with your farmer. If your farmer does not satisfactorily address the issues raised, or if you determine your farm is not a good fit for the culture at your workplace, then you will need to find a new farm to partner with for the following year. If you stay with the same farm in your second year without making modifications, your program will suffer and could collapse due to low sign-ups.

Please see the *Toolshed* for these evaluation forms: **Mid-season, End of Season, WCSA Coordinator, and Non-returning Member.**

"We had such a positive experience. Our participants were concerned at first because the shares were small, but after explaining that it was due to the beginning of the season, they were comfortable and became very satisfied with the share size."

Kristin Larson
Sani-Matic, Madison, Wisconsin



The WCSA Toolshed

Open the door of the Toolshed and you'll find additional resources for CSA Networks, Farmers, and WCSA Coordinators.

PROMOTIONAL INFORMATION	63
Tips on How to Find Local CSA Farms	63
The Benefits of Bringing CSA to Employees	63
Making the Most of Your CSA Share	65
Sample CSA Social Media Posts	66
Aprilaire WCSA video link	66
Quickstart Your WCSA	67
FLYERS AND INFOGRAPHICS	68
TOOL: WCSA ANNOUNCEMENT FLYER	68
TOOL: WORKPLACE CSA LUNCH 'N LEARN FLYER	69
TOOL: VEGGIE DEMO FLYER	70
TOOL: CSA FOOD PRESERVATION DEMO FLYER	71
TOOL: CSA INFOGRAPHICS	72
TOOL: ANATOMY OF A WCSA PICK-UP SITE	72
TOOL: FAIRSHARE CSA COALITION FOOD BOOKS	73
ARTICLES	74
Article: Promoting Prevention Through the Affordable Care Act: Workplace Wellness	74
Article: Building Workplace Wellness and Employee Engagement with CSAs	74
EDUCATION AND VEGGIE EMPOWERMENT	75
TOOL: CSA MENU PLANNING RESOURCES	75
TOOL: LOCAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURE BOOK CLUB SUGGESTIONS	76
SURVEYS	77
Employee Survey to Gauge Interest in WCSA	77
Meet and Greet Survey Template	78
TOOL: WCSA ORGANIZER SURVEY	79
TOOL: MID-SEASON SURVEY	80

TOOL: END OF SEASON SURVEY	81
TOOL: NON-RETURNING MEMBER SURVEY	82
OTHER RESOURCES	83
Sample Farmer Interview for WCSA Organizers	83
Sample Promissory Notes for Payroll Deduction	84
Sample Email for Approaching Businesses	85

KEY



Tool



Case Study



Quote



Best Practices



Caution



Tip



Toolshed

PROMOTIONAL INFORMATION

Tips on How to Find Local CSA Farms

Cast a wide net to start. Find out which CSA farms serve your area either by online research or word of mouth. Then, thoroughly review the farms' websites, Facebook, and Instagram accounts. When you decide on several farms that would be a good fit, contact the farmer to see if they are interested in working with your company on WCSA. The next step is to thoroughly interview the farmer.

Nationally, there are a couple of websites that may provide information

- Visit the USDA Local Food Directory - [Community Supported Agriculture Directory](#)
- Check [Local Harvest](#), a national website, for CSA farms in your area.
- Google "CSA farm near [YOUR CITY'S NAME]"
- For the Upper Midwest, here are some resources.
- In Wisconsin, FairShare CSA Coalition endorses 50+ CSA farms annually
- You can also check [The Farm Fresh Atlases](#) for CSA farms.
- In the Twin Cities/Minnesota area, visit [The Land Stewardship Project](#).
- In Chicago, check out the [Chicagoland Band of Farmers](#).
- Here are some other regional directories:
- [Greater Cleveland and Northeast Ohio CSA Directory](#) (2017)
- [Massachusetts CSA farms](#)
- [Lexington, Kentucky CSA farms](#)
- [Seattle area CSA directory](#)
- [New York City area CSAs](#)
- Hudson Valley CSA Network
- Duluth CSA Guild
- Great Lakes CSA Coalition (Michigan)
- Community Alliance for Family Farms (CAFF)
- NOFA, MOFGA, PASA
- Just Food (New York)

THE BENEFITS OF BRINGING CSA TO EMPLOYEES

Employers love Workplace CSAs for these reasons:

Healthier employees. Consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables and physical activity may protect against obesity and other related health outcomes. Research has shown improved health and diet quality of CSA shareholders. In one study, higher frequency of shopping at CSAs predicted lower body mass index, waist circumference, and better diet quality¹. Other studies have cited an increase in overall fruit and/or vegetable consumption as a result of participating in a CSA.²

A happier, more productive staff. In companies with a strong culture of health, employees are three times as likely as others to report taking action to improve their health. These same employees rate all aspects of their performance higher than employees whose employers lack a strong culture of health. Employees rate an employer's commitment to their well-being as critical to overall job satisfaction as opportunity for advancement, and more important than competitiveness of pay and benefits. Additionally, companies with a strong culture of health have better financial outcomes and lower employee turnover.³

Healthcare savings. The recent trend of declining workforce health contributes to an increase in health-related expenses, both in direct medical payments and indirect costs resulting from absenteeism and less efficient work output. Evidence suggests that worksite wellness programs save companies money in health-care expenditures and produce a positive return on investment. One study calculated an average return of \$3.27 in medical costs for every dollar spent on worksite wellness programs.⁴

¹ Minaker LM, Raine KD, Fisher P, et al. Food purchasing from farmers' markets and Community-Supported Agriculture is associated with reduced weight and better diets in a population-based sample. *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*. 2014;9(4):485-497.

