



Agricultural Institute of Marin, ExtraFood, and Ritter Center Awarded State Grants to Advance Fresh Food Accessibility

Marin County, CA – Tuesday, January 9, 2024 – In a strengthening of Marin County food systems, three local nonprofits – the Agricultural Institute of Marin (AIM), ExtraFood, and Ritter Center– jointly announce they were selected as recipients of the Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program awards, administered by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Farm to Fork Office. These dedicated local organizations were recognized among 103 projects that promote access to healthy foods in underserved communities while promoting California-grown agriculture.

In Marin County, one in five residents is at risk of food insecurity. Over 15,000 Marinites receive CalFresh (food stamp) benefits to help put healthy food on the table. “Marin County is often touted as one of the healthiest places to live; however, we have some of the highest inequities in the state, making healthy food hard to access especially for older adults, people of low income, and communities of color,” said Andy Naja-Riese, chief executive officer of the Agricultural Institute of Marin and Co-Chair of the Marin Countywide HEAL Collaborative.

ExtraFood will use its grant award of \$256,765 to provide 37 refrigeration units to 22 of their food distribution partner sites as well as their facility. With additional refrigeration and freezer space, ExtraFood will reach over 25,000 food-insecure people living in Marin, Sonoma, and San Francisco and increase equitable access to healthy fresh food in our community.

Ritter Center’s grant of \$41,382 will fund walk-in refrigeration and freezer equipment for its expanded food pantry at 800 A Street in San Rafael, Ritter Center’s future location scheduled to open in late 2024. After 43 years on Ritter Street, the organization is moving to a new location to continue meeting the evolving needs of the community’s most vulnerable people.

AIM’s grant award of \$173,218 funds a new Rollin’ Root mobile farmers market truck, which will serve as a cornerstone in its mission to provide accessible, nutritious food to older adults and under-served communities across Marin and San Francisco. The



mobile market addresses healthy food access barriers of affordability and mobility while supporting the livelihoods of small-scale local farmers, dairies, and food producers.

AIM, ExtraFood, and Ritter Center are honored to contribute to this progressive movement and remain steadfast in their commitment to a future where sustainable agriculture and food and nutrition security are a reality for all.

About AIM, ExtraFood, and Ritter Center:

The Agricultural Institute of Marin (AIM) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that operates nine certified farmers markets across the Bay Area, along with a variety of agricultural education, healthy food access, and training programs.

ExtraFood is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending hunger and reducing wasted food in the Bay Area. ExtraFood rescues surplus food from businesses, schools, hospitals, and backyards and redistributes it to people in need through their nonprofit recipient partners. In addition to food recovery, ExtraFood has a variety of programs including gleaning, meal-making and emergency response that serve our community's most vulnerable people with healthy fresh food.

Ritter Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to prevent and resolve homelessness and improve the health, dignity, and well-being of people living in poverty in Marin County by providing high-quality, culturally sensitive, easily accessible medical care and social services.

Organizational Quotes:

Karimah Hay, Mobile Market Manager, Agricultural Institute of Marin

"I am thrilled that AIM has been awarded this incredible opportunity. This support will not only help our mission to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables but will also allow us to start carrying more products, including local dairy and eggs. I am very proud of how much our program has grown over the last 5 years, and with the addition of a second truck, this will greatly help us extend our reach. We are grateful for the CDFA



Farm to Fork Office for their belief in our vision and for contributing to the success of our program.”

Will Dittmar, Executive Director, ExtraFood

“In the pursuit of our mission to fight hunger and prevent wasted food, we are thrilled to be a part of this generous grant. This transformative support catalyzes us to amplify our efforts to alleviate hunger, prevent perfectly good food from being wasted, and create positive change in our community. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the CDFA Farm to Fork Office for this grant and recognizing our commitment to serving even more vulnerable people in our community with healthy fresh food.”

Mark Shotwell, CEO, Ritter Center

“Ritter Center’s food pantry helps ensure that thousands of under-resourced Marin residents won’t have to choose between paying rent and putting food on the table. Over 350 households and unsheltered individuals receive food each week, which amounts to more than 16,000 bags of food distributed each year. The new equipment will allow us to help even more people. This initial food connection often grows to include other services, such as access to income and health benefits. We appreciate the tremendous support of the CDFA Farm to Fork Office grant to help create new beginnings for our neighbors in need.”

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