

Ordering Farm Fresh Produce for Worksites

In order to increase employee access to healthy food options at work, the Network for a Healthy California—Worksite Program is encouraging employers to implement this easy-to-use guide, which offers step-by-step instructions on how to order boxes of fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers and have those boxes delivered right to your worksite.



Did you know that having sweet, juicy fruits and crisp, crunchy vegetables delivered directly to your worksite will give your employees enough energy to power through the day? Imagine the impact this could have on improving productivity and your bottom line! If healthy employees and profitability are of interest to your organization, then this simple guide to worksite produce delivery is right for you.

This easy-to-use guide offers step-by-step instructions on how to order boxes of fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers and have those boxes delivered right to your worksite or to a nearby location with a schedule that meets your needs.

HOW TO ORDER BOXES OF FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FROM LOCAL FARMERS

One simple way to have fresh fruits and vegetables delivered to your worksite is to participate in a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program. A CSA Program provides locally grown, seasonal fruits and vegetables to worksites or individuals on a subscription basis. This subscription typically includes a weekly delivery of one or more large boxes of produce. Each box of produce contains enough fruits and vegetables to feed a family of four for a week. If a CSA Program is right for your worksite, here are a few steps you should consider:

- The cost for each weekly CSA delivery of fresh fruits and vegetables ranges from \$13 to \$30 per box. Collaborate with your management staff and employees to determine the best way to pay for the fruit and vegetable deliveries.
 - If your worksite pays for the fresh produce, you can distribute the items to your employees as snacks that they can enjoy during breaks and lunchtime/dinnertime,
- at meetings, and throughout the workday. You'll be surprised by how well this small investment will go over with your employees.
- If your worksite is unwilling to pay for the fruit and vegetable deliveries, you can determine whether individual employees or groups of coworkers would like to pay for the produce themselves. With this approach, the employees who pay for the produce deliveries can choose whether they want to share the fruits and vegetables amongst themselves during the workday and/or take the produce home to share with their families.
- Another approach is to share the cost of the fruit and vegetable deliveries between the worksite and the employees.
- Designate a person in your office who will be responsible for coordinating the CSA fruit and vegetable deliveries.
- Locate participating CSA farms in your area by visiting www.localharvest.org. This easy-to-navigate Web site will allow you to search for a CSA farm by city, zip code, or state. Additional CSA resources can be found at www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa/, a Web site hosted by the United States Department of Agriculture.
- Contact a nearby CSA Program to set up a partnership agreement or subscription between your worksite and the farm.
- Once a subscription has been established, you can expect your weekly drop-off of fresh fruits and vegetables delivered to, or near, your worksite.

- Often, CSA Programs have pre-existing drop-off/pick up locations, times, and days for each specific geographic area. Locations are usually centralized, such as a community hall or nearby recreation club.
- You may also arrange for your subscription to be delivered directly to your worksite. You and the farmer should discuss this prior to committing to a subscription service. It may be necessary to speak with a couple of farms in the region to find one that meets your needs.
- The subscriber will not always know what is in the box until he or she opens it up, which adds to the fun of receiving produce straight from the farm. For those who can't wait, most CSA Programs have Web sites that list the week's fruit and vegetable selections.
- During a bountiful season, subscribers may receive extra boxes of produce during the week, with more types of fruits and vegetables than normal. There is no additional cost for these extra boxes, but keep in mind that during less bountiful times of the year, selection and abundance can be limited.

HOW TO ORDER BOXES OF FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FROM PRIVATE COMPANIES

If you prefer to receive customized orders of fresh fruits and vegetables, consider utilizing private companies who specialize in shipping fresh produce. The benefit of such companies is that you can choose how much, how often, and what type of fruits and vegetables you want delivered to your worksite. The fruits and vegetables are sent directly to your worksite, and the time from harvest to consumption can be as little as 3 days. If this approach fits well with your worksite, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Make sure a person in your office is designated to order the fruits and vegetables, monitor the deliveries, place the produce boxes in common eating or gathering areas, communicate with employees that the produce is available, and keep track of the payment process.
- A 25-pound box (50 pieces) of fresh produce can be delivered directly to your worksite for as little as \$64 per week, which includes overnight shipping. Go to www.fruitguys.com to see how a California-based company, The FruitGuys, provides boxes of fruits to worksites.
- A long-term annual commitment is not required from a private produce supplier, and a worksite can cancel its subscription at any time.
- Many forms of payment can be used, such as credit cards, installment agreements, and purchase orders.
- Private produce suppliers want to know what you think of their products, so make sure your worksite provides feedback on the quality and variety of fruits and vegetables that are provided.