² Wilkins, Farrell, and Rangarajan 2015; MacMillan Uribe, Winham, and Wharton 2012; J. N. Cohen, Gearhart, and Garland 2012; Russell and Zepeda 2008; Wharton et al. 2015

³ Anderko L, Roffenbender JS, Goetzel RZ, Millard F, Wildenhaus K, et al. Promoting Prevention Through the Affordable Care Act: Workplace Wellness. *Prev Chronic Dis* 2012;9:120092

⁴ Anderko L, Roffenbender JS, Goetzel RZ, Millard F, Wildenhaus K, et al. Promoting Prevention Through the Affordable Care Act: Workplace Wellness. *Prev Chronic Dis* 2012;9:120092

Making healthy eating the easy choice. CSA ensures a variety of fresh, seasonal, local produce is always on hand in the fridge or pantry. Farmers provide information to members about the produce, storage tips and recipes with every share.

Members learn about the farm, eating seasonally, and new vegetables, and increase their awareness of the local food system.

Employees love Workplace CSA for these reasons.

Enjoying the bounty of the season. Fresh food tastes really, REALLY good. A CSA will provide you with fruits and vegetables that were picked 12-48 hours before you receive them. Though produce from California can reach stores in as little as 56 to 82 hours⁵, it may stay on the shelves for a week or more before purchase. Produce shipped from other parts of the world may be even older.

Cultivating culinary skills. Local meals unlock the creative cook inside us (or at least encourage us to learn some basic cooking skills!)

Personal cost-savings. Preparing more meals at home with your regular delivery of local produce can save you money by cutting out restaurant trips and pricey pre-prepared foods.

Heightened awareness of our food system. Eating local makes us break our normal mealtime routines and look more closely at the food around us.

Investing in the local economy. Purchasing local food is an investment in your region's working landscape and keeps money in the local economy, by supporting family farms.

Supporting environmentally sustainable practices. Local and organic food production and sales can reduce energy demands, from reducing the amount of equipment used in the fields, to transportation, to the amount of packaging.

Preserving biological diversity. Local farmers often carry on their region's food traditions, including raising heirloom varieties of products that are not commonly found in the commercial marketplace.



*Adapted from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Vermont State Employees' CSA Program, "FAVORx: Fruit & Vegetable Or Recreation Prescription Feasibility Study" by Dr. Maggie Grabow (2016), and "Promoting Prevention Through the Affordable Care Act: Workplace Wellness" by Laura Anderko, et al. (2012) for Preventing Chronic Disease

⁵ <https://www.quora.com/Organic-Food-How-long-does-it-take-to-ship-produce-once-picked-from-California-to-New-York>

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR CSA SHARE

by Erika Jones, FairShare Executive Director and Longtime CSA Member and Foodie

The following is an outline for a presentation given by FairShare staff, and gives an example of a presentation that could support farm membership.

Goal

- Help you feel confident and get excited about using the produce in your CSA share!
- **Key:** Understanding seasonality – gives us something to look forward to!

You've Got Your Box...Now What?!

- **Unpacking your box:** This is an important step & you can make it fun!
- Sorting is a critical step to get your veggies to your plate and not in the compost!

Making Meals

- What do you like to eat?
- Tricks & Tools for some “Go-To” dishes

Salad spinner

Roasting

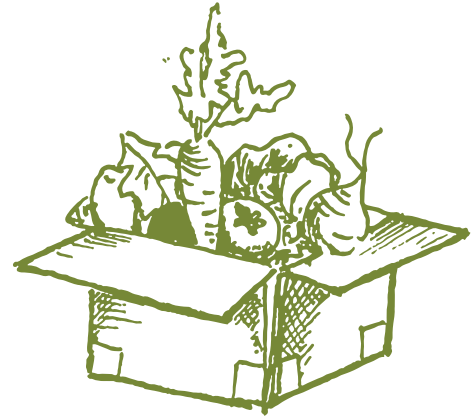
Pesto, presto

Wok – Stir Fry

Soups

Raw/Snacks/Salads/Crunch

Thinking outside the box



Preserving the Harvest

- Freezing
- Drying
- Canning
- Fermenting

Year-Round CSA Eating

- Saves you money!
- Tastes yummy
- Use pickles/salsa as ingredients
- Pantry staples

Resources

- Books
- Online
- Magazines
- Farms

SAMPLE WCSA SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Here are a few sample WCSA social media posts:

Post with an image from one of your worksites or use those supplied by FairShare. Photos of shares, or photos of employees unpacking shares are recommended.

[YOUR GROUP'S NAME] is starting a Workplace CSA program. We help businesses connect with local farms that deliver healthy, fresh produce to employees. How easy to take your veggies home with you!?! Learn more at XXX.

GROWING A BETTER WORKPLACE CULTURE: Bring CSA to your workplace and take home a box of fresh produce each week! Learn about our Workplace CSA program at XXX.

Explore how you can receive produce at your work via our new Workplace CSA program that connects farms with businesses. Fresh, healthy food = a new employee benefit! Contact XXX.

Connect your employees to the building blocks of good nutrition! Workplace CSA brings fresh, healthy produce to area workplaces directly from nearby farms. Learn more at [WEBSITE] contact XXX.

