What is Farm-to-Food Bank?

We consider ‘Farm-to-Food Bank’ (F2FB) to be a broad term that includes many strategies to increase fresh produce in your food bank. These strategies include:

- Plant-A-Row for the hungry
- Community gardens
- Food bank gardens & farms
- Seed or plant start distributions
- Gleaning
- Farmer’s market recovery
- Donations from growers or gardeners
- Contract or direct purchasing from growers

The term “Farm-to-Food Bank,” can be somewhat of a misnomer in this context. Your food bank doesn’t need to be in a rural farming community or even have access to farmers to start a F2FB program. Even if you are located in an urban area, growers truck their produce into the city every week for farmer’s markets or to food hubs. Many city residents have gardens or fruit trees in their backyards. These are terrific potential F2FB partners.

The average citizen’s growing awareness of the broader food movement along with trends like sustainable agriculture, eating local, and better awareness of nutrition can support your goals of increasing fresh produce to your food bank participants. Harness some of the energy behind these food issues to attract volunteers to your F2FB program. See if there are other organizations with a food or health focus that might have overlapping goals with yours.

Why Farm to Food Bank?

These strategies are right for your community if:

- You want to increase fresh produce available to your clients;
- Your open hours are such that deliveries from your distributor don’t allow you to receive fresh produce without it spoiling;
- You want to offer diverse produce choices to your clients;
- You are concerned about your clients' health;
- You want to support local agriculture;
- You want to build a stronger community.

For more information about starting or developing your farm-to-food bank initiative, please email growingconnections@northwestharvest.org, or contact Laura Titzer at 206.923.7423