L.A. GROWN

A Guide to Selling Good Food in Los Angeles County for Urban Growers
The Los Angeles Food Policy Council (LAFPC) is a collective impact initiative representing over 400 organizations and thousands of individual community members, working to ensure food is healthy, affordable, sustainable and fair for all. Our key objectives are to improve the health and wellbeing of residents, particularly in disadvantaged communities; develop a thriving “Good Food” economy; and strengthen agricultural and environmental stewardship throughout the region.

FARMERS FOR ALL WORKING GROUP

From 2012 to 2018, the Farmers for All Working Group focused on improving the accessibility and affordability of fresh food for residents of all income levels and supporting small, local farmers through farmers’ markets, CSAs, and farm pop-up stands. The group emphasized ways to make farmers markets more accessible to low-income families through CalFresh/EBT acceptance, marketing materials, promotion, and technical assistance.

For more information, email info@goodfoodla.org

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide was spearheaded by Elizabeth Bowman, Manager of the Altadena Farmers’ Market and an active member of the Los Angeles Food Policy Council’s Farmers for All Working Group. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the former co-chair of the Farmers for All Working Group, Jackie Rivera-Krouse, for engaging the Working Group and informing the scope and scale of this final product.

WORKING GROUP PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Altadena Farmers’ Market
Community Health Councils
Hunger Action Los Angeles
Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles
The Heritage Education Group

Additional thanks for members of our Urban Agriculture Working Group who submitted photos.

DISCLAIMER

This guide is intended to provide urban growers with general information and contacts to successfully market their product. The information provided herein is not intended to be legal advice. Please seek legal advice from a professional attorney.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION** ....................................................................................................................... 4

**PART I: THE FOOD GROWING POLICY LANDSCAPE** ............................................................. 6

**PART II: GENERAL HEALTH & SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR SELLING FOOD** ................. 14

**PART III: HOW DO I SELL MY PRODUCT TO** ................................................................. 17
- **FARMERS’ MARKETS** ........................................................................................................... 17
- **COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA)** ......................................................... 22
- **PRODUCE DISTRIBUTORS AND WHOLESALERS** .......................................................... 23
- **NEIGHBORHOOD MARKETS AND SMALL GROCERY RETAIL** .................................... 25
- **LOCAL RESTAURANTS** ...................................................................................................... 25
- **MOBILE FOOD VENDORS** .................................................................................................. 26
- **HOME PREPARED FOODS: COTTAGE FOOD OPERATIONS** ........................................ 28

**TESTIMONIALS** ..................................................................................................................... 30

**GET INVOLVED** .................................................................................................................... 33

**APPENDIX** ............................................................................................................................. 35
INTRODUCTION

Just a few miles outside of Los Angeles County’s boundaries lies one of the largest food producing regions in the nation—yet 40 percent of low-income Angelenos struggle daily to find their next meal. Each year, more family farms in Southern California are purchased by large agricultural corporations that use conventional farming practices, which has ramifications for the environment, workers, and local economies. These challenges are just a few examples of the many ways the Los Angeles food system is not working and in desperate need of a new way of operating.

Fortunately, local, values-driven and small food businesses are leading the way in transforming Los Angeles’ food system into one that is more equitable, fair and sustainable. Urban growers, cottage food operators, street vendors, and other small to mid-sized food producers, are disrupting the status quo and cultivating a new food economy—one that looks beyond maximizing profits to providing multiple benefits for the health, resilience and vitality of local communities.

WHO IS AN “URBAN GROWER”?

An urban grower is someone who grows food in a city or suburban setting, whether it be for personal or commercial consumption. Food can be grown on public or private land such as urban farms, community gardens, front/backyards, parkways, and more.

Despite the immense need for more values-driven food growing practices, many policy and permitting hurdles make it difficult for new good food enterprises to begin or sustain. This guide aims to demystify the complicated regulatory landscape for existing and aspiring urban growers and connect them with the appropriate information to get their products to market and help create a more just food economy in Los Angeles.

1 Values-driven businesses refers to enterprises that intentionally work to make their businesses more equitable and fair—beyond their “bottom line.”
Urban growers need resources to sell their products in Los Angeles County. Whether one wishes to sell at a farmers’ market, small corner store, or directly to customers from one’s home, this guide helps bridge connections between small-scale food producers and retail opportunities across the (often-fractured) local food chain.

Before sharing the ‘how-to,’ this guide first gives some context on the policies that have shaped local retail opportunities for urban growers and other small-scale food entrepreneurs in Los Angeles County. Part I of this guide provides an overview of the food policy landscape, particularly as it relates to increasing healthy food access.

Part II includes general information that is applicable to many retail outlets. Part III delves into how to sell one’s product, based on the type of retail outlet an urban farmer chooses. These outlets include:

- Farmers’ Markets
- Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
- Produce Distributers and Wholesalers
- Neighborhood Markets and Small Grocery Retail
- Local Restaurants
- Mobile Food Vendors
- Home Prepared Foods: Cottage Food Operations

Part III is followed by testimonials from small-scale food producers and entrepreneurs on the benefits of connecting to local retail opportunities. This section shares testimonials from the perspectives of the following groups:

- Farmers’ Markets
- Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
- Backyard Growers

Thereafter, this guide shares ways in which readers can get involved in efforts to eliminate policy barriers for good food entrepreneurship in Los Angeles. The guide concludes with an appendix that shares additional useful information for local food entrepreneurs. It is our hope
that this guide demystifies the complicated processes around selling locally-grown food and encourages you to find retail opportunities for your product—food is that is proudly “L.A. Grown”.

**PART I: THE FOOD GROWING POLICY LANDSCAPE**

Over the past decade, the food policy landscape has shifted to better support the unique needs and circumstances of emerging, small and mid-scale food businesses. In this section, we provide a brief overview of the most relevant local, state and federal policies impacting urban farmers, community retailers, and other small food enterprises in Los Angeles. The following policies are not a comprehensive list of all laws governing food production, but rather those most relevant to urban farmers looking to grow and sell product in Los Angeles County.

