



# Overview of the USDA/AMS “Farmers to Families” Coronavirus Farmer’s Assistance Program (CFAP). Supporting the Inland Valley COVID-19 Resourcing Collaborative.

The Blessing Center Inc. Lead  
Agency, Redlands, CA



# A Community Outreach Program of The Blessing Center



# The Blessing Center Inc.

- ▶ 501 (c) 3 non-profit charitable aid organization
- ▶ Established in 1998
- ▶ Joseph Storehouse Food Bank – New Hope Free Clinic – The Resource Center (Job Training) ESL, GED, Legal Aid, Asylum Seekers Program and Hope Reentry Programs, AA, Al Anon
- ▶ Transformative Homes of Hope Transitional Housing for homeless children & their mothers – 2009
- ▶ Initiated Redlands Charitable Resource Coalition – 2004



# USDA/AMS Program Timeline

- ▶ April 17, 2020 USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue announces CFAP to assist farmers & dairymen during pandemic
- ▶ AMS develops program as a partnership between government, producers, non-profits and consumers
- ▶ Three billion dollars allocated to purchase \$461 million in fresh fruit & vegetables, \$317 million in dairy products, \$218 million in meat and \$175 million for combination boxes
- ▶ Initial funding schedule: April 20<sup>th</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 – \$1.2 billion dollars spent
- ▶ Second performance period: July 1<sup>st</sup> to August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 – \$1.16 billion dollars spent
- ▶ To date: 35.4 million food boxes invoiced in round one of feeding cycle
- ▶ 8.1 million food boxes invoiced in round two (July 1<sup>st</sup> to July 21<sup>st</sup>)





United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

# Farmers to Families Food Box

USDA is partnering with farmers, ranchers, specialty crop producers, food processors and distributors, and non-profit organizations to ensure that all Americans have access to the fresh and wholesome food they need during the COVID-19 national emergency.



## Farmers

sell food previously destined for restaurants and bulk purchasers to distributors, preventing waste

## Distributors

partner with USDA to package family-sized boxes with fresh produce, dairy and meat products, then transport them to non-profits across America

## Families

pick up food boxes from local schools, food banks, faith-based organizations and other non-profits



# Inland Valley COVID-19 Resourcing Collaborative Mission:

- ▶ Create effective and sustainable infrastructure distribution networks in underserved communities throughout the two county Inland Valley Region
- ▶ Procure and distribute USDA/AMS Farmers to Families food products at volume levels for VLI/LI populations
- ▶ Rectify historic resourcing disparity and inequality between LA/OC and the Inland Valley two county region (\$100 vs. \$4 ratio)



# Collaboration “Wins” to Date

- ▶ Total number of full semi-truck loads contracted: 104
- ▶ Total dairy boxes allocated: 156,000
- ▶ Total gallons fluid milk allocated: 184,000
- ▶ Total dollar invoice value: \$5,120,000
- ▶ Number of unduplicated families served: 42,200
- ▶ Total number of individuals served (four times multiplier): 204,800





# Food as a 'Weapon'

- ▶ We are waging a war –
  - ❖ On poverty
  - ❖ On hunger
  - ❖ On injustice
  
- ❖ We fight hate with love
- ❖ We fight hunger with food
- ❖ We fight injustice by doing justice



# The Power of Collaboration

- ▶ The power of a community is their unity
- ▶ ‘What one can do well, two can do better’ – C. Turley
- ▶ Collaborations endure to the extent they fulfil their purpose – to serve
- ▶ The “Why” of our existence – to alleviate suffering, despair, fear & hopelessness wherever we encounter it



# Collaborative Partnerships

There is enormous power in collective effort

- ▶ Redlands Unified School District – plus 40 agencies
- ▶ Hope Pantry & Lake Elsinore Unified School District
- ▶ Desert Manna & Bartsow Unified School District plus others
- ▶ Inland Harvest plus 50 agencies
- ▶ Sikh Temple serving 2,000 local families
- ▶ Perris Unified School District, North County Health Services (NCHS)
- ▶ Dozens of collaborative distribution events



# Distribution Morning – July 17, 2020



# Ongoing Weekly Distribution

- ▶ To over 40 collaboration partners in the East Valley area every Thursday at RUSD
- ▶ Over a dozen school districts resourced each week throughout the two-county region
- ▶ Current need greatly outweighs our available supply





# Another Load Ready for Delivery

- ▶ Value of each truck shipped is approximately \$40K
- ▶ Over \$5 million worth of high nutritional value dairy & fluid milk products distributed in the last two months



# RUSD Weekly Distribution to Families – 1,700

- ▶ Produce Box
- ▶ Dairy Box
- ▶ Groceries



# Immediate & Long-term Project Goals

- ▶ **MAXIMIZE IMPACT OF THE USDA/AMS PROGRAM ON VLI/LI FAMILIES**
  - ▶ **BUILD EFFECTIVE & SUSTAINABLE COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS**
  - ▶ **LOBBY POLITICAL LEADERS FOR PROGRAM LONGEVITY**

