



Boston Area Gleaners, Inc.
From Farms to Families

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Non-Profits Team Up to Connect Farmers to Families in Need

May 14, 2020 – Waltham, MA - [Boston Area Gleaners](http://www.bostonareagleaners.org), a Waltham-based non-profit dedicated to bringing fresh produce from local farms to families in need, has been awarded a contract by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to distribute pre-packaged boxes of fresh fruits and vegetables to hunger-relief partners in the region via the [Farmers to Families Food Box Program](#).

As part of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, USDA has allocated \$3 billion to purchase and distribute agricultural products to those in need. “This program allows us to rapidly expand efforts in response to the increasing food insecurity created by the COVID-19 crisis,” said Boston Area Gleaners’ executive director, Usha Thakrar. “We have always been committed to supporting farmers, reducing on-farm food waste, and providing healthy food for families. This initiative allows us to fulfill all three objectives.”

Boston Area Gleaners is collaborating with Tufts University’s Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy’s [New Entry Sustainable Farming Project](#) (New Entry) on this effort. Based on the north shore, New Entry’s mission is to improve the local and regional food systems by training the next generation of farmers. “New Entry has been supporting small, limited resource, and immigrant and refugee farmers over the last 15 years through our New Entry Food Hub and this program will allow us to continue to purchase diverse, specialty and ethnic crops for distribution to families in need,” said Jennifer Hashley, New Entry’s Director. “This collaboration with Boston Area Gleaners complements and extends the work we have been doing over the past 8 years, distributing produce to senior centers, food pantries, homeless shelters, and other food access organizations.”

Between them, Boston Area Gleaners and New Entry have over a decade of experience distributing fresh produce to the regional hunger-relief network. The two organizations will work together to provide a weekly supply of produce boxes that will be distributed directly to families. Distribution partners include those serving a wide geographic area such as Community Servings, Food For Free, and Food Link as well as those serving specific communities such as the Salem Public School system, Lazarus House in Lawrence, Beverly Bootstraps in Beverly and Mystic Community Market in Malden.

“As we refine our process for sourcing and building the Farmers to Families Box Program, we plan to add more distribution points to this network. The USDA program has given us a tremendous opportunity to have a positive impact on the regional food system,” added Ms. Thakrar, “We are deeply grateful to the USDA for prioritizing the needs of local farms and look forward to serving thousands of families with this effort.”

Additional Resources:

[Boston Area Gleaners](#) (Social Media: FB - [@bostonareagleaners](#); IG: [@bostonareagleaners](#); Tw: [@bostonareglean](#))
[New Entry Sustainable Farming Project](#)
[USDA Farmers to Families Box Program](#)
[Farmers to Families Box Program Infographic](#)