**LOCAL LEVEL**

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES PARKWAYS ORDINANCE**

In 2015, the City of Los Angeles approved the use of parkways—the strip of land between the sidewalk and the street—as land for growing edible plants, with the exception of fruit trees. Previously, food growing on parkways required a permit. Now, Angelenos can use this land for food growing without a permit, thereby facilitating land access, particularly in neighborhoods that have limited access to open space.
CITY OF LOS ANGELES CALFRESH AT FARMERS’ MARKETS ORDINANCE

In May 2016, the City of Los Angeles approved an ordinance requiring the acceptance of CalFresh, the program formerly known as food stamps, at City of Los Angeles farmers’ markets. Specifically, the ordinance requires farmers’ market operators to show proof of CalFresh acceptance by providing a Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) number in order to obtain the Special Events Permit needed to hold a farmers’ market on the City public right-of-way.

At farmers’ markets, CalFresh/EBT customers are able to swipe their Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card at point-of-sale (POS) machines and receive tokens, also known as Scrip, and use them to pay farmers directly for their purchases. Farmers exchange the Scrip for cash with the farmers’ market manager. Individual farmers do not need to become EBT authorized on their own.

FRUIT AND FLOWERS FREEDOM ACT

Passed in 2010, the Fruit and Flowers Freedom Act is a City of Los Angeles ordinance allows for an expanded list of products to be grown in residential-zoned neighborhoods, including: fruits, flowers, mushrooms, and other products. Sales of produce on-site are allowed if pre-ordered, and off-site sale of produce is permitted.
Please see page 41 of the Appendix for the full list of eligible products through the Fruit and Flowers Freedom Act.

GOOD FOOD PURCHASING POLICY

The Good Food Purchasing Policy (GFPP) provides a metric-based, flexible framework that encourages large institutions to direct their buying power toward five core values: local economies, environmental sustainability, valued workforce, animal welfare, and nutrition.
The City of Los Angeles adopted GFPP in 2012, followed by the Los Angeles Unified School District. Since its inception, GFPP has been adopted by various cities and public institutions across the United States, including the San Francisco Unified School District and Chicago Public Schools.

The local economies value of GFPP encourages public procurement opportunities for local and food businesses. By directing public purchasing power toward local growers, GFPP helps keep public dollars in our local economy, creating jobs and economic opportunity.

LOS ANGELES STREET VENDOR CAMPAIGN

Sidewalk vendors are key players in Los Angeles street food culture. These entrepreneurs source their food from a variety of producers and businesses, generating ripple effects in our local economy. Unfortunately, as of October 2018, sidewalk vending remains illegal; the City of Los Angeles is the only major U.S. city without a sidewalk vending program. To this end, sidewalk vendors have organized since 2012 around the need for a fair sidewalk vending permit program. In November 2013, the City Council introduced a motion to explore the development of a sidewalk vending permit process. Since then, different groups have worked with the City to develop the framework for a comprehensive sidewalk vending program. In early 2017, the Los Angeles City Council voted to decriminalize sidewalk vending, as criminal charges related have potentially detrimental implications for immigration status. Later, in April 2018, the City of Los Angeles directed the City Attorney to draft an ordinance for a sidewalk vending program. As of October 2018, the City of Los Angeles’ is expected to legalize sidewalk vending in early 2019.

For more information on the Sidewalk Food Vending Program, please visit:
https://cityclerk.lacity.org/lacityclerkconnect/index.cfm?fa=ccfi.viewrecord&cfnumber=13-1493

URBAN AGRICULTURE INCENTIVE ZONES (UAIZ)

The Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones program provides vacant property owners with reduced property taxes in exchange for allowing urban agriculture on their property for an
initial period of five years. In order to be eligible, the property must be between 0.1 and 3 acres in size with no habitable buildings or dwelling units on the site. Through the program, vacant property owners may be able to save thousands of dollars annually in reduced property taxes.

In 2016, LA County adopted the program-- allowing Urban Agriculture Incentives Zones to be established in unincorporated areas of LA County. Thereafter, the City of Los Angeles and the City of Long Beach adopted UAIZ in 2017. UAIZ provides property owners with a financial incentive, while also giving urban farmers the security of a land lease.

To apply for the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone program in the City of Los Angeles, visit: https://planning.lacity.org/Forms_Procedures/7836.pdf

To apply for the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone program in the City of Long Beach, visit: http://www.longbeach.gov/globalassets/sustainability/media-library/images/programs/programs/uaiz/long-beach-uaiz-application

For unincorporated areas in LA County apply at: http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/apps/uaiz_application.pdf
STATE LEVEL

CA SAFE SIDEWALK VENDING ACT (SENATE BILL 946)

Senate Bill 946, the California Safe Sidewalk Vending Act, introduced by Senator Lara, is a statewide sidewalk vending bill will 1) decriminalize sidewalk vending, and 2) allow local jurisdictions to regulate vending as related to public health, safety, and welfare.

The bill was introduced in February 2018 and cleared the legislative process. On September 17th, 2018, Governor Jerry Brown signed SB 946 and the bill will take effect on January 1st, 2019.

For more information on Senate Bill 946, please visit:
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SB946
COMMUNITY FOOD PRODUCTION ACT

The Community Food Production Act was passed by the California State legislature in 2014 to allow those growing food on non-agricultural lands, such as urban farmers or community gardeners, to sell their uncut fruits and vegetables and up to 15 dozen eggs directly to consumers or to a permitted restaurant, if they become registered Community Food Producers. Community Food Producers are required to implement the California Department of Food and Agriculture’s Safety Guidelines for Small Farmers (more details on page 15). While Community Food Producers’ operations will not be routinely inspected, safety recalls or complaints could result in a cease and desist order, if corrections to operations are not adequately made.

To register to become a Community Food Producer in LA County, please visit: http://www.ph.lacounty.gov/eh/docs/AB1990_CFP_RegForm.pdf

For more information on how to sell designated Community Food Production products, see page 14.