Does your company have an employee wellness program? Do something concrete to support employee health. Bring Workplace CSA to your business at low or no cost to your company. It's easy to start a Workplace CSA program! Contact XXX.

“When our employees ask me how they can lose weight, I tell them to eat all the vegetables in their CSA box. I tell them it's nature's nutrisystem,” said Emily Moenck, wellness manager at Research Products. Help your employees get healthier! Learn how to bring deliveries of fresh, healthy produce to your company. Contact XXX.

Aprilaire Video



Quickstart your WCSA

Workplace Community Supported Agriculture

(WCSA) is a program in which employees join a CSA farm and receive boxes of produce at their workplace. It's an idea whose time has come, with many businesses sponsoring a site so that their employees can eat healthy and stay productive.

If you answer “yes” to the following questions, WCSA could be a good fit for your workplace.

- Our workplace culture is oriented towards health and fitness. Employees would view WCSA as an employee benefit.
- We have a location, such a break room, in which employees could pick up their shares.
- People here seem interested in the idea of CSA. Some employees have tried it already.
- Our CEO would likely be in favor of WCSA.

10 EASY STEPS TO SET UP A WCSA

If you think your workplace is ready for a WCSA, let's get started. This is a step by step guide that gives you the basics. Before you start organizing, you'll likely want a little more detail. Links in this document make it possible to go directly to information in the WCSA Toolkits, available for download at the [FairShare CSA Coalition website](#).

1. **Survey your employees.** To make sure that there is enough interest to really start a WCSA, it's essential to do a [survey](#). Word of mouth and longer discussions are also vital. Most CSA farms require a minimum of 10 shares; a few will deliver for five shares.
2. **Find a WCSA Coordinator.** This can be anyone, but a HR professional or wellness coordinator is the ideal person to step up to the plate. The coordinator should be someone who's organized and a great communicator.
3. **Communicate with your CEO.** At the very least, you'll need his or her blessing. It might also be possible to add some incentives for people who want to sign up.
4. **Select a farm.** Finding a farm is easy. There are a number of useful [websites](#), but one easy way to get started is by doing an internet search on “your city” and “CSA farm.” Select a farm based on employee preferences, which you'll discover when you do your survey. Contact the farmer to see if he/she would consider delivering to your business.
5. **Market the farm to employees.** Use a combination of [internal communications strategies](#) such as emails, lunch and learn sessions, presentations from farmers, etc. Set a membership goal and strive to reach it a month or more before deliveries begin in the spring.
6. **Find a location for your pick-up site.** You'll need a place to set up the boxes of produce until employees come to pick them up. Examples include an employee breakroom or storage area. You may need to communicate with your facilities coordinator about any potential roadblocks.
7. **Meet with your farmer to review logistics.** They will want to see the proposed [pick-up site](#) and make sure that it's accessible, welcoming to members, and informal.
8. **Receive your deliveries.** This is the best part of the experience! Enjoy your fresh produce, which comes like a gift, week by week during the season. You may want to add a volunteer to be present for the first week or two of delivery to answer questions, and clean up the site weekly.
9. **Support membership.** During the season, you'll want to support the farm members through educational efforts such as potlucks, presentations, farm trips, etc. This support is crucial to retaining farm members, especially new ones.
10. **Survey membership & wrap up the season.** As the season progresses, you'll want to [survey](#) membership twice—once midway through the season, and once at the end. Share these results with your farmer. After the delivery season is over, talk with your farmer and discuss any changes you feel need to be made. Set a new (hopefully increased) membership goal for year two.

FLYERS AND INFOGRAPHICS



TOOL: WCSA ANNOUNCEMENT FLYER



XXXXX is offering a Workplace CSA Program in 2016!

Join XXX farm and take home a box of fresh, organic produce each week (or every other week) from June to October!

Share cost: XXX (XX weeks)

Share options: XXX

Sign-up deadline: XXX

Farm website: XXX

Contact: XXX

Download the CSA sign-up form at the farm's website, or pick up a form in room XXXX.
Shares will be delivered on XXX between XX and XXX in Building XX room XXX,
beginning June XXX.

Incentives: Write here about payroll deduction, free cookbooks, whatever you're doing to promote workplace CSA.



TOOL: FLYER—WORKPLACE CSA LUNCH ‘N’ LEARN



WORKPLACE CSA LUNCH ‘N’ LEARN

INTERESTED IN...

Affordable, freshly picked, local, organic produce?

Fresh vegetables delivered to work?

Good nutrition and a

Put workplace CSA to work for you! Learn about the many benefits of community supported agriculture (CSA) and FIRM’S NAME intention to become a drop-site for a CSA farm. Find out how you can “join” the farm and take home a box of fresh produce each week (or every other week).

TIME: Put time in here.

DATE: Put date in here.

LOCATION: Put location in here.

RSVP: Put RSVP in here.





TOOL: CSA VEGGIE DEMO FLYER

Ok, I've got this box of veggies, now what?

Join us for a veggie-centric **CSA** (Community Supported Agriculture) **Demo!** You will learn fresh, easy ways to use all of the veggies in your CSA box from an expert while sampling delicious and nutritious snacks prepared from a typical CSA box.

So if you are a CSA members (or just CSA curious) and have a box veggies waiting to be devoured, please join us in the **LOCATION** on **DATE** for some delicious fun!

You got veggies?

eat your greens

and reds!

We've got recipes!



