



## **Fresh produce for low income food providers from the Portland Growers Alliance**

**SUMMARY:** With the help of local donors, we will offer 2,500lbs of fresh, local and organic produce to Portland food providers serving the needy

### **Vision and Description**

Portland residents that are homeless or have limited incomes often find it difficult to access fresh produce. Food providers often receive free food which is not especially fresh or is second-quality, but rarely are highly quality, organic vegetables available for a discount. We will make healthy, locally grown produce available to the hungry with financial support from Organically Grown Company and other donors. Food providers (such as food banks and soup kitchens) can purchase credits at the beginning of the year to receive fresh produce items throughout the season. The credits are matched 3:1 from donated funds. For example, an organization which purchases \$100 receives \$400 worth of produce. Three options are available for pickup. Organizations can join our CSA program, shop at our farmers markets stand or place advance bulk orders for \$100 or more (eligible for delivery). Our goal is to distribute \$2,000 worth of produce in 2011 (2,500 pounds) by securing \$1500 in donations and \$500 in contribution from the providers.

***From Joy Cartier, Assistant Director at P:ear (participant in 2010):***

*The CSA boxes have made a considerable difference in the quality and quantity of the food we have been able to provide for the homeless youth we serve. Our food program is unique in that we use both local restaurants to provide meals 2 days a week and we cook "in house" 2 days a week. The CSA boxes have provided the much needed fruits and vegetables for the cooks to work with and have supplemented the restaurant entrees creating well balanced meals and proper nutrition. We simply could not have made nutritionally sound meals without your support.*

### **Information on the Growers Alliance**

The Portland Growers Alliance is a new grower-led, cooperative marketing service for new and disadvantaged farmers. We jointly market and distributed naturally grown vegetable crops through diverse direct-market channels. We are building a self-supporting social enterprise specifically designed to increase market access and sales for disadvantaged growers.

The project is collaboration between two nonprofit organizations, Grow Portland and Mercy Corps Northwest. With limited education and literacy, many refugee farmers cannot effectively sell produce through direct-market channels. The efforts help growers increase sales and profits, laying the foundation for successful and durable farm businesses.

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