COTTAGE FOODS ACT

Effective as of January 2013, the Cottage Foods Act, allows people to sell limited, “low risk” foods prepared at their homes as Cottage Foods Operations (CFO). The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health implements the Cottage Foods Act for 86 of the County’s 88 cities, including the City of Los Angeles.

CFOs have the option of being Class A or Class B operators. Class A operators sell directly to consumers from their homes, temporary events, farm stands, farmers’ markets, or through community-supported
agriculture (CSA) subscriptions. Class B operations can sell directly to consumers, as well as indirectly through restaurants, grocery stores, and mobile food vendors.

In September 2018, Governor Jerry Brown signed into law Assembly Bill 626, which will allow local jurisdictions to permit microenterprise home kitchen operations. This will expand the list of permissible cottage foods to include hot meal, “high risk” foods.

For more information about what foods are currently allowed through the Cottage Foods Act, please visit the appendix on page 39.

For an overview of Cottage Food Laws across the United States, please see the Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic’s August 2018 report here:

For more information on AB 626, please view the bill language here:
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB626

FARMER EQUITY ACT

The Farmer Equity Act of 2017 is a California bill that directs the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to address the challenges that socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers and urban growers face by providing them with technical assistance and resources. Socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers include: African-Americans, Indigenous Americans, Asian-Americans, Pacific Islanders, Latinos and other groups that have been historically impacted by discrimination in the agricultural industry. The bill required the CDFA to hire a staff member to support the department in its efforts to include socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and to report back to the Governor and California Legislature in 2020.

For more information on the Farmer Equity Act, please visit:
FEDERAL LEVEL

2018 FARM BILL

The “Farm Bill” refers to omnibus, multi-year federal legislation that authorizes a variety of national food and agriculture programs. These programs include most notably the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), as well as federal crop insurance, commodity programs, microloans, and other programs that benefit farmers and ranchers. Nearly 80 percent of Farm Bill funding is allocated for SNAP, known in California as CalFresh.

Currently, the Farm Bill is due for reauthorization, as the current 2014 Farm Bill expired on September 30, 2018. The House of Representatives introduced the House version of the Farm Bill in April 2018 and the Senate version was introduced in June 2018. The two bills are very different, as the House version includes substantial cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and environmental programs. As of October 2018, the House and Senate are reconciling their different versions of the Farm Bill via the conference committee process.

PART II: GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR SELLING FOOD

COMMUNITY FOOD PRODUCER REGISTRATION

A Community Food Producer is someone who produces agricultural products on land that is not zoned for agricultural use but is in compliance will all other applicable laws. Community food producers need to register with the Los Angeles Department of Public Health. The application is found here:

In order to successfully complete the application, a community food producer needs to confirm with local land use ordinances, have a sales permit, and must contact the Los Angeles County Agricultural Commissioner’s office if any pesticides are used. Furthermore, if a community food producer sells eggs, they need to register with the California Department of Food and Agriculture’s Egg Safety and Quality Management Program. More information on egg production is found here:

https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/mpes/esqm.html

**CALIFORNIA SMALL FARM FOOD SAFETY GUIDELINES**

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) developed Small Farm Food Safety Guidelines, which provide guidance to farmers on how to grow food on small farms. These guidelines apply to community food producers (including urban farms), those selling at certified farmers’ markets, community supported agriculture (CSAs), restaurants and retail, and more. If you are growing food in California for public consumption, then review these guidelines.

*For more information, please visit the following link:
https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/i_&_c/sffsg.html

*For more information about health and safety regulations and exemptions for urban growers, see visit the following link for the Sustainable Economies Law Center’s report:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FPi3fiLXLeLxVZFBgo-jYVSq49ZCBof/view*
The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) is federal legislation passed by US Congress in 2011. FSMA changes federal food safety laws to be more amenable to micro-farms, gardens and small food enterprises. The law consists of two primary components: Produce Safety Rule and Preventive Controls Rule. The Produce Safety Rule impacts how produce is grown, harvested and packed and includes numerous exemptions for community gardens and small urban farms. The Preventive Controls Rule impacts food manufacturers and produce packing facilities only.

For more information on FSMA requirements and exemptions, visit the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition’s Food Safety Modernization Act Resource Center at: http://sustainableagriculture.net/fsma/.

ORGANIC REGISTRATION

Non-Processed Products: Growers selling food defined or labeled as organic must be registered with the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) State Organic Program (SOP) and certified by a USDA accredited certifier registered with the SOP. A grower grossing less than $5,000 annually from the sale of organic foods needs to register with the SOP, but does not have to go through the organic certification process. A minimum $25 annual registration fee applies.

Organic Processed Products Registration (OPPR): Producers of processed organic agricultural products, (i.e. dried foods, juices, cosmetics, etc.) need to have an
Organic Processed Products Registration (OPPR), administered through the California DPH. Registration fees are based on gross annual sales. More information about OPPR and the application are found on the following website: https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DFDCS/Pages/FDBPrograms/FoodSafetyProgram/OrganicFoodProcessors.aspx.

PART III: HOW DO I SELL MY PRODUCT TO...

Through the shifts in policy discussed earlier in this guide, local food entrepreneurs sell their products at a variety of food retail outlets. Whether you want to sell to a farmers’ market or a restaurant, your locally-grown produce will be filling a critical gap. Below is an overview of how to sell your product based on the outlet you choose.

FARMERS’ MARKETS

Farmers’ markets have been a critical piece of Los Angeles’ food landscape since the early 1970s. Since their inception, farmers’ markets have connected growers directly to the communities they serve, allowing customers to know where their food comes from and the people that helped produce it. These markets provide opportunities for small farms to thrive and connect with the city, an important link in bridging urban-rural connections. For small farmers, farmers’ markets give them a way to directly market their goods to consumers to help sustain their business, while also helping urban residents access local, organic food. Farmers’ markets also sell processed and prepared foods, making them viable sourcing opportunities for restaurants, small grocery stores, and more.

