

FAQs Community Supported Agriculture in the Workplace

~ Adapted from resources produced by the Carver County Public Health & Environment Division, Chaska, Minnesota

1. What is a CSA?

A CSA is a partnership between a farm and a community of supporters, employees, individuals, families, etc. 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. Worksites can arrange to have the food delivered on a specific day and to a specific location, depending on the farmer's drop-off route. CSA is a mutually beneficial relationship that keeps family farmers on the land, provides the freshest food to farm members, and builds strong, vibrant communities. There are two primary types of CSAs: the weekly box, and the pre-paid loyalty card that customers can use to shop at the farmer's stand throughout the season.

2. What is a Workplace CSA?

Workplace CSA provides you the opportunity to receive a fresh box of local produce delivered right to your work every week. Each share contains a variety of the freshest produce and products from your local farm. Many organizations are incorporating CSAs into their employee wellness programs; it is a great way to encourage people to eat more fruits and vegetables.

3. Why should I take advantage of a CSA?

By participating, employees have the convenience of fresh, reasonably priced produce delivered to their worksite. Employees will also have access to recipes and cooking tips to help them learn how to prepare the produce they receive in their box.

- Growers receive better prices for their crops, since there is no middle-man in this model. They also gain financial security, because the farmer knows what their typical weekly sales will be, in advance, so they know how much to plant.
- CSA members receive the freshest grown produce and sustainable farm products and keep hard earned dollars circulating in our local economy. Members get to know your farmer, how your food is grown, and become active participants in viability of your farm.

4. What is the cost?

Cost can vary depending on the type of CSA:

- Flowers – U-pick at the farm. \$15/visit (summer)
- Vegetables - \$29-\$35 per box, or roughly \$600 for a six-month share; Pre-paid loyalty cards will vary (May – October)
- Meat – \$10 per lb. of meat, share sizes vary. Any combo of beef, lamb, pork and chicken. On farm pickup only. (May – October)
- Fruit - \$26 per box (June – October)

5. Can I choose what items I want in my box or order a half share?

The boxes are assembled at the farm and depend on the seasonal crops available. *You cannot choose which items you want or do not want in each box.* However, it is possible to share a full/every-week share with a colleague. Your workplace can help match you with others looking for a "half" share. If there are any items you don't like, you can ask a co-worker to trade for something

you like better. Many workplaces create a swap box where people leave items they don't like and take items they like better.

6. What kinds of produce can I expect in my box?

Vegetable CSA growers often offer members a diversity of seasonal vegetables, herbs, and sometimes fruit. Over the summer and during the early fall growing season in Michigan, produce typically includes spinach, lettuce, greens, cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, beets, cilantro, parsley, garlic, green and yellow onions, carrots, spinach, kale, zucchini, green beans, sweet and hot peppers, peas, tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplant, basil, kohlrabi, radishes, potatoes, leeks, hard squashes, watermelon, and sometimes strawberries, raspberries or apples. Farms typically supply a list of their crops and when they are in season. **Meat CSA** farmers offer any combination of lamb, beef, pork and chicken, along with various cuts and value-added products like sausage and bacon. Lots of options for share size (small, medium or large). **Fruit CSAs** offer strawberries, cherries, pears, apples, peaches, grapes, raspberries, blueberries, plums, nectarines, apple cider, along with some veggies like asparagus, peas, beans and potatoes.

7. How much produce comes in a box?

Each produce share contains a variety of items. Shares are typically lighter in the spring and heavier as the season progresses. For a family of four, one full share is plenty for a week's worth of cooking. For two people, it might be more than enough produce for a week, but, with a little creativity (freezing, etc.), a full share can enable year-round cooking with fresh food from your farm! If you are vegetarians or heavy vegetable eaters, a full share might be just right for a family of two.

8. What are the benefits of eating locally?

Buying locally grown produce enhances your quality of life through nutritional benefits and the satisfaction of harmonizing your values with your purchasing power. Eating locally supports family farms AND your community, by creating local jobs and economic growth. Local food also benefits the environment, especially if your CSA farm is certified organic. On average, food travels 1,500 miles before reaching your plate, using precious resources for transportation, refrigeration, and distribution along the way. By becoming a CSA member, you join the growing local food movement and help to create a more secure local food system.

9. Where can I find a CSA?

Visit the Farmers Market webpage or follow this link for the list of Ann Arbor Farmers Market vendors participating in the workplace CSA program. <https://www.a2gov.org/departments/Parks-Recreation/parks-places/farmers-market/Pages/City-Employee-Workplace-CSA.aspx>