

# Harvest of the Month Fundraising Guide



## What is CAFF?

Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) is one of the first California organizations to emphasize the role that family farmers play within the sustainable food and farming movement. Our work connects the needs of family farmers with the needs of communities, in service of a thriving food system. From the school lunch lady, to the urban chef, to the children learning to make healthy choices, our programs influence all stakeholders in a regional foodshed. Our goal is to strengthen family farms, which are the cornerstone of healthy and economically viable communities.

One way that CAFF does this work is by leading the California Farm to School Network. Farm to School programs connect farms with school cafeterias and classrooms. These programs come in all shapes and sizes, but they fall into two main categories: Farm to School Education programs and Farm to School Produce Distribution programs. A comprehensive Farm to School program puts both elements together: Fresh, locally-grown produce appears on the school menu, while students learn about local agriculture. Farm to School programs are sprouting up across the country!

## What is CAFF's Harvest of the Month Program (HOTM)?

Since 2009, CAFF has run a Harvest of the Month Tasting Kit Program (HOTM), incorporating the monthly materials from the Network for a Healthy California with information on local agriculture. Each month CAFF purchases produce from local growers, packs the produce items into educational kits, and works with a local distributor to deliver the kits to participating schools and classrooms. This model enables teachers to take the lead on food and farming education and allows kids to taste fresh, local fruits and vegetables while learning about the farmers who grew them, empowering them to make healthy choices.

HOTM is a perfect segue into Farm to School education and distribution because it allows both educators and food service staff to focus on one local seasonal produce item a month. If kids are used to seeing chips at school and home, they may not be welcoming to broccoli as a replacement unless they are familiar with it. That's where HOTM comes in.

Community Alliance with Family Farmers

[www.caff.org](http://www.caff.org)



Tasting different types of citrus during a HOTM lesson



A student writes a thank you letter to the farmer

## Why do I Need to Fundraise?

The HOTM Tasting Kit program is designed to support students and teachers in incorporating nutrition and agriculture education into the classroom as well as providing economic support and community connections with California's family farmers. \$15/kit only covers a portion of the program, primarily the direct costs of the fresh produce, delivery fees, printing, and supplies. CAFF continues to fundraise to support our staff time. By purchasing these monthly kits, we know that you value the program and are committed to integrating Farm to School education into your schools. Our funders will be more willing to support our efforts if they know you are sharing the costs, and our farmers feel supported by their communities. We appreciate your help in fundraising for this program together so that we can continue to provide this resource to you in the future.

## Making the Case for HOTM

### Why HOTM

In California, only 26% of 12-17 year olds eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables every day. Early intervention can help change these patterns. Studies show that connecting agriculture and nutrition education through various farm to school activities increases student consumption of fruits and vegetables. By providing tastings from local farmers, you can ensure that you're presenting your students with fresher and more flavorful produce. In fact, 75% of teachers who participated in HOTM during the 2011-2012 year reported that their students have increased their consumption of fruits and vegetables. Even more remarkably, almost 100% of teachers reported that their students exhibit more willingness to try new fruits and vegetables.

### Why Local

Over 90% of California's farms and ranches are family-owned businesses; however, many struggle to keep their farms in existence. In connecting students to local farmers with HOTM, CAFF encourages partnerships between growers and the community, which create locally based economic vitality, improved environmental and human health, and long-term sustainability of family farms. Buying local supports local farm families with your dollars, helping them stay on their land, preserving open spaces. By eating food that has traveled less distance, it is often fresher, tastes better and has retained a higher nutritional content. Last year, because of your participation, CAFF was able to invest in local family farms by purchasing over \$30,000 of produce for HOTM!



Rainbow, Baby Orange, and Purple Carrots



Students preparing a kale salad in class

## Fundraising 101

There are many different ways to fundraise to support HOTM in your classroom. From asking parents to help support the program, to hosting fundraising events, we know that different schools will need to take different approaches. Two easy, but often underutilized ways to fundraise are through small grants and by asking for sponsorship, which we will outline below.

### Small Grants

Applying for a small grant is an excellent way to fund the entirety of your school's Harvest of the Month program. To get started, we recommend you first check out these links that include helpful Grant Writing 101s. With the proper framework, set of tools and well-matched grant opportunity, you may find it is easier than you think!

Grant Writing Tips: <http://www.k12grants.org/tips.htm>

Education World: [http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_curr/profdev/profdev039.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/profdev/profdev039.shtml)

The following is a list of organizations and websites that include applicable grants for school Wellness, Farm to School, and Nutrition Education programs:

Deadline	Grant Source	Link
Rolling deadline	California Based School Health Alliance	<a href="http://www.schoolhealthcenters.org/start-up-and-operations/funding/grants-without-deadlines/">http://www.schoolhealthcenters.org/start-up-and-operations/funding/grants-without-deadlines/</a>
Rolling deadline	Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation	<a href="http://responsibility.lowes.com/community/our-programs/lowes-charitable-and-educational-foundation/">http://responsibility.lowes.com/community/our-programs/lowes-charitable-and-educational-foundation/</a>
Rolling deadline	The Awesome Foundation	<a href="http://www.awesomefoundation.org/en">http://www.awesomefoundation.org/en</a>
Varies	Your local Rotary Club	<a href="https://www.rotary.org/en/search/club-finder">https://www.rotary.org/en/search/club-finder</a>
Varies	National Farm to School Network	<a href="http://www.farmtoschool.org/funding.htm">http://www.farmtoschool.org/funding.htm</a>
Varies	SPARK - Countering Childhood Obesity since 1989	<a href="http://www.sparkpe.org/grants/grantfunding-resources/">http://www.sparkpe.org/grants/grantfunding-resources/</a>

While many foundations will have a specific application format that you'll need to complete, many others only request a letter outlining what you are asking for. Feel free to use this sample letter to help guide you.