In California, farmers’ markets are regulated to ensure food safety, to ensure a certain level of transparency, and to ensure direct, farmer-to-consumer transactions. Furthermore, Certified Farmers’ Markets (CFMs) must be operated by one or more certified producers, by
a nonprofit organization, or by a local government agency. No other entities are allowed to operate a CFM in California.

For more information about this ownership requirement, visit: https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Document/i549A4530CF4E11E0A17EBD98F4264ABD?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPagItem&contextData=(sc.Default)&bhcp=1

CERTIFIED PRODUCER CERTIFICATE (CPC)

A Certified Producer Certificate (CPD) is needed for a farmer to sell fresh fruits, nuts, vegetables, shell eggs, honey, flowers, and nursery stock directly to the consumer. Furthermore, it allows government agencies and customers to ensure they are buying food
grown by the farmer, while also exempting farmers from following complicated wholesale packing guidelines. Farmers must become Certified Producers (CPs) in order to sell at a certified farmers’ market (CFM).

CPCs are granted after an inspector from the LA County Agricultural Commissioner Weights & Measures Office visits the area where the produce sold is grown and documents relevant information. The inspector will document four things:

1. Type and variety
2. Number of each plant or tree
3. Harvest months for each plant
4. Estimated pounds of production

Only plants that are in the ground and growing at the time of the inspection can be certified. If a farmer decides to add plants to a certificate that has already been issued, another appointment with an inspector is necessary. The cost for the inspection is $95 for the first hour of inspection and $23.75 for every 15 minutes thereafter.

Around three weeks after inspection, a CPC with the Los Angeles County Agriculture Commissioner (LACAC) seal will be mailed. Once a CP has the CPC certificate, the CP is able to sell at a CFM. The CPC must be displayed in the farmers’ market booth at all times and updated on a yearly basis. The application is available at https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/egov/farmersmarket/producers_app_step1.asp.

**Contact:** Ibrahim Abdel-Fatah, Los Angeles County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office  
**Phone:** 562.622.0426  
**Fax:** 562.861.2828  
**Email:** IAbdel@acwm.lacounty.gov

**Important:** Unless you have a secondary certificate, a CPC only permits the CP, immediate family, and their employees to sell the CP’s agricultural products at a CFM. Employees must be paid a regular salary or wage that is not primarily based on a commission, and they cannot sell or represent agricultural products purchased from other producers. See more about secondary certificates below.
SECONDARY CERTIFICATES

If a CP wants to be represented by another CP at a CFM, a secondary certificate is needed. Secondary certificates may be helpful for urban growers that are unable to be physically present at the market but still have produce to sell. The CPs going into a secondary certificate agreement must be cross-referenced on each another’s CPC. A maximum of two secondary certificates are allowed, which can be added or dropped when a CPC is renewed.

The CP vending at the CFM must have more of their own product for sale (at the beginning of each day, by weight or dollar value) than the secondary certificate they are selling for. In addition, all produce and monies from each CP need to be separated and clearly identified with signage.

Both participants in the Secondary Certificate agreement need to keep the following documentation for at least three years:
1. Date of transfer to seller with accurate amount of products by weight, dry measure, or count.
2. Date of sale with accurate amount of products recorded according to variety by weight, dry measure, or count.
3. Names of all CPs involved in the Secondary Certificate Agreement.

**PROCESSED PRODUCTS**

CPs can sell minimally processed foods as long as the primary ingredients are grown by the producer and listed on their CPC. Processing includes slicing, juicing, drying, shelling, smoking, freezing or cooking.

Non-certifiable products are defined by the CA Code of Regulations and include:

1. Certified agricultural products processed by the CP (e.g. dried fruit and herbs, jams, etc.)
2. Livestock (including rabbits) and livestock products (e.g. meats, dairy, etc.)
3. Fish and shellfish produced under controlled conditions in waters or ponds located in California (e.g. aquaculture)
4. Other agricultural products that are produced, caught or foraged by the producer selling them (i.e. wild mushrooms).

Certified producers that process agricultural products must be either registered through the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) as a Cottage Food Operation or can process their products out of a commercial kitchen that has obtained Processed Food Registration through the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). More information on Cottage Food Operations is found on page 12.

**FIND A FARMERS’ MARKET TO SELL YOUR PRODUCE**

Once you are certified to sell at farmers’ markets, identify the farmers’ market(s) where you would like to sell your goods.
Visit the Ecology Center Farmers’ Market Finder at https://ecologycenter.org/fmfinder/ to find a farmers’ market near you. You can filter to find farmers’ markets that accept EBT and/or Market Match, a nutrition incentive program for CalFresh participants that purchase fresh fruits and vegetables.

Once you find a farmers’ market where you would like to sell your produce, ask to speak to the farmers’ market manager to find out if they are currently seeking farmers. An example of a network of farmers’ markets that sources from small-scale farmers is Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles. Visit their website at https://seela.org/ to find out more.

**COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE**

Community-supported agriculture (CSA) is a retail opportunity in which farmers sell “shares” to consumers. This usually looks like a weekly or monthly subscription for a box of seasonal produce. Farmers sell directly to the consumer, which cuts intermediary costs of distribution and retail. This facilitates a relationship between the farmer and the consumer. Cottage Food products can be sold through Community-Supported Agriculture as well.

Many CSA’s function without formal agreements between the grower and the customer. However, agreements are recommended to prevent liability-related problems. A sample agreement template is found here:

2 https://modernfarmer.com/2014/05/dear-modern-farmer-legally-start-csa/
CSA organizers need to also take into account distribution of the produce. Some CSAs distribute the weekly or monthly subscription to customers, whereas some require that the customers pick up the produce. Furthermore, the organizers of the CSA need to consider storage of the produce. Setting up required pick up times can help prevent issues related to produce going to waste and can eliminate the need for refrigeration space.

The fee for registering a CSA is $75 a year, with amendments requiring an additional $25 fee.

