



# Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

*Growing local farms, healthy food, and strong communities  
in Vermont since 1971.*



## **About Farm Share**

Now entering its 27th year, the NOFA-VT Farm Share program provides low income Vermonters (185% FPL) with subsidized CSA shares, while ensuring the farm receives the full cost of the share. In prior years, the participants have paid 50% of the share cost and the other 50% of the cost is split between NOFA-VT and the participating farms who solicit donations from their communities. Participants may pay their portion of the share using 3SquaresVT benefits and can often set up payment installments with most farms. We typically have about 50 participating farms. They are paid for the full value of their crops and are able to serve low income community members for whom the full cost of a CSA share is prohibitive. In this way, the Farm Share Program supports both food security and farm viability.

Previously, NOFA-VT has raised funds through a statewide fundraising event with restaurant partners called *Share The Harvest*, as well as through small grants and donations from our membership. In 2020, the *Share the Harvest* revenue was dramatically reduced because of the economic hardship faced by so many of our restaurant partners. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we received a subgrant of \$75,000 in CARES Act funds from the Vermont Foodbank. This allowed us to not only make up for the lost revenue from our traditional fundraising program, but we were also able to scale the program up at a time of significantly heightened food insecurity, increasing the number of fall and winter shares by 86% and the number of individuals served by 85%. The additional funds allowed us to eliminate the farm match for our fall season and increase participation by 200% compared to the fall season in 2019.

**A \$75,000 appropriation would allow us to more than double the number of subsidized shares we can offer, and expand the number of participating farms compared to what we project we will be able to do for 2021.** This means NOFA-VT could serve 1404 Vermonters versus 630. The \$75,000 we are requesting would translate into \$251,000 in revenue for small farmers in Vermont. We know from decades of experience that Farm Share participants increase their consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, feel more connected to their communities and save scarce income to be spent on other necessities. We hope the legislature will invest in our small farms and our low income neighbors.

## **Quotes from 2020 Participants**

*"My husband and I both have chronic health conditions and being able to have a CSA Share from Full Moon Farm is one of the things that keeps us out of the hospital. The quality and quantity of food we get through our CSA is incredible. We have 3 kids and I'm only able to work sporadically, there is just no way we'd be able to afford to eat this well without the farm share program. It makes being healthy possible for my family, we don't have to sacrifice the quality of our food just because we are lower income."*

*"THANK YOU! We are grateful for this subsidy/help in feeding our family healthy, local produce. The connection we get through the program- connection with our greater community, connection with the land, connection with the seasons, is celebrated in our house, and we recognize how lucky we are to be able to have this opportunity."*

*"I am elderly and I need organic, fresh food in my diet to remain healthy. If I did not have NOFA's help, I could not afford the weekly cost of CSA shares. I would not get the 17 or so weeks of healthy food all summer long. I am so grateful to local farms and NOFA to provide the nutrition I so badly need. Thank you!"*