## Sample Grant Letter

Date

To Whom It May Concern:

(School Name), in collaboration with the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF), is committed to providing our students with a well-rounded education which includes teaching healthy behaviors that they will carry throughout life. One way that we do this is by participating in CAFF's Harvest of the Month Tasting Kit Program (HOTM). As part of CAFF's Farm to School initiatives, HOTM supports healthy eating behaviors and local agriculture knowledge among K – 12 students in two ways: delivering educational programs and creating access to fresh, locally-sourced produce in the school meals. By connecting schools to farms in the classroom, on the farm, and in the cafeteria, the Farm to School program creates environments that support a holistic approach to student health and wellness.

Increasing rates of childhood obesity and diabetes are undoubtedly widespread across the nation. According to the California Department of Education, 74% of youth are unfit, and 51% eat a maximum of one fruit or vegetable serving each day. This generation of children will be the first to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. Health and nutrition disparities are not solely the result of poor individual choices -- they are rooted in a lack of access to healthy food and insufficient health and agricultural education. To address these issues, the state's task force on childhood obesity recommends increasing the quantity and quality of health education while ensuring the availability of healthy food in schools.

The Harvest of the Month Tasting Kit program has grown from a small operation serving a couple of schools in 2006 to a successful project that currently serves 600 classrooms each month. These tasting kits are the simplest way for our school to integrate nutrition education into our classrooms. Each month, participating teachers receive a package that features samples of a produce item grown by a local farmer for students to taste, nutrition education curriculum, parent newsletters, and farmer profiles. At (School Name), (enter free and reduced percentage) of students qualify for free and reduced meals, and these inequities often influence health behavior. Because of this we request (\$ amount) so that we can provide this program to (x number of classes), serving (multiply number of classes by 32) students total!

Funds will allow us to participate in this program as CAFF charges \$15 per kit to cover the cost of fresh produce from local farmers, printing costs, program supplies, and delivery charges. Ultimately, the Harvest of the Month Tasting Kit Program transforms students from passive consumers to informed advocates who make good nutrition and stewardship choices through food. (School Name) thanks (Foundation Name) for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please contact us at (insert contact info).

Warmly,

Signature

(Tax ID # of the school)

## Ask for Sponsorship

Local businesses are often enthusiastic to help support schools in their area, but you have to ask! Even if they can't support HOTM, they may be able to offer in-kind support in the form of classroom supplies like napkins, cooking supplies, etc. One of the easiest ways to ask for sponsorship is to send out a letter. We've included a template below that you can fill out with your information.

### Sample Sponsorship Letter:

Date

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of (School Name), I wish to request a donation so we can participate in the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) Harvest of the Month Tasting Kit Program (HOTM). HOTM is a program that provides tasting kits of local, seasonal fruits and vegetables to students around our county each month. HOTM is often paired with lessons in the garden and emphasizes local food system and nutrition education. Your donation will help our school's commitment to nutrition grow even stronger!

(School Name) serves (number of students) (range of grades) students. Of this number, (percentage free and reduced) of students qualify for the free and reduced meal program. The HOTM program is essential to providing students with hands-on experiences, encouraging healthy behaviors, and an appreciation for trying new foods.

We are requesting you to sponsor our school to receive HOTM Tasting Kits for the 2014 - 2015 school year. We have found that this program is incredibly beneficial to our students and would love to share photos and quotes of our students' experiences with Harvest of the Month.

(School Name) thanks (Business Name) for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please contact us at (insert contact info).

Warmly,

Signature

(Tax ID # of the school)

## Other Fundraising Ideas

- Ask parents to support the program for their child's class. 9 months of HOTM for a class of 32 students only costs about \$4 per student; which is an easy ask of 44 cents per student each month!
- Ask for PTA/PTO support
- Check with your district nutrition service dept to see if they can help fund the program
- Host a school event (for ex: a walkathon with pledged sponsorship for every 400 meters walked)
- Instead of selling candy to raise money, you can sell fruit, seeds or plant starts.  
<http://www.farmfreshfunds.com/>

## How CAFF Can Help You Fundraise

We want to help you through this process. We will continue to send out grant opportunities as they are available. We're also happy to come present to your PTA/PTO, teachers association, child nutrition dept, wellness committee, etc. If you need a letter of support for a grant or when asking a local business for sponsorship, please let us know!

If you are in San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, San Benito or Monterey County, and would like more info please contact:

Allie Hoffman  
Farm to School Coordinator  
(831) 761-8507  
[allie@caff.org](mailto:allie@caff.org)

If you are in Sonoma or Marin County, and would like more info please contact:

Daniele J.A. Strawn  
Farm to School Coordinator  
(707) 824-1823  
[daniele@caff.org](mailto:daniele@caff.org)