To apply to register as a CSA, visit: https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/i_&_c/pdfs/CSAProducerRegistrationRemittanceForm.pdf.

In recent years, produce home delivery services that may seem like CSAs have gained popularity. Similar to CSAs, these produce delivery services provide customers with an assortment of fruits and vegetables. However, they are usually medium to large-scale operations and may not be rooted in small-scale farming, in the way that CSAs are. If you would like to sell produce to one of these produce home delivery services, contact them to find out if they source locally.

**PRODUCE DISTRIBUTORS AND WHOLESALERS**

Produce distributors serve as intermediaries between farmers and retail outlets, selling farm products to grocery stores, restaurants and other retail outlets. Community gardeners and urban farmers can sell to produce distributors and wholesalers, if they are compliant with relevant Food Safety Modernization Act requirements (see page 16). The University of California, Davis has more resources to sell to wholesale distributors on the following website: http://asi.ucdavis.edu/programs/sarep/research-initiatives/fs/supply/breaking-into-selling-wholesale
While most produce distributors and wholesalers typically source from large farms with high volume, there are some smaller-scale produce distribution companies emerging that focus on sourcing from small, local growers. For example, the Los Angeles Food Policy Council is a partner organization for Community Markets Purchasing Real and Affordable (COMPRA) Foods, a produce distribution social enterprise for small grocery and convenience stores in underserved Los Angeles neighborhoods.

For more information about COMPRA, please visit: https://comprafoods.org/services

For more information about food safety requirements, please visit: https://ourenvironment.berkeley.edu/sites/ourenvironment.berkeley.edu/files/user/profile2/main/publications/California%20Urban%20Agriculture%20Food%20Safety%20Guide.pdf
NEIGHBORHOOD MARKETS AND SMALL GROCERY RETAIL

Across the country, there is a movement to utilize corner stores and neighborhood markets as sites for healthy food retail. Urban farmers, Community Food Producers and Cottage Food Operators can sell to local healthy food retailers if they meet relevant requirements for Cottage Food Producers and/or California Small Farm Safety Guidelines (see pages 15 and 12 respectively). Food businesses interested in selling directly to neighborhood markets should contact stores directly. Another option is to connect with the Healthy Neighborhood Market Network, a project that builds the capacity of corner store and neighborhood market owners to operate as successful healthy food retailers in underserved communities.

Through a series of free business and leadership development trainings, the Healthy Neighborhood Market Network organizes the sector of small markets, corner stores and other small food enterprises around resources for healthy food retail.

Over 600 neighborhood market owners and food entrepreneurs in Los Angeles have been touched by outreach efforts of the Healthy Neighborhood Market Network.

For more information about the Healthy Neighborhood Market Network, visit: www.goodfoodla.org/policymaking/healthy-neighborhood-market-network/

LOCAL RESTAURANTS

Increasingly, there is a market for ‘farm-to-table’ (also known as ‘farm-to-fork’) businesses. These restaurants give their customers the experience of eating food that has been grown locally and sustainably. When restaurants procure food that has been produced locally—and even better yet, directly from a grower—this cuts down on intermediary costs, such as distribution.

Local growers building partnerships with local restaurants is an essential part of the “farm to fork” movement. Community food producers interested in selling to local restaurants should know the type of crops that the restaurant needs. Often times, farmers can earn more
income by growing and selling specialty crops. Producers are also recommended to start by selling to one or very few restaurants and to expand their enterprise as their clientele grows. Payment options should be agreed upon with the restaurant owner.

More information is found on the following websites:

**7 Ways to Sell your Produce to Local Restaurants:**
https://www.hobbyfarms.com/7-ways-to-sell-your-produce-to-local-restaurants-2/.

**University of California Small Farm Program:**

**MOBILE FOOD VENDORS**

Another retail outlet for local food producers is mobile food businesses, which include enclosed facilities like food trucks and unenclosed facilities, such as food carts. Mobile food businesses often times have strong connections to the neighborhood they serve, where they provide prepared food and produce. Given these strong connections, mobile food vendors may be amenable to sourcing from urban farmers, Community Food Producers and Cottage Food Operators. Additionally, mobile food businesses frequently sell culturally appropriate foods for many immigrant communities. Therefore, mobile food businesses can benefit from locally grown foods, particularly herbs and other fresh fruits and vegetables that may be unique to the cultural cuisine they prepare. If you are a community food producer, you may be able to sell your product to a mobile food facility.

Should you wish to become a mobile food vendor, you must comply with California Retail Food Code requirements. See page 38 for more information regarding the California Retail Food Code regulations impacting mobile food vendors. In Los Angeles, the Retail Food Code is implemented by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) - Environmental Health.

There are various public health requirements for mobile vending, which you can find at http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/docs/vip/MFF_InfoPacket.pdf. These requirements include food preparation in commissary (also referred to as commercial kitchens), as well
as cleaning and storage of carts in commissaries. To find a commissary near you, visit page 38.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERMITTING

**Mobile Food Permit:** The Department of Public Health requires mobile food vendors to obtain a mobile food permit. The requirements and fees vary depending on the type of operation. For example, there are different categories for low risk carts and high risk carts. To find out more, visit: [http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/docs/vip/MFF_InfoPacket.pdf](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/docs/vip/MFF_InfoPacket.pdf).

**Food Safety Certification:** Under California law, each mobile food facility must have at least one employee/owner who has passed a state-approved Food Safety Certification exam. A certification is valid for five years. A few examiners include the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation, Experior Assessments aka Thompson Prometrics and the National Registry of Food Safety Professionals.
**Food Handler permit:** Any employee who handles food must obtain a permit to do so. A “food handler” is someone who works in a facility with food and involved in the preparation, storage, or serving of food. Instructions and frequently asked questions about obtaining this permit can be found on Foodhandler USA’s website. California law requires employers to maintain records documenting that each employee that handles food has a valid food handler permit. New employees have thirty days to obtain the permit. A permit is valid for three years.

