



# Community Food Projects

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS FY 2017

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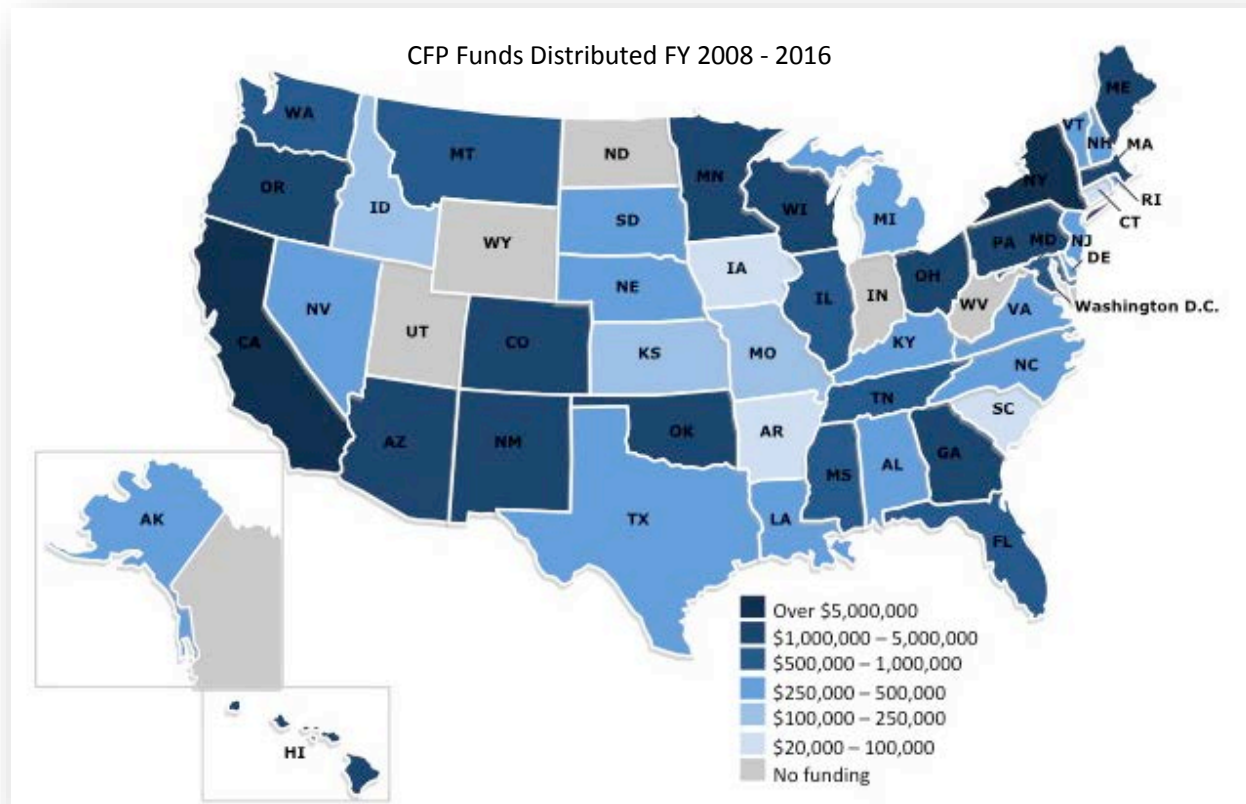
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*Cover photo courtesy of Crossroads Community Food Network*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Impacts of the Community Food Projects competitive grant program are felt far and wide. The program has been in operation under the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture for over 2 decades and has supported innovative projects across the US, helping communities work toward food security and self-reliance. Between 2008 and 2016, CFP has distributed close to **\$50 million** in funding to **200** organizations in 47 states, including the District of Columbia and American Samoa.



The New Entry Sustainable Farming Project (New Entry) has been honored to serve as the technical assistance provider for CFP applicants and grantees since 2014. As part of this work, New Entry provides feedback and guidance to applicants, and facilitates trainings on project planning and evaluation development. An important component of project evaluation is assessing each grantee's accomplishments through the Indicators of Success survey annually. The Indicators of Success Report is based on the six categories of Whole Measures for Community Food Systems: Healthy People; Strong Communities; Thriving Local Economies; Vibrant Farms and Gardens; Sustainable Ecosystems; and Justice and Fairness. While individual Community Food Projects may work in vastly different landscapes, implementing diverse programming that may address one or more of those categories, collectively they are transforming our approach to healthy communities and improving food security.

Between 2014 and 2017, 123 projects have received CFP funding benefiting over 900,000 community members, including over 3,700 farmers. CFP programs support the local economy by setting up local farmers markets, sponsoring small food ventures and providing job training. CFP programs improve food security by creating new donation streams for locally-grown produce, teaching people to grow their own food, providing innovative nutrition education and increasing access to healthy food stores. As a result, communities are building self-reliance and strong partnerships for long-term resilience and sustainability.

Food Distributed 2014 - 2017	
<b>Pounds of Food Distributed</b>	<b>97,868,348</b>
<b>Number of People Who Received Food</b>	<b>199,235</b>

CFP programs create retail outlets for rural farmers to sell their produce direct to consumers, provide skills training to the next generation of food entrepreneurs using locally-grown produce and build the capacity of rural communities to support a thriving local food economy.

Between 2014 and 2017:	
<b>CFPs have operated 75 CSAs</b>	<b>CFPs have operated 209 farmers markets</b>



Angelic Organics Rockford Urban Training Farm and Enterprise Center (2012-2015)



YMCA Greater Grand Rapids The Grand Rapids Community Food Program (2014-2017)

It takes a collaborative community based approach to achieve healthy thriving local food systems and CFP has held this as an integral component of the grant program from the get go. Working in partnership with nonprofit organizations, local government and policy makers, youth, schools, and faith based institutions, each Community Food Project takes a grassroots, “from the ground up” approach. A core value of the program is to be rooted in community – to incorporate input and engagement from the very constituents the projects seek to serve. Empowering the local population is necessary and leads to long-term success and viability. Resilience cannot be achieved unless all stakeholders truly have a seat at the table, their perspective respectfully heard.

## Introduction and Study Methods

The Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program (CFP) was started in 1996 with the aim of fighting food insecurity through the development of community food projects that promote the self-sufficiency of low-income communities. Since 1996 this program has awarded approximately \$90 million to organizations nationally (Community Food Projects, 2018).

### The primary goals of CFP are to:

- Meet the food needs of low-income individuals through food distribution, community outreach to assist in participation in Federally assisted nutrition programs, or improving access to food as part of a comprehensive service;
- Increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for the food needs of the communities;
- Promote comprehensive responses to local food access, farm, and nutrition issues; and
- Meet specific state, local or neighborhood food and agricultural needs including needs related to:
  - Equipment necessary for the efficient operation of a project;
  - Planning for long-term solutions; or
  - The creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers (Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program, 2018).

In order to determine the collective impact of this grant program on an annual basis, the Community Food Security Coalition and the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture developed the Community Food Projects **Indicators of Success**. This method focuses on outcomes based reporting and was conducted by the Community Food Security Coalition annually from 2005 – 2011. In 2014, New Entry Sustainable Farming Project (New Entry) became the Training and Technical Assistance provider for CFP applicants and grantees, and began conducting the survey.

The data for this survey is collected online using Qualtrics (a web-based tool for survey research), and includes both an organizational component for the recipient organization of the grant as well as a beneficiary component for communities served to gain an understanding of the impact on the projects' participants. The Indicators of Success questionnaire surveys both Planning Grant recipients as well as Implementation Grant recipients (the majority being Implementation grantees). 93% of recipients (64 of 69 projects) active in FY 2017 completed the survey.

## Whole Measures for Community Food Systems

The Whole Measures for Community Food Systems was developed as a values-based planning and evaluation tool for community food security projects in 2009. The Whole Measures tool was jointly developed by the Community Food Security Coalition and the Center for Popular Research, Education and Policy and was based on work done by the Center for Whole Communities. The tool strives to take a holistic approach to evaluating community food security, so that practitioners and community members can work together to develop a



systems level understanding of the unique challenges of their community and how their projects impact their lives. The tool is broken down into 6 major categories (Jeanette Abi-Nader, 2009):

- Healthy People
- Strong Communities
- Thriving Local Economies
- Vibrant Farms and Gardens
- Sustainable Ecosystems
- Justice and Fairness

The Indicators of Success was developed to incorporate these 6 components of Whole Measures for Community Food Systems to evaluate the collective impact of Community Food Projects. These six categories are not discrete topic areas, but rather practice areas that are synergistically entwined. They are important fields individually, but indicators within each field can collectively be used to assess the true value of Community Food Projects.

### Overview: FY 2017 Activities

69 grant projects were active in FY 2017 representing 34 different states. 64 of the 69 (93%) active grantees in FY 2017 responded to the survey from 30 different states. 530 individual project participants (“beneficiaries”) from 22 different projects (representing 15 states/territory: AK, American Samoa, CA, Canada, GA, HI, KY, MD, MI, MN, MT, NC, NY, OR, UT) responded to the beneficiary survey.

