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New Report by the Milken Institute: A Blueprint for Employer-led Food as Health Strategies

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As Food as Medicine (also known as Food is Medicine) campaigns increase in popularity, employers recognize the ability to leverage food to create healthier and happier employees. Employees are looking for benefits beyond healthcare coverage. They are interested in benefits that positively contribute to their overall health and well-being, such as access to local and nutritious food and its role in the healthcare system.

However, some employers can become overwhelmed with how to integrate food into their employee benefit offerings and the volume of solutions available. Employers must design a strategy based on the employees' needs and employer resources, weigh strategies of implementation, navigate a payment strategy that is beneficial for all parties, create and sustain partnerships with those providing the benefit, engage employees, and measure the impact of their programming. An organization at any stage of this process can develop a plan that meets employee needs and employer resources; they just need guidance and a plan of action.

The University of Kentucky has been a leader in the Food as Medicine space, as the CSA Voucher Program was piloted in 2015. This year, the University partnered with 13 local farms to provide employees and retirees with vouchers toward the cost of a CSA share from one of the partner farms. The CSA Voucher Program is just one of the many health and well-being offerings at the University, but remains one of the most prominent. While the University and other important players have piloted and made this program possible, not all employers are this established. To help employers navigate the choices, strategies, and pathways, the Milken Institute (a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank) offers a step-by-step roadmap in a new report that guides employers through key considerations to offer strategies that meet their organizations' priorities and their employees' needs, contributing to better health outcomes, reduced health-care costs, and a more engaged, satisfied workforce. The [CSA Innovation Network](#) and others shared insights with The Milken Institute to contribute to their "Food as Health" toolkit. Please note, what we know as "CSA shares" are referred to as "harvest subscriptions" throughout the document. See the full report and a few additional CSA-specific resources listed below.

Read the full report here: <https://milkeninstitute.org/content-hub/research-and-reports/reports/blueprint-employer-led-food-health-strategies>.

Other helpful resources for employers:

- CSA Innovation Network, CSA-to-University Toolkit: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-r3iUpqxrWELWrI_h2OxvQ1bPOJol-9bObeaBK4oB0M/view
 - KY Farm Share Coalition, Workplace CSA Toolkit: https://www.csainnovationnetwork.org/files/ugd/a09f0c_8751f368f37b4745b7df5e92133bd06b.pdf
 - Brooke Gentile, 10 Reasons Why Employers Choose Workplace CSA: <https://www.kyfarmshare.org/top-10-reasons-why>
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