Open Source Software for CSAs Funded by Western SARE

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The Siskiyou Sustainable Cooperative CSA in Southern Oregon has recently unveiled innovative, open source software developed through funds acquired from SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) to assist CSA farmers in connecting with their members.  At a time when farmers work hard to keep up with some of the latest trends in the local food movement nationally, CSA coordinator Maud Powell sought to provide a high-tech, user friendly tool to support CSA members interested in having their member information right at their fingertips.  "CSAs continue to be a great marketing channel for farmers, but in order to attract customers, they need to be adaptive to cultural trends," says Maud.  The first of its kind, the CSA App was developed by [Josh Shupak](https://www.codementor.io/josh_shupack) with assistance from Lars Faye of [Chee Studio](http://goodchee.com/) and Becky Brown of[iWrite](http://www.iwriteforbusiness.com/).  Siskiyou Sustainable Cooperative CSA members participated in surveys and focus groups to determine the features and functionality that would be used in the App.

The CSA App supports CSA members with easy access to product information, recipes, cooking and storage tips and nutritional information for the produce found in their weekly CSA shares.  The mobile friendly tool was created using a web based platform and is easily customizable by anyone comfortable using a computer and navigating the internet.  "The whole idea is to keep it simple for the farmer and easy to use for the membership," says Powell.   "I wanted to help make CSAs more relevant and accessible for younger generations, and the most obvious way to do that is through the use of technology."  Farmers can utilize the templates in the web platform to create their very own personalized App that can include product information, recipes, cooking videos, farmer bios and any specific instructions about how and where to pick up weekly CSA box deliveries.  Creative users may even find additional ways to provide valuable information to their members using mobile technology.  Access to the customizable web platform is provided free of charge, although a valid credit card is required to secure information in the account set up phase.  All existing content is open source and available for use, although customization may be necessary to reflect the specifics of a particular CSA farm.  The Siskiyou Sustainable Cooperative CSA App can be viewed here:  <https://mobile-csa.herokuapp.com/>.  For instructions on how to get started or for more information visit: [http://www.siskiyoucoop.com/csa/app/](http://www.siskiyoucoop.com/).