Visit Foodhandler USA’s website here: [https://www.servsafe.com/](https://www.servsafe.com/).

**Note regarding land use regulations:** While public health permits are required for mobile food vendors to sell food, they do not give any authority over land use. Be sure to check local land use regulations to find out where you are allowed to vend.

**HOME PREPARED FOODS: COTTAGE FOOD PRODUCERS**

Cottage Food Operations offer opportunities for local growers to process the produce they grow into “value added” product like jams, dried fruit, and dried herbs without investing in a commercial kitchen space. Additionally, local growers can sell their produce to Cottage Food Producers. Cottage Food Producers are able to sell their products from home, at a farmers’ market, and to retailers. For example, if a backyard farmer grows apricots, with a Cottage Food permit, they can make jam in their home kitchen and sell apricot jam in the off season. A full listing of approved Cottage Foods products is found in the Appendix on page 38.
More information for cottage food producers is below, based on the type of outlet:

- Class A Operations sell directly to consumers from home, or sell through temporary events, farm stands, farmers’ markets, and community-supported agriculture (CSA) subscriptions. Registration costs $103 annually.

- Class B Operations sell food indirectly, such as to restaurants, food retail, and mobile food facilities. Furthermore, Class B Operations can also sell directly to consumers. Registration costs $254 annually.

Cottage food producers can only employ one or fewer full-time employees (not including immediate family or household members), and have gross annual sales limited to $50,000 or less. If you would prefer to process your foods in a commissary (also referred to as commercial kitchens), please see appendix on page 38 for a list of some existing commissaries in the Los Angeles area.
TESTIMONIALS

FARMERS’ MARKET MANAGER

Farmers Market Manager, Lupe Mejia, works for Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles (SEE-LA), a local non-profit that builds sustainable food systems and brings the community together through social and cultural activities that benefit low to moderate income residents throughout Los Angeles. The organization also runs six farmers’ markets in the City of Los Angeles.

Lupe started as a nutrition educator and worked her way through SEE-LA. She now runs the Central Avenue Farmers’ Market in South Los Angeles and has been doing so for the past four years. Customers at the farmers’ market are primarily African American and Latino, and predominantly low-income.

There are approximately 14 vendors who sell at the Central Avenue Farmers’ Market and around eight of them are farmers. A little bit of everything is sold; fruits and vegetables, sprouts, herbs, and prepared foods such as pupusas, hummus, bread, and juices. A barrier that farmers face when selling at farmers’ markets is lack of clarity on becoming a Certified Producer. Additionally, since many farmers drive from the Bakersfield or Riverside area, they want a minimum selling amount per day. Because the Central Avenue Farmers’ Market is in a low-income community, sometimes this can be a challenge. However, accepting EBT definitely helps, as it gives customers supplemental income to purchase fruits and vegetables and more money for farmers.
COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE

Christina Perez is the Food Production Manager at the Social Justice Learning Institute (SJLI), a non-profit organization based in Inglewood that works to improve the education, health, and well being of youth and communities of color by empowering them to enact social change through research, training, and community mobilization. At SJLI, Christina manages seven gardens in the Inglewood/Lennox area. The crops grown are for a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. The CSA services families in Inglewood and South Los Angeles.

SJLI’s CSA program accepts EBT through a point of sale (POS) device. Unlike farmers’ markets, no tokens are needed because the charge for the CSA box is made directly. Some challenges faced include getting the word out about the CSA program, as well as working toward no food waste. Both of these issues require education and outreach.

Christina is the primary grower for the program, though there are also part-time growers. Given the current size of the CSA program, the amount of production is adequate. However, if the program were to scale up, then more growers may be needed. SJLI currently works with local schools to teach students about permaculture through different activities. By building knowledge of permaculture in local schools, SJLI is contributing toward a next generation of students who understand the importance of food growing.
BACKYARD GROWER

Louis Easton is a filmmaker and backyard grower in Northeast Los Angeles. While he began his career in sales, his passion for agriculture came from his father who worked in the nursery industry. Louis sells at the Crenshaw Farmers’ Market in South Los Angeles, where the customer base is primarily African-American, followed by Latino. He sells tomatoes, aloe, oranges, guavas, limes, as well as ornamental plants.

As a backyard grower, Louis has the convenience of growing from home, but also faces the issue of limited land. Louis is interested in expanding his businesses and growing superfoods, such as microgreens and sprouts. When asked why he grows food in his backyard, Louis said: “I do this for survival. A lot of people don’t know what to do with the land and it’s scary. If I lose my job, I still have what I grow.”
GET INVOLVED

We hope that this guide provided you with the information, contacts, and resources needed to help connect your good food business with retail opportunities. Whether you are growing your own food or processing other locally grown food to sell, you are still filling a critical need for locally produced food in Los Angeles. We need more local, small-scale food entrepreneurs, such as yourself.
**ACTIVE WORKING GROUPS AND COALITIONS**

a. **The LAFPC Urban Agriculture Working Group** is a multi-sector coalition of food justice, open space, community health and environmental advocates working to increase fresh food access and green spaces when and where appropriate in low-income communities throughout Los Angeles. For more information, please contact info@goodfoodla.org.

b. **The Los Angeles Street Vendor Campaign (LASVC)** is the initiative to legalize street vending on Los Angeles’ city sidewalks. The Campaign works toward a policy in Los Angeles that legalizes sidewalk vending and establishes conditions that protect the rights and dignity of our city’s low income entrepreneurs. For more information, visit: [http://www.streetvendorsforla.org/](http://www.streetvendorsforla.org/).

c. Different farmer and grower networks exist throughout Los Angeles, both formally and informally. For example, some organizations have networks of backyard growers. Visit these websites to find out more:
   - Community Services Unlimited: [http://csuinc.org/](http://csuinc.org/)
   - American Friends Service Committee – Roots for Peace: [https://facebook.com/rootsforpeace/](https://facebook.com/rootsforpeace/)
APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR FARMERS’ MARKETS

**Scales:** In order to sell agricultural product by weight, Certified Producers (CPs) must purchase a scale that is approved by the CDFA and have it tested and sealed by the County Sealer of Weights and Measures. Before purchasing a scale, contact the Office of the Agricultural Commissioner/Director for Weights & Measures for more information at [http://acwm.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/acwm/main/home/page/](http://acwm.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/acwm/main/home/page/).