TOOL: CSA FOOD PRESERVATION DEMO FLYER





TOOL: CSA INFOGRAPHICS

FARM CULTURE: ENGAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION, EVENTS

Farms communicate and engage their members in different ways. This is a good topic to discuss with your potential farmer.

<p>HOW INVOLVED DO YOU WANT TO BE? If you don't plan to visit your farm, distance is irrelevant. If you do, consider the following.</p> <p>Do you want a farm that hosts lots of events? Check your farm's website or talk to your farmer.</p>	<p>HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE FARM?</p> <p>Some farms use social media more than others. Check out your farm's Facebook and Twitter presence.</p>
<p>Do you want a farm that encourages volunteering? Ask your farmer how you can help.</p>	<p>Most farms archive newsletters on their websites. Read old newsletters to see the kinds of info your farmer shares with their members.</p>
<p>Do you want to pick up your share at your farm? Most farms allow for on-farm pick-up.</p>	
<p>Do you love to cook? Do you want lots of recipes? Check farm websites for archived recipes, member newsletters, etc. Some farms offer subscriptions to Local Thyme, a CSA menu planning service.</p>	

FINDING YOUR FARM

SHARE TYPES AND SIZES

Find CSA sign-up forms and detailed share descriptions on farm websites.

<p>Do you want to pick up your veggies every week or every other week? Do you want a farm that offers early spring and late fall shares? See share types in the Farm Chart.</p>	<p>Do you want typical veggies or heirloom varieties? Ask your farmer for details about their shares. Often you can find the previous season's pack list and newsletters on farm websites.</p>
<p>What type of add-ons do you want (eggs, honey, flowers, meat), if any? Check the Farm Chart and look for the farm's CSA sign-up info on their website for add-on details.</p>	<p>Spring, Fall, Storage, Holiday Shares...? The typical season is June-October, about 20 weeks, but farms create all kinds of shares. Find share details on farm websites.</p>
<p>Market Shares usually allow you to choose some of your veggies. Search the Farm Chart for Market Shares.</p>	

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

CSA supports the LOCAL community and keeps your dollars close. All FairShare veggie farms are certified organic (or in transition) and use sustainable growing techniques.

<p>Do you care if your farm uses hand-scale or mechanized production techniques? Talk to your farmer for details.</p>	<p>Do you want a farm that uses solar energy? Ask how your farm is sustainable.</p>
<p>Do you want to support a recently established farm? Check the Farm Guide for acreage, year established, etc.</p>	<p>Do you want to support a farm that donates their seconds to local food pantries? Ask your farmer how they give back to the community.</p>
<p>Do you want to support a woman- or minority-owned farm? Check the farm's website for details about farm ownership and see the Farm Guide.</p>	<p>Do you want a farm that uses permaculture techniques? Talk to your farmer for details about their growing philosophy. Oftentimes, you'll find this info on the farm website.</p>

The average American farmer is a 58-year-old male. The average age of a FairShare farmer is 44, and more than half of FairShare farmers are women. Nationally, about 14 percent of farmers are women.

PERMACULTURE
the development of agricultural ecosystems intended to be sustainable and self-sufficient.



TOOL: ANATOMY OF A WCSA PICK-UP SITE

CSA Pick-Up at Aprilaire

Diagram showing how to break down the box, since they have new people each week through their CSA Member for a Week program.

They print out the farm's newsletter each week and post it.

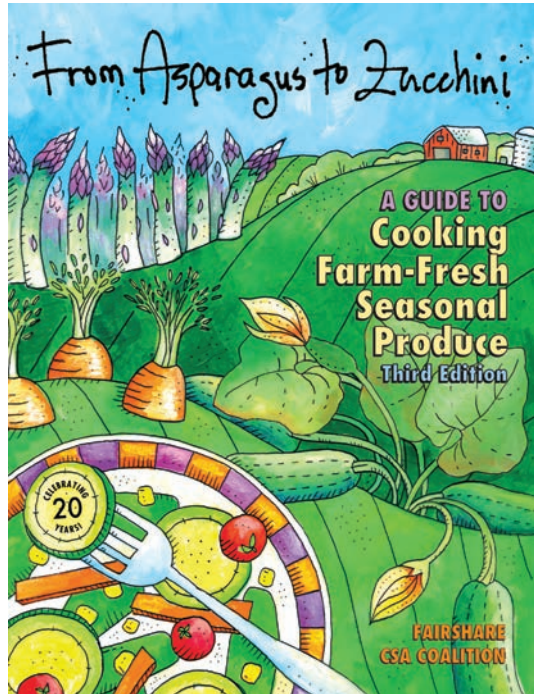
SWAP BOX!

Table to make it more comfortable to unpack boxes.

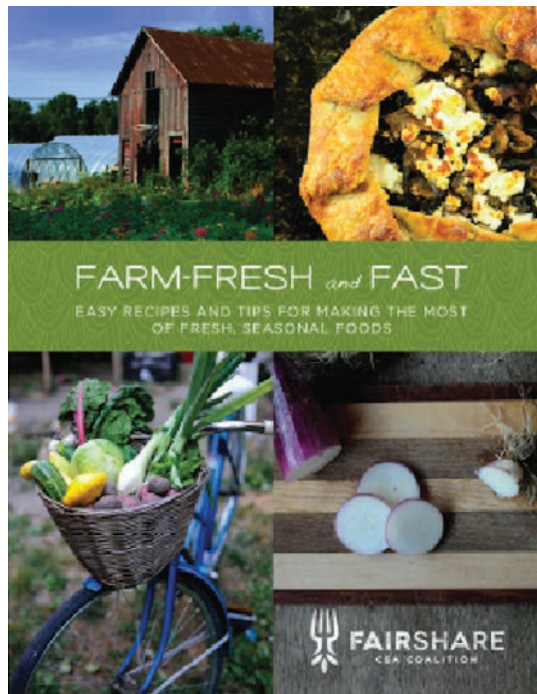
CSA Box Drop Off



TOOL: FAIRSHARE CSA COALITION
FOOD BOOKS



A TO Z



FARM-FRESH AND FAST

HELP YOUR
CUSTOMERS MAKE
THE MOST OF
SEASONAL PRODUCE!



