

EFI Receives New Grant From Walmart Foundation

Funds Promote Worker Voice, Responsible Recruitment and Adoption of the Ethical Charter

WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, UNITED STATES, June 28, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Equitable Food Initiative](#), the workforce

development and certification organization that partners with growers, farmworkers, retailers and consumer groups, announced that the

Walmart Foundation has awarded it a new one-year grant of \$700,000. The grant builds on a successful prior award to promote responsible recruitment and adoption of the [Ethical Charter on Responsible Labor Practices](#) among produce growers in Mexico.



Equitable Food Initiative certifies Responsibly Grown, Farmworker Assured fresh produce

“

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Gavin Bailey, Walmart Foundation

The new Walmart Foundation funding supports development of a “continuous improvement ramp” program for growers selling to EFI-certified suppliers; a certification program for labor providers to promote responsible recruitment and contracting; and a pilot initiative to measure quality improvements achieved when ethically recruited workers receive skill-building and credentialing services through their EFI-certified employers.

EFI has been building its social assurance program for the past decade and embraced the publication of the Ethical Charter in 2018 as an important industry commitment to elevating labor concerns to the same critical level as food safety. The Ethical Charter’s emphasis on labor-management communication and responsible recruitment aligns well with EFI’s model for building labor-management collaboration by strengthening worker voice and agency.

“We are excited to support EFI's work to scale implementation of the Ethical Charter, strengthen the industry and improve conditions for agricultural workers,” said Gavin Bailey, senior manager

at Walmart Foundation.

The new Walmart Foundation funding supports a program to help growers develop the management systems and communication structures they need to fully implement the principles of the Ethical Charter. It invests in piloting a new certification for labor providers to demonstrate that the workers they deploy have not been subjected to recruitment violations. And since EFI affirms that responsible labor practices actually drive better business performance, the grant will measure improvements in produce quality indicators that can be traced to the inclusion of worker voice and competencies in harvesting and production processes.

“EFI deeply appreciates this support from the Walmart Foundation to expand implementation of the principles of the Ethical Charter, and not just because it’s the right thing to do,” said EFI executive director Peter O’Driscoll. “We believe that workers who are recruited ethically onto farms with safe and dignified working conditions, and who are given the opportunity to gain skills and credentials, can better meet customer demands and improve supplier performance.”

About EFI

Equitable Food Initiative is a nonprofit certification and skill-building organization that seeks to increase transparency in the food supply chain and improve the lives of farmworkers through a team-based approach to training and continuous improvement practices. EFI brings together growers, farmworkers, retailers and consumers to solve the most pressing issues facing the fresh produce industry. Its unparalleled approach sets standards for labor practices, food safety and pest management while engaging workers at all levels on the farm to produce Responsibly Grown, Farmworker Assured® fruits and vegetables. For more information about Equitable Food Initiative, visit equitablefood.org.

About Philanthropy at Walmart

Walmart.org represents the philanthropic efforts of Walmart and the Walmart Foundation. By



NatureSweet workers in Mexico have received training from Equitable Food Initiative



Worker-manager collaborative team from a GoodFarms location in Mexico received training from Equitable Food Initiative

leaning in where the business has unique strengths, Walmart.org works to tackle key social issues and collaborate with others to spark long-lasting systemic change. Walmart has stores in 24 countries, employing more than 2 million associates and doing business with thousands of suppliers who, in turn, employ millions of people. Walmart.org is helping people live better by supporting programs that work to accelerate upward job mobility for frontline workers, address hunger and make healthier, more sustainably-grown food a reality, and build strong communities where Walmart operates. To learn more, visit walmart.org or connect on Twitter @Walmartorg.

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