

Whom to call: Both of your Senators and Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Tom Harkin

How to Call: The Capitol switch board can connect you to any Member's office - (202) 224-3121

Or look it up here:

http://www.senate.gov/general/resources/pdf/senators_phone_list.pdf

What to say: Ask to speak to the person covering the farm bill. If you get their voice mail, please leave a detailed message. Here is an example:

"I am ____ from _____ and I am calling to urge Senator XXXXX to support **mandatory funding** for the Community Food Projects program. The House-passed Farm Bill (H.R. 2419) reauthorized the Community Food Projects program at \$30 million, but stripped it of the mandatory funding base it has had for ten years. Without mandatory funding, the future of this program -- regarded as one of the most successful competitive grant programs within USDA -- will be jeopardized. Over its history, this program has funded over 240 innovative projects across the United States, promoting a wide variety of community-based solutions to local food system and food security problems and building stronger links between farmers and consumers. As the Senate begins to review Farm Bill, I am requesting that Community Food Projects program receives mandatory funding, as it has for the last 10 years."

If you reach someone appropriate to talk to, here are Additional Talking Points:

- First authorized in the 1996 Farm Bill, the Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program (CFP) has earned a reputation as a dynamic and adaptable force within the changing circumstances of community food needs. CFP has made grants to over 240 innovative community food projects, promoting a wide variety of community-based solutions to local food system and food security problems. At the current \$5 million annual funding level, the program is forced to decline scores of worthy requests every year. In 2006, USDA received 186 proposals for funding, but \$30 million worth of needed and fundable projects went unfunded due to the \$5 million cap. The administrators of the CFP program highlight as one of the Department of Agriculture's favorite programs for supporting farmers and consumers. Because of the success and popularity of the CFP program, it is clear that a significant expansion is warranted.
- CFP's purposes were clearly expressed by Congress, which established the program to assist non-profit, community-based organizations with the development of projects that would require a one-time infusion of federal assistance to become self-sustaining and were designed to:
 - Meet the food needs of low-income people;
 - Increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs, and;
 - Promote comprehensive responses to food, farm, and nutrition issues by combining the resources of multiple sectors of the food system.

- Over the past ten years, CFP has played a major role in forging a national network of innovators who are eager to learn from each other, know how to put good ideas into action, and empower their communities to solve their own problems. In addition, CFP often creates vital linkages between rural and urban communities, ensuring that both are able to develop economic opportunities for food producers and consumers. As a result of these linkages, local planners now work with food program advocates, public health officials engage community development groups, and farmers see their futures increasingly tied to local markets.

BE SURE ALSO TO TALK ABOUT YOUR OWN PROJECT IF YOU HAVE BEEN FUNDED BY CFP.