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BULK DISCOUNT PRICING!

For orders of 10 or more books.

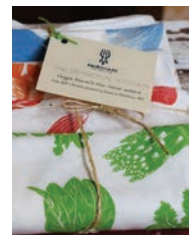
“Being part of a CSA has opened up my world of vegetables, but your book was the key to being able to prepare them. I love the format and unique recipes—definitely not run of the mill. Thank you.”

-Linda Mackanesi, Gansevoort, NY

FairShare Kitchen Towels
A great cookbook companion!

—Bulk pricing on orders of 10 or more—

- **Seasonal Kitchen Towel Sets** - \$20 bulk (suggested retail: \$30)
- **Tableware Towels** - \$5 bulk (suggested retail: \$10)
- **Farm for Every Family** - \$4.50 bulk (suggested retail: \$8)



FairShare CSA Coalition
303 S. Paterson St. Suite 1B
Madison, Wisconsin 53703
(608) 226-0300

ARTICLES

Literature on the Health and Benefits of Workplace Wellness Programs and WCSA

Here are some articles to provide background reading to potential WCSA sites and customers. You can provide these in a business packet or as a handout at a lunch n' learn event.

[Promoting Prevention Through the Affordable Care Act: Workplace Wellness](#)

Laura Anderko, RN, PhD; Jason S. Roffenbender, MS; Ron Z. Goetzl, PhD; Francois Millard; Kevin Wildenhaus, PhD; Charles DeSantis; William Novelli, MA

Abstract

Public health in the United States can be improved by building workplace “cultures of health” that support healthy lifestyles. The Affordable Care Act (ACA), which includes the Prevention and Public Health Fund, will support a new focus on prevention and wellness, offering opportunities to strengthen the public’s health through workplace wellness initiatives. This article describes the opportunity the ACA provides to improve worker wellness.

[Building Workplace Wellness and Employee Engagement with CSAs](#)

Posted on August 7, 2013 by Liz King.

Abridged, full article at: <https://blog.gthankyou.com/2013/08/07/building-workplace-wellness-and-employee-engagement-with-csas-by-gthankyou/>

Truly effective employee engagement requires innovative thinking, active listening, and an instinctual understanding of what your employees want and need. Take nutrition, for instance. Everyone wants to eat healthy, but those working nine to five and beyond often don’t have the time or energy to prepare healthy meals. Management at Aprilaire, a Madison-based company, recognized this challenge and offered their employees shares in Burr Oak Gardens, a Community-Supported Agriculture project based in Rio.

Aprilaire has joined a long list of companies that now offer CSAs to their workers. Human resource managers at these firms recognize that unhealthy employees are a financial drain on the company. employing unhealthy workers costs American

firms \$576 Billion last year. This cost includes wage replacement (sick time), long-term disability, short-term disability, health insurance, pharmacy, and lost productivity. In this case, fifty-two employees are signed up. Produce delivery day is a festive occasion at Aprilaire including HR sponsored cooking lessons on how to cook your new produce.

Employee Engagement Benefits of CSAs

According to Doug Conant, CEO of Campbell’s Soup, “To win in the marketplace, you must first win in the workplace.” Conant also recognized the value of reducing Campbell’s carbon footprint by investing in solar energy, environmentally friendly farming, and employee CSA programs. Recognized as one of the “Best Employers for Healthy Lifestyles” by the National Business Group, Campbell’s employee engagement rate is estimated at 17:1 (engaged to unengaged), significantly higher than Gallup’s “world-class” standard of 12:1. For their stockholders, that has translated into a 64% return in the past decade. Obviously, healthy employees are productive employees.

Health Benefits of Community Supported Agriculture

According to nutritionist Dr. Lisa Young, in an article published in the Huffington Post, “Veggies and fruits (both fresh and frozen) are loaded with vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants, which have been shown to protect against chronic diseases such as heart disease and cancer

Community Supported Agriculture brings fresh vegetables and fruits into the workplace in a way that’s fun and nutritious for all of your employees. Think about it as an employee engagement exercise. Implement it because you care about the health of the men and women you work with.