**Sampling:** The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) regulates all sampling that takes place at CFMs. CPs that wish to sample their produce at a CFM must follow procedures found in Chapter 12 of the California Food Retail Code, which is found on the following website: [https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DFDCS/CDPH%20Document%20Library/FDB/FoodSafetyProgram/RetailFood/CRFC.pdf](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DFDCS/CDPH%20Document%20Library/FDB/FoodSafetyProgram/RetailFood/CRFC.pdf).

**Water Waiver:** All commercial agricultural activity in Los Angeles County is subject to the Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Irrigated Lands by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (LARWQCB). This entity requires agricultural entities in LA County to monitor and regulate the quality of water discharge from their activities. CPCs can enroll in the conditional waiver from the LARWQCB, though some exemptions exist. Contact the LARWQCB to find out more on the following website: [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles/about_us/contact_us/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles/about_us/contact_us/).

**Business Licenses:** Many markets do not require proof of a business license or sellers permit to operate a produce stall at the market. However, urban farms should find out more information about business licenses required to sell homegrown produce. The business license requirements for farmers in the City and County of Los Angeles are undefined. The City of Los Angeles does not tax businesses that make under $100,000 per year, though they are still required to have a business license and file annual taxes.
The County of LA only requires specific agriculture-related businesses to have a license: poultry dealers, live poultry dealers, and plant nurseries. Many farmers markets hold their own business licenses and pay all required taxes and fees.

**Employee Agreements:** Many farmers’ markets require that employees representing the CP at the CFM sign an Employee Agreement (EA). In addition, an employee may only sell for one CP at a time. Unfortunately, this prohibits a lot of good ideas about community fruit booths where one individual would sell on behalf of a number of CPs.

**Lease Agreements:** If a CP does not own the land they are growing on, the landowner must sign a lease or crop share agreement prior to obtaining a CPC, and if possible, prior to planting crops. A lease agreement must include a description of the leased property (current use, dimensions and location), cost of lease, and the date of lease agreement. The signatures of the lessor and lessee must be guaranteed by a notary public.

**PRODUCT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR FARMERS’ MARKETS**

**Honey:** Honey vendors selling at a CFM need to register their beehives with the County Agricultural Commissioner. The annual registration fee is $10. The CP’s name, as well as the address and zip code where the honey was produced, must be clearly visible on the container in which the honey is sold.

Beekeeper Exceptions: Beehives are considered “property,” therefore lease agreements are not needed for beehives kept on the property of someone other than the beekeeper. Additionally, multiple beekeepers can share a single CPC, as long as they organize under one entity.

More information is found in the following article: [https://americanbeejournal.com/want-sell-farm-market/](https://americanbeejournal.com/want-sell-farm-market/).

**Avocados:** CPs selling avocados can be exempted from uniform crop standards and packaging requirements by obtaining a free Avocado Exemption Permit. A person, firm, or household can receive a maximum of four permits per year, and each permit allows for a maximum of 10 containers of avocados to be sold. Avocado growers cannot receive an
exemption permit until all sizes of the variety they are growing meet minimum maturity requirements. For most varieties, this results in a three to four month period each year in which avocado exemption permits are not distributed.

To learn more about Avocado Exemption Permits, visit the California Avocado Commission here: [http://www.californiaavocadogrowers.com/articles/avocado-exemption-permit-requirements](http://www.californiaavocadogrowers.com/articles/avocado-exemption-permit-requirements).

**Eggs:** Any CP selling eggs must be registered as an Egg Handler with the CDFA. The registration fee is $75, and the annual renewal fee is $50. There is an additional “mill fee” of $0.10/30 dozen eggs sold. Note that many CFMs require all meat, egg and prepared food vendors to have insurance. Additional information on egg requirements is found at [https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/mpes/esqm.html](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/mpes/esqm.html).

**Poultry:** Producers slaughtering 1,000 poultry (including turkeys, chickens, ducks, geese, squab, guinea fowl, and ratites) or less may be exempt from the bird-by-bird inspection requirements of the USDA’s Poultry Products Inspection Act. Exempt poultry must be raised and slaughtered by the producer on the premises. The meat may be sold on the farm and at a CFM only if the producer and their immediate family members process the poultry. If employees are involved in the processing of poultry, the meat may only be sold on the farm.

Many CFMs require all meat, egg and prepared food vendors to have insurance. More information on selling meat at farmers’ markets is found on the following website: [http://ucanr.edu/sites/CESonomaAgOmbuds/Selling_Meat/Selling_Meat_at_Farmers_Markets/?helpful=100&pageenum=52548&ratingtype=1](http://ucanr.edu/sites/CESonomaAgOmbuds/Selling_Meat/Selling_Meat_at_Farmers_Markets/?helpful=100&pageenum=52548&ratingtype=1).

**Nursery stock:** Nursery stock includes seedlings, plant starters and other rooted plants or trees, but does not include seeds themselves. Producers of nursery stock must have a License to Sell Nursery Stock from the CDFA to sell at a CFM. Licenses are good for 12 months and must be renewed annually. The CDFA offers four license periods throughout the year, beginning in January, April, July and June.

The basic license fee is $150 for a farm one acre or less. Licenses for nurseries larger than one acre will be charged additional acreage fees. However, you are eligible for a fee
exemption if sale of nursery items is less than $1,000 per fiscal year. More information is found here: https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/plant/pe/nsc/nursery/index.html.

