

State of Vermont Employees Workplace CSA Program

What is CSA?

Community Supported Agriculture or CSA is the name of a direct marketing relationship between farmers and consumers where a customer enrolls in a seasonal share from a local farm and receives a certain amount of local food products on a regular basis. While the specific terms of membership differ from farm to farm, CSA shares are usually purchased for a set price early in the season in exchange for weekly boxes of mixed produce and other agricultural products.

CSA was created for customers to share in the seasonable rhythms of the people and land that produce their food, for families to access locally produced, healthy and nutritious foods, and for farmers to achieve financial security and an assured customer base.

Workplace CSA delivery programs have been identified by The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as an effective means of increasing consumption of healthy foods. Increasing access to healthy local food at the workplace does not only align with VT Agency of Agriculture priorities, but is also supported by Department of Health Workplace Wellness efforts, Department of Human Resources Wellness Program, and Attorney General's 2010 Healthy Weight Initiative.

State of Vermont Workplace CSA Program

The State of Vermont Workplace CSA Program provides space and opportunity for State of VT employees to access local food offered through VT CSA farms to be delivered to designated state building drop sites. This program offers the opportunity for employees to support local farmers and conveniently access healthy, nutritious and locally produced food delivered to their workplace. Our goal is to offer the convenience of workplace delivery to our state of Vermont employees and market growth to our CSA farms by connecting local farmers to the largest employer in the state, the State of Vermont.

In 2012 the Workplace CSA Program piloted in three counties of Vermont expanding access state-wide in 2013. After two years of working diligently to open this program up to all farmers and employees the Vermont Agency of Agriculture and DHR Wellness Program will now take a targeted outreach strategy to work on expanding the sites that are approved and relationships that have been built. We will also work with CSA farmers who are interested in servicing the existing sites by reaching out to employees with



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their contact information. Instructions will be provided to both employees and farmers on how to begin the process to establish a drop site location for CSA deliveries.

CSA farms participating in the State of Vermont Workplace CSA Program may offer different local food items, volume of product, and price structure in their weekly shares, so connecting with the farm that best suits each employee's needs is important. The consistent aspect of this program is local food being weekly delivered to one of the approved drop sites on a weekly basis beginning in May. The season length will be determined by the CSA farm offerings.

Communication

We encourage State of Vermont Employees and participating farms to visit the program's webpage:

https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/agriculture/workplace_csa/default.aspx

Here you can find information regarding farms willing to service the specified counties, copies of participation agreements for both employees and farmers, announcements, where building delivery sites will be, times of weekly deliveries, and any changes announced throughout the season.

Drop Site Locations

The 2014 drop site locations are:

- Middlebury; Middlebury State Office Building 156 Green Village Drive
- Montpelier; Agency of Agriculture 116 State Street
- Montpelier; National Life Building 1 National Life Drive
- Barre; McFarland Building 5 Perry Street
- Springfield; Springfield State Office Building 100 Mineral Street
- Burlington; John J Zampieri State Office Building 108 Cherry Street

To add a drop site you will need to work with the Workplace CSA Program manager, Johanna Herron, and Building and General Services (BGS) to assess and approve the site eligibility. The site must identify a designated drop site location that accommodates once a week commerce transactions. All sites must meet the following criteria:

- Inside area that the public can access to allow for farmer drop off or under cover outdoors to ensure dry and cool short-term storage.
- Safe environment for public and employees.
- Drop site location approved by BGS.



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Payment & Pick Up

Payment must be arranged individually between each State of Vermont Employee and the CSA Farm directly. The State of Vermont will not be involved in any exchange of payment or be responsible for any unreceived payment.

CSA shares will be delivered by the farmer in boxes or crates clearly marked with the employee's name. The moment the CSA share is delivered ownership transfers from the farm to the employee. Empty boxes or crates may be returned to the farmer at the agreed upon drop site.

Each participating employee is responsible for pick-up of their CSA share at the agreed upon time each week. If an employee is not able to pick up a share during the season, it is their responsibility to make alternate arrangements or communicate this in advance with the farm. Any unclaimed shares will be donated or distributed to other individuals.

Program Solicitation

VAAFM Agriculture Development Specialist, Johanna Herron, will function as statewide program coordinator and will share information with all State of VT Employees through the DHR Wellness Program e-newsletter and a variety of other outreach strategies.

Each office's CSA Program and drop site location will be overseen by an on-site coordinator who will provide organizing and logistical contact with participating employees in their building. This communication should be minimal and will likely occur by email. All programmatic concerns are to be directed to the statewide program coordinator at VAAFM.

Farmer Expectations

- Deliver CSA farm shares in boxes or crates labeled with employee name every week (likely May through November) during the set time to designated State building drop-off locations. Some CSA farm shares may continue through the winter months.
- Returned containers may be picked up by the farmer at the drop site location based on an agreed upon schedule.
- Proper communication with on-site coordinators at State buildings during delivery times, throughout the season if any changes in time and/or problems occur.
- Open communication with new CSA members (State of Vermont Employees) about season dates and payment requirements.



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- Responsible for administration of participation agreements for State of Vermont employee which must be filled out by SOV employee and returned to the statewide program coordinator at VAAFM. The on-site coordinator may be able to help with this process.
- Responsible for compliance with all State of Vermont Rules and Regulations, possession of all required licenses, and assumed liability associated with CSA share until SOV employee assumes ownership.

Employee Expectations

- Pay farmer directly for the CSA share you receive.
- Participation in being a CSA member through the full given season dates outlined by the farm.
- Pick up share box weekly or make arrangements for share to be picked up on their behalf, if unavailable.
- If an employee fails to pick up their CSA share during the given time, the share will be donated or redistributed by the on-site coordinator.
- Fill out a participation agreement for the farmer to turn in to the state-wide coordinator.
- Share CSA concerns directly with the farmer, when appropriate; communicate with the on-site coordinator about drop site logistics, and share any programmatic concerns with the VAAFM statewide program coordinator.
- Assume ownership and responsibility for your CSA share, including all potential physical or health risk, at the time of delivery by the farmer to the worksite location

Role of On-Site Coordinator

- Assist interested employees to select a CSA Farm that is willing and able to deliver to their workplace.
- Share CSA Farm information via the program's webpage with participating State of Vermont Employees at your assigned drop site.
- Responsible for maintenance of drop site location, including:
 - Set up tables for delivery, if necessary.
 - Ensure all CSA shares are picked up each week.
 - Distribute or donate any unclaimed shares if needed on delivery days.
- Receive minor concerns from farmer or employee and when appropriate communicate issues and programmatic concerns to statewide program coordinator.

Role of VAAFM Statewide Workplace CSA Coordinator



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- Advertise the Workplace CSA Program to State of Vermont Employees with access to approved locations, with DHR Wellness Program support.
- Outreach and assist farmers in the process of delivering to a State building.
- Addresses concerns between farmer and employee.
- If shares are continuously not picked up, address with involved employee.
- Survey farmers, employees, and onsite coordinator annually about success of program.

This program will not demonstrate preferential treatment or prioritization of any particular CSA farm but instead allow State of Vermont employees and willing farms to create direct marketing relationships on their own. The Workplace CSA Program will simply facilitate the space and opportunity for these relationships.