EDUCATION AND VEGGIE EMPOWERMENT



TOOL: CSA MENU PLANNING RESOURCES

Blogs

[Meal Planning and CSA Produce - Life as Mom blog:](#)

[Free Printable CSA Menu Planner - Organized by Christina McLaughlin](#)

[CSA Meal Planning - The Arugula Files](#)

[A Vegan Summer CSA Menu Plan - FIMBY](#)

[CSA Survival Tip #2: Menu-Planning with Your CSA Share - Accidental](#)

Pumpkin

[This Week for Dinner blog](#)

[CSA Meal Planning: End of Summer - Plate and Pour](#)

Articles

[Menu Planning with Your CSA or Organic Veggie Delivery - Green Baby Guide](#)

[Cooking With a Friend: Menu Planning with a CSA Box - Serious Eats](#)

[CSA Meal Planning - Pinterest](#)

Videos

[First CSA, Menu Plan and Grocery List](#)

[First CSA Grocery Trip](#)

[CSA Veggies & Our Meal Plan](#)

[Localicious Meal Planning](#)



TOOL: LOCAL FOOD & AGRICULTURE BOOK CLUB SUGGESTIONS

[In Defense of Food, Food Rules, and Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals - all three by Michael Pollan](#)

[Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life, by Barbara Kingsolver \(contains recipes\)](#)

[Unprocessed: My City-Dwelling Year of Reclaiming Real Food, by Megan Kimble](#)

[Food Matters, a Guide to Conscious Eating, by Mark Bittman \(contains recipes\)](#)

[The 100 Mile Diet: A Year of Local Eating, by Alisa Smith and James MacKinnon](#)

[The Dirty Life: A Memoir of Farming, Food, and Love, by Kristin Kimball](#)

[Gaining Ground: A Story of Farmers' Markets, Local Food, and Saving the Family Farm, by Forrest Pritchard and Joel Salatin](#)



SURVEYS



TOOL: EMPLOYEE SURVEY TO GAUGE INTEREST IN WCSA

In addition to securing administrative approval before working on a WCSA program, it’s important to assess whether your employees are interested in participating. The tool below is designed to give you an idea of who wants to participate, what size and types of shares they might want, and why they want to participate.

This survey is appropriate for the Madison, Wisconsin area. Please adapt it to reflect the CSA model in your region. FairShare recommends inputting the survey into an electronic survey tool to make it easier to sort the results.

Introductory Information: A CSA is a partnership between a farm and a community of supporters (e.g., employees). CSA members pay up front at the start of the season for a “share” of the crops that are grown. In return, the farm provides each member with a healthy supply of fresh, locally grown food each week or every other week. Workplace CSA (WCSA) will provide an opportunity to receive a box of local produce (and sometimes other food products) delivered right to your place of employment.

Shares typically cost about \$350 to \$375 for a half share; \$575 to \$625 for a large share. The season typically runs 20 weeks, so that’s about \$17.50/week for a small share or \$28.75/week for a large share.

Health Insurance providers may offer incentives such as rebates, wellness points, or gift cards if you purchase a CSA share. Employers also may offer other incentives for signing up, such as payroll deduction or special gifts. Inquire with your insurance provider or company. Learn more about HMO rebates at [FairShare CSA Coalition](#).

1. Do you belong to a CSA farm?
 - Yes
 - No (If no, please skip to question 6)

If yes, what is the name of your farm?

2. How many years have you been a member of your farm?
 - 1-2
 - 3-5
 - 6-10
 - 11 or more
3. If our company starts a workplace CSA program, would you switch to the farm that delivers here, or stay with “your” farm?
 - Switch
 - Stay with my current farm
 - I don’t know
4. If this was your first season as a CSA member, how did you like it?
 - I didn’t like it
 - So so
 - It was good
 - It was awesome!

Comments:

5. Do you regularly (weekly) shop at a farmers market for your produce?
 - Yes
 - No
6. How many people live in your household, counting yourself?

Adults:

Children:

7. Do you like to cook?
 - Yes
 - Yes, but I’m too busy to cook much
 - No, I don’t like to cook
 - I would like to learn to be a better cook, and I would like to cook more
 - Someone else in my household does the cooking

WORKPLACE CSA TOOLKIT

- 8. If you were to sign up, do you think you'd order a half share or a full share?
 - Half (enough for 1-2 people)
 - Full (enough for 2 serious veggie eaters or a family of 4)
- 9. Do you consider yourself an adventurous eater?
 - Yes
 - No
- 10. Do you enjoy a range of different vegetable varieties or do you prefer common veggies such as lettuce, tomatoes and cucumbers?
 - I prefer the basics
 - Mostly the basics, but I am open to trying new veggies
 - I'm a foodie and I eat everything!
- 11. Farms offer different types of shares and add-on products. Please circle everything you MIGHT be interested in purchasing via CSA. Your responses will help guide the farm selection process:
 - Eggs
 - Meat
 - Cheese
 - Flowers
 - Honey
 - Bread
 - Coffee

OTHER:

- 12. Please check all the reasons you are interested in joining a CSA farm:
 - I want my food dollars to support a small family farm
 - I want to eat very fresh food
 - I want to eat food that is locally grown
 - I want to eat organic produce raised without pesticides
 - I want to improve my overall health
 - I want to support a vibrant local food system

- I want to visit the farm with my family so that my kids (or grandchildren!) understand where food comes from
- I want the convenience of having veggies delivered to my workplace, to save driving and shopping time
- I want the camaraderie of getting food at work and sharing recipes with my colleagues
- I want to buy organic produce for less than what I would pay in retail grocery stores
- I want to take advantage of the health insurance rebate and get "free money" toward food

OTHER:

- 13. Are you interested in joining a CSA farm and participating in our Workplace CSA Program? (Expressing an interest is not a commitment; we are simply trying to gauge potential participation.)
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe

COMMENTS:

Thank you for filling out this survey! Workplace CSA Organizer Survey



TOOL: MEET AND GREET SURVEY TEMPLATE

WCSA Meet & Greet Survey Template, EVENT DATE

1. **Overall:** On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with today's Meet & Greet? Please circle a numeral below.