CALIFORNIA RETAIL FOOD CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR MOBILE FOOD VENDORS

The California Retail Food Code (RFC) outlines requirements for sidewalk vendors and other mobile food vendors. The RFC defines a mobile food facility as a “vehicle used in conjunction with a commissary or other permanent food facility upon which food is sold or distributed at retail.” Mobile food facilities include “enclosed” facilities, such as food trucks, and “unenclosed” facilities, such as food carts. The RFC sections regarding mobile food facilities are found on the following document (Chapter 10, page 78):
https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DFDCS/CDPH%20Document%20Library/FDB/FoodSafetyProgram/RetailFood/CRFC.pdf

COMMISSARIES

If you would prefer to process your foods in a commissary (also referred to as commercial kitchen), there are various options such in the Los Angeles area, including the listing below. Note: this is not an exhaustive list.

- **AA Cater Truck**
  - Address: 750 E. Slauson Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90011
  - Contact: (323) 235-6650
- **BLVD Kitchen**
  - Address: 13545 Ventura Blvd, Sherman Oaks, CA 91423
  - Contact: (844) 454-2583
- **Chef’s Center**
  - Address: 45 N San Gabriel Blvd, Pasadena, CA 91107
  - Contact: (626) 744-9995
- **Chef’s Kitchens**
  - Address: 1716 South Robertson Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90035
  - Contact: (310) 837-8900
• **Crafted Kitchen**
  - Address: 672 S Santa Fe Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90021
  - Contact: (213) 477-1127

• **LA Prep**
  - Address: 230 W. Avenue 26, Los Angeles, CA 90031
  - Contact: (213) 403-1620

**COMMUNITY FOOD PRODUCT ACT APPROVED FOODS**

- Whole uncut fruits and vegetables, including unshelled nuts
  - Cutting beyond that required during harvesting is considered food processing and will require further permitting
- Unrefrigerated shell eggs (up to 15 dozen per month)
- Certain high-risk products (such as sprouts and mushrooms) may require further evaluation and be subject to additional requirements. Check with your Local Enforcement Agency.

Visit [https://www.co.merced.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/19277/Community-Food-Production-FAQ](https://www.co.merced.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/19277/Community-Food-Production-FAQ) for more information.

**COTTAGE FOOD ACT APPROVED FOODS**

*As of January 1, 2018:

(1) Baked goods, without cream, custard, or meat fillings, such as breads, biscuits, churros, cookies, pastries, and tortillas.
(2) Candy, such as brittle and toffee.
(3) Chocolate-covered nonperishable foods, such as nuts and dried fruits.
(4) Dried fruit.
(5) Dried pasta.
(6) Dry baking mixes.
(7) Fruit pies, fruit empanadas, and fruit tamales.
(8) Granola, cereals, and trail mixes.
(9) Herb blends and dried mole paste.
(10) Honey and sweet sorghum syrup.
(11) Jams, jellies, preserves, and fruit butter that comply with the standard described in Part 150 of Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations. * See Below
(12) Nut mixes and nut butters.
(13) Popcorn.
(14) Vinegar and mustard.
(15) Roasted coffee and dried tea.
(16) Waffle cones and pizelles.
(17) Cotton candy.
(18) Candied apples.
(19) Confections such as salted caramel, fudge, marshmallow bars, chocolate covered marshmallow, nuts, and hard candy, or any combination thereof.
(20) Buttercream frosting, buttercream icing, buttercream fondant, and gum paste that do not contain eggs, cream, or cream cheese.
(21) Dried or Dehydrated vegetables.
(22) Dried vegetarian-based soup mixes.
(23) Vegetable and potato chips.
(24) Ground chocolate.
(25) Seasoning salt.
(26) Flat icing.
(27) Marshmallows that do not contain eggs.
(28) Popcorn balls.
(29) Dried grain mixes.
(30) Fried or baked donuts and waffles.
(31) Dried hot chocolate (dried powder or molded hardened cocoa pieces).
(32) Fruit infused vinegar (containing only high-acid fruits such as apple, crabapple, nectarine, peach, plum, quince, blackberry, blueberry, cherry, cranberry, grape, huckleberry, gooseberry, loganberry, pomegranate, pineapple, raspberry, strawberry, tomatillo, youngberry, grapefruit, kumquat, lemon, lime, orange).
(33) Dried fruit powders.
FRUIT AND FLOWERS FREEDOM ACT ELIGIBLE PRODUCTS

Eligible products for *farming*: for use on-site or sale or distribution on-site or off-site.

- berries
- flowers
- fruits
- grains
- herbs
- mushrooms
- nuts
- ornamental plants
- seedlings
- vegetables

Eligible products for *truck gardening*: for use onsite or sale or distribution off-site.

- berries
- flowers
- fruits
- grains
- herbs
- mushrooms
- nuts
- ornamental plants
- seedlings
- vegetables

FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION ACT (FSMA):

Below is a list of produce that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has deemed as “rarely consumed raw” and thus is not subject to the “Produce Safety Rule” of the FSMA.

(1) asparagus
(2) beans (black, great)
northern, kidney, lima, navy, pinto)
(3) beets, garden (roots and tops)
(4) beets, sugar
(5) cashews
(6) cherries, sour
(7) chickpeas
(8) cocoa beans
(9) coffee beans
(10) collards
(11) corn, sweet
(12) cranberries
(13) dates
(14) dill (seeds and weed)
(15) eggplants
(16) figs
(17) ginger
(18) hazelnuts
(19) horseradish
(20) lentils
(21) okra
(22) peanuts
(23) pecans
(24) peppermint
(25) potatoes
(26) pumpkins
(27) squash, winter
(28) sweet potatoes
(29) water chestnuts
The County of Los Angeles Agriculture Commissioner has regulations related many aspects of food growing, such as rules around pesticide use, beekeeping, and more. Visit https://acwm.lacounty.gov/ to find out more.

For pesticide regulations, please visit: https://acwm.lacounty.gov/pest-exclusion/

For beekeeping information, please visit:
http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/acwm/1031715_ACWMwebBeekeepingSection12-17.pdf

For common violations of Certified Farmers' Markets, visit: