

# Farm to School Innovator Series: Establishing Simple Acquisitions and Bids

February 25, 2026

## **Liz Carlton**

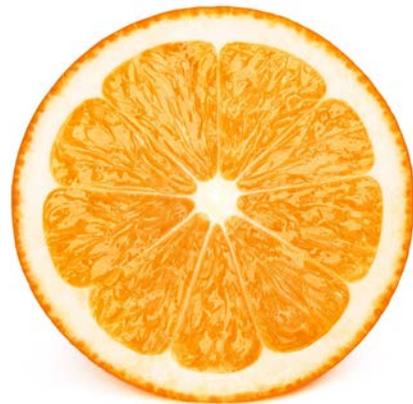
California Food for California Kids  
Program Manager

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**Ben Lucas Thomas**

Shared Plate Strategies  
Founder and CEO

**Mark Tadros**

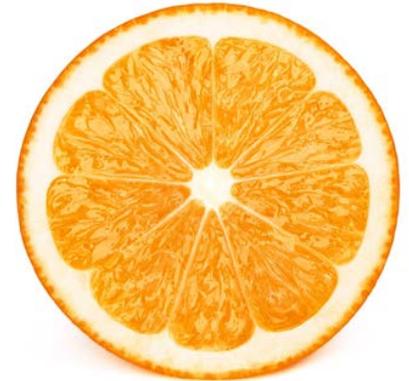
Aziz Farms  
President and Farmer

**Florence Simpson**

Los Angeles Unified School District  
Deputy Director of Food Services



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# Live Interpretation Community Language Cooperative

The Community Language Cooperative (CLC) provides interpretation services, focus groups, and inclusivity/diversity training to make community, academic and governmental events more accessible for all. We help remove barriers and broaden opportunities for participation and community engagement by non-English speakers and train organizations on implementation of inclusivity practices.



# Agenda

- Welcome + Updates
- Establishing Simple Acquisitions and Bids
- Guest Panel
- Q+A
- Farm to School Poll
- Regional Breakouts
- Resources
- Closing





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# CALIFORNIA FOOD FOR CALIFORNIA KIDS®

**171**

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

**40**

COUNTIES

# California Food for California Kids New Member Introductions



**HEALDSBURG UNIFIED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**



# Farm to School Innovator Series

The Farm to School Innovator Series provides virtual gatherings for farm to school leaders focused on building resilient school food systems in California. Live interpretation into Spanish will be provided for the event series.



# Establishing Simple Acquisitions and Bids

# Simple Acquisitions

- Simple Acquisition Threshold (SAT) was increased from \$250,000 to \$350,000 as of October 1, 2025.
- District must solicit 2 quotes. If only 1 bid is received, contact solicited vendors to confirm that the bid too restrictive and document follow up.
- District must solicit the same info from each vendor and be as specific as possible.



# Bids

- Lowest price wins. Requirements can be included but must be general enough.
- Contracts up to one year. Extensions and piggybacks are allowed if stated!
- Don't forget: Buy American
- Must track # of contracts and/or purchases and \$ spend in the Vendor Paid List and SFA Procurement Table for CDE Procurement Reviews.



# RFQs for Farm to School at LAUSD

- Simple Acquisitions are conducted through Requests for Quotes (RFQs)
- Seasonal (3-4 month) RFQs to test working with new vendors, regional food hubs
- Request availability lists to choose seasonal varieties (Request for Information)
- Include items, pack sizes, volumes, time frames, # of deliveries and locations
- Organic and local requirements
- Solicit like vendors based on your goals



# RFQs for Farm to School at LAUSD

- \$653,000 + 679,000 lbs of produce from 27 farms via 6 food hubs + 2 regional distributors
- 45% Organic, 67% BIPOC farmers – at 34¢ per serving!
- Farmer, Hub + District Buy-In





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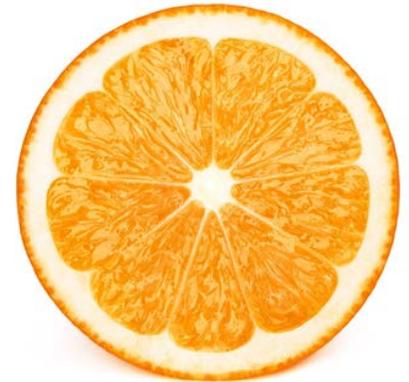
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\*\*\*\*\*  
AZIZ FARMS

California  
Pistachios

THE  
PACKHOUSE  
AT AZIZ FARMS  
PACHISTACHIO

AZIZ FARMS  
EST. 1987  
1000 S. MOUNTAIN VIEW

Murphy



## THE FIELD WHO WE GROW FOR

STUDENTS IN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
IMPLEMENTING FARM-TO-SCHOOL  
INITIATIVES

PATRONS OF THE FINEST RESTAURANTS IN  
THE COACHELLA VALLEY

RESIDENTS OF UPSCALE COUNTRY CLUBS

CUSTOMERS AND RECIPIENTS OF  
COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE  
(CSA) PROGRAMS

GUESTS AT FARM-TO-TABLE EVENTS

### FAMILY-FARM FUN FACT

AZIZ FARMS PIVOTED FROM EXCLUSIVELY GROWING  
HARVESTING, PACKING AND SELLING DATES TO  
GROWING, HARVESTING, AGGREGATING, PACKING AND  
SELLING A VARIETY OF PRODUCE ITEMS DURING THE  
COVID-19 PANDEMIC. THE EXPANSION WAS NAMED THE  
PACKHOUSE AT AZIZ FARMS TO REFLECT THE NEW  
DIRECTION AND HONOR ITS ROOTS.



@PACKHOUSE\_FARM



PACKHOUSE AT AZIZ FARMS



AZIZPACKHOUSE.COM



# Farm to School Dream School

Garden-Enhanced-  
Nutrition Education  
Solidifies in State  
Standards.

Formal Contracts  
directly with Farmers  
and Food Hubs.

Healthiest Kids excited  
about local fruits & veg!

I went across  
at all 21 schools

Sign/EBT  
for teachers  
to spend @  
Farmers' Market



# Guest Panel Discussion

# Farm to School Poll

# Regional Breakouts

# CA FARM TO SCHOOL NETWORK REGIONAL MAP

-  SUPERIOR REGION
-  NORTH COAST REGION
-  BAY AREA REGION
-  CENTRAL REGION
-  SAN JOAQUIN REGION
-  SOUTH COAST REGION
-  GREATER LOS ANGELES REGION
-  SOUTHERN REGION



# Resources

# Center for Ecoliteracy Resources

## **PUBLICATIONS**

- [California Flavors, Sabores de California](#)
- [Nourishing Students Resources](#)
- [Fresh from California](#)

## **EVENTS**

- [California Food for California Kids® Collective Action Week: April 20–24, 2026](#)
- [Farm to School Innovator Series: May 6, 2026](#)
- [Farm to School Innovator Series Archive](#)

# Join the California Food for California Kids Network

California Food for California Kids is an initiative of the Center for Ecoliteracy that builds the capacity and commitment of public school districts to provide all students with fresh, locally-grown school meals and develop connections between the cafeteria, classroom, and garden.



# Partner Organization Resources

## **Association of State Public Health Nutritionists**

- Farm to ECE Evaluation Webinar Series Part II: Simple Approaches to Measuring the Big Impacts of your Farm to ECE Efforts – *April 30*

## **California Department of Food and Agriculture**

- Office of Farm to Fork California Farm to School Program
- CDFA Office of Farm to Fork: CA Farm to School Network Call – *March 26*

# Partner Organization Resources

## **LunchAssist**

- [The Lunch Break Webinar](#) – *March–October 2026*

## **Newman's Own Foundation**

- [Food Justice for Kids Prize Informational Webinar March](#) – *March 25*

# Grant Opportunities

## **Newman's Own Foundation**

- [Food Justice for Kids Prize](#)

*Nomination Deadline: April 21, 2026*

*Application Deadline: April 28, 2026*

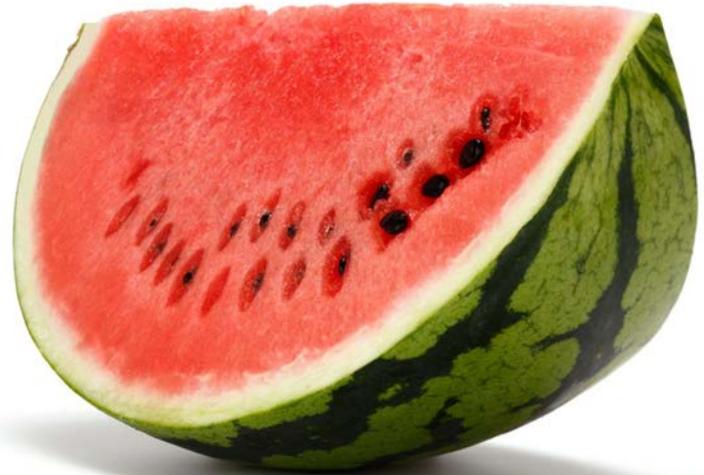
## **Salad Bars to Schools (SB2S)**

- [Expanding Access to Fresh Fruits and Vegetables in School Meals](#)

*Ongoing Grant Program*

# Cultivating Farm to School Leaders

Funding for the Cultivating Farm to School Leaders project is made possible by the 2023 Farm to School Incubator Grant through the CDFA Office of Farm to Fork's Farm to School Program.



Thank you!



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