1 2 3 4 5

2. **Presentation:** How useful to you was the information in XXXXXX's presentation? 1 is lowest; 5 is highest.

1 2 3 4 5

COMMENTS:

3. **Content:** Did you get the information you needed at this event? If not, what would you have preferred to learn/hear about? Please circle:

Yes

No

COMMENTS:

4. **Facility:** Did you like this meeting location?

Please circle:

Yes

No

COMMENTS:

5. **Follow-Up:** What are the chances you will start a workplace CSA program for the XXXX season? 1 is unlikely, 5 is very likely. Please circle:

1 2 3 4 5

COMMENTS:

6. **Would you like assistance developing your company's workplace CSA program?** If yes, please list your name and contact information below.

7. **Is there anything else you'd like to add?**

WORKPLACE CSA ORGANIZER SURVEY

Typically, this survey is used by CSA network coordinators, like FairShare, to understand how a WCSA program is going overall and provide ongoing support for WCSA organizers.

- 1. What is the name of your workplace?

- 2. What are the total number of employees at your workplace?

- 3. How many were offered the opportunity to participate in CSA in this year?

- 4. Was your program officially connected with your workplace's wellness initiatives?

circle one

Yes No. Other

- 5. Did you facilitate match-making among people who split shares?
- 6. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being terrible and 5 being excellent, how satisfied were your employees with our farm in 2016?

circle one

1 2 3 4 5

- 7. Was your answer to the previous question based on your impressions or did you conduct an end-of-season survey?

circle one

My impressions. . . . Survey results Both

- 8. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being terrible and 5 being excellent, how was communicating and working with our farm, from your perspective?

circle one

1 2 3 4 5

- 9. Is there anything you'd like to share about your experience with our farm?
- 10. Did you offer any incentives for signing up for CSA? (If yes, please describe. If no, please leave blank.)
- 11. Do you think your workplace will want to partner with our farm again next year? *Please check all that apply.*
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
 - We won't know until spring
 - We plan to work with a different farm next year
 - We don't plan to offer CSA next year
- 12. How did you feel personally about coordinating CSA for your workplace? *Please select one answer.*
 - It went great! Can't wait for next season!
 - It went fine, and did not require too much time
 - It was a lot of work, but worth it
 - It was a lot of work and required too much of my time
 - I don't plan to do this again

Thank you for taking this survey!



TOOL: MID-SEASON SURVEY

1. How satisfied are you with your shares so far, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most satisfied?

circle one

1 2 3 4 5

2. Have you had any problems with your vegetables?

- No - *please skip to question 4*
- Yes - *please describe below*

3. If you've been dissatisfied, did you communicate with your farmer, and was the issue resolved?

4. Do you feel like your share is the right size for your household?

- Yes
- No
- Other

5. How much of your share would you estimate you are using each week?

- 100%
- 75-90%
- 50-75%
- 25-50%
- Less than 25%

6. What do you enjoy most about CSA so far?

7. What do you like least?

8. Have you noticed any improvement in your health or energy level from eating more produce?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

9. Are you cooking more?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

10. Do you feel like CSA is a good value?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

11. Would you recommend CSA to a friend or colleague?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

12. At this point, do you plan to sign up for CSA next year?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

OPTIONAL QUESTIONS

13. How satisfied are you with our efforts to coordinate CSA at our company, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most satisfied?.

circle one

1 2 3 4 5

14. What more would you like us to coordinate?

- Nothing
- Cooking class
- Book group
- Lunch N Learn Speaker
- CSA potluck
- Farm visit
- Other:

15. Do you want to build more of a CSA community at work or do you prefer to do your own thing?

- Do things together
- Do my own thing
- Other:



TOOL: END OF SEASON CSA SURVEY

1. Now that it's the end of the season, looking back, how satisfied were you with your shares over the course of the entire season? Please rank your satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most satisfied.

circle one

1 2 3 4 5

2. Do you feel like your share was the right size for your household?

- Yes
- No
- Other

3. How much of your share would you estimate you used each week?

- 100%
- 75-90%
- 50-75%
- 25-50%
- Less than 25%

4. What did you enjoy most about CSA and seasonal eating?

5. What did you like least?

6. Did you notice any improvement in your health or energy level from eating more produce?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

7. Did joining a CSA inspire you to cook more?

- Yes
- No
- Comment:

8. Do you feel like CSA was a good value?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

9. Would you recommend CSA to a friend or colleague?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

10. Do you plan to sign up for CSA next year?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

11. If yes, do you plan to stay with the farm that delivers to our workplace or join a different farm outside of work?

- Stay with the farm that delivers to work
- Join a farm outside of work
- Unsure

OPTIONAL QUESTIONS

12. How satisfied were you with our efforts to coordinate CSA, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most satisfied? Please circle one.

1 2 3 4 5

FINAL QUESTION

We appreciate your comments and feedback. Thank you for participating in our company's CSA program! Is there anything else you'd like to share?



TOOL: NON-RETURNING MEMBER SURVEY

1. Please list the name(s) of the CSA farm you belonged to this year.

2. Why are you no longer a member of that farm?

Please check ALL the reasons that apply.

- We received too many vegetables and food went to waste
- We received too few vegetables and it was not a good value
- We were not satisfied with the quality of the produce
- We were not satisfied with the cleanliness of the produce
- We did not like the types of vegetables we received
- We had trouble with the deliveries or our pick-up location
- We couldn't afford a CSA membership this year
- We prefer to shop elsewhere.
- Our household is smaller this year and we don't need that much produce
- We will be traveling a lot this summer
- We wanted to try a different farm
- Our health insurance provider changed their CSA rebate
- Other

3. Did you join a CSA farm that is not part of our Workplace CSA Program this year?

- Yes
- No

4. If yes, which farm?

5. What made you switch to that farm?

6. If you didn't join a different farm, would you consider joining a CSA farm at our office sometime in the future?

7. Is there anything else you'd like to share?

OTHER: SAMPLES, TEMPLATES



TOOL: SAMPLE FARMER INTERVIEW FOR WCSA SITE ORGANIZERS

The first five questions are crucial to forming a successful WCSA relationship with a farm. Questions 6-13 are purely for information gathering.

1. How long have you been managing your own farm?
2. The farmer should have at least three years of experience managing his or her own CSA. Five years (or more!) would be better.
3. Generally, how long does it take you to respond to email and phone calls?
4. Accessibility and good communications are key to working successfully with your farmer. The farmer should return all communications within 24-48 hours.
5. What is your farm's member retention rate? How do you address negative feedback from your members?
6. The farm's member retention rate should be at least 60 percent, and they should have a process for responding to negative feedback.
7. Would you please discuss your farm's systems and infrastructure. Have your deliveries been late or have you missed deliveries?
8. The farmer should have systems and infrastructure in place to handle the vagaries of weather, disease, weeds, and staffing issues.
9. In addition to CSA, how else do you market your farm's products? Where do your CSA shares fall in your marketing hierarchy?
10. The farmer should prioritize filling CSA shares above all other marketing outlets.
11. Would you be willing to give a presentation at our workplace and help us market your shares?
12. Would you please send us last year's packing list or direct us to it online?
13. Please translate the size of the box, bag or carton you deliver into bushels or box size.
14. What kinds of vegetable varieties do you grow? Do you grow heirlooms? Which crops are your specialties?
15. What kinds of opportunities do your members have to get involved with your farm? Do you offer any organized farm events?
16. Where can we see your farm newsletters?
17. Do you wash all your vegetables, including your greens?
18. Please supply at least three references, preferably WCSA organizers at existing sites, pick-up site coordinators, or long-term members.

PROMISSORY NOTE AND SECURITY AGREEMENT

(CSA Workplace Program - half share, employee paid bi-weekly)

I, Name, promise to pay xyz company the sum of \$300.00 plus \$3.50 per week for the egg program, to reimburse the Company for a half share size from the xyz company's CSA Workplace Program. The CSA farm is CSA Name, located in city, Wisconsin. This is a non-interest bearing Note, which I agree to repay as follows:

(a) \$37 per pay period for 10 pay periods (5 months), until the balance is paid in full, with the first payment commencing 6-12-15.

(b) I have 2 options if in the event I leave the employ of xyz company for any reason:

Option 1: Any and all amounts remaining unpaid on the loan shall be immediately due and payable in full. I will be responsible to make arrangements to pick up my share portion at another drop-off location.

Option 2: I can "sublease" my share portion to another xyz company employee, and they will have the remaining payroll deductions taken from their pay check and I will no longer received any produce.

Dated this 8th day of May, 2015

Name

PAYROLL DEDUCTION AUTHORIZATION

I, Name, hereby request and authorize xyz company commencing 6-12-15 to deduct from my wages and pay xyz company \$37.00 per pay period by payroll deduction for 10 pay periods until payments totaling \$300.00 plus \$3.50 per week for the egg program, have been made. This is for a half share size from xyz company's CSA Workplace Program. The CSA farm is CSA Name, located in city, Wisconsin.

Dated this 8th day of May, 2015

Name



TOOL: SAMPLE EMAIL FOR APPROACHING BUSINESS

Begin by reaching out by email. Please see the example below. Link to your farm's website and please feel free to link to [FairShare's WCSA webpage](#).

Subject Line: Healthy, fresh produce for your employees!

Dear Ms. Avery,

I hope this email finds you well. I am reaching out to you today as a farmer at Red Barn CSA Farm, located in Cambridge, to discuss the possibility of bringing CSA produce shares to your employees. My longtime farm member, Anne Peterson, (reference contacts) also an employee at your business, recommended that I contact you. We believe a CSA site at Business Acuity would be a great addition to your Workplace Wellness Initiative.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) at workplaces is a growing and popular trend across the nation. With CSA, consumers invest in a farm in the spring and receive weekly boxes of fresh produce throughout the 20-week growing season, a weekly farm newsletter, and invitations to farm events such as potlucks and U-picks. It's a way to learn more about how food is grown as well as providing access to very fresh, healthy produce. Since the boxes are delivered to employees at work, the convenience of this model can't be beat.

Companies that have started WCSA programs find employees appreciate this opportunity. It boosts employee morale when people open their boxes together and share produce; it brings together people from different departments. WCSA is also seen as a concrete way to contribute to employee wellness programs at a low cost to the employer. It does require some staff time to help organize and market the program in the spring, but once deliveries start, the time commitment is minimal.

Please see attached information about Workplace CSA. I'd love to discuss this with you further.

All the best,

Jacob Anderson

Farmer, Red Barn CSA Farm

Files to attach:

- Workplace CSA FAQ
- Farm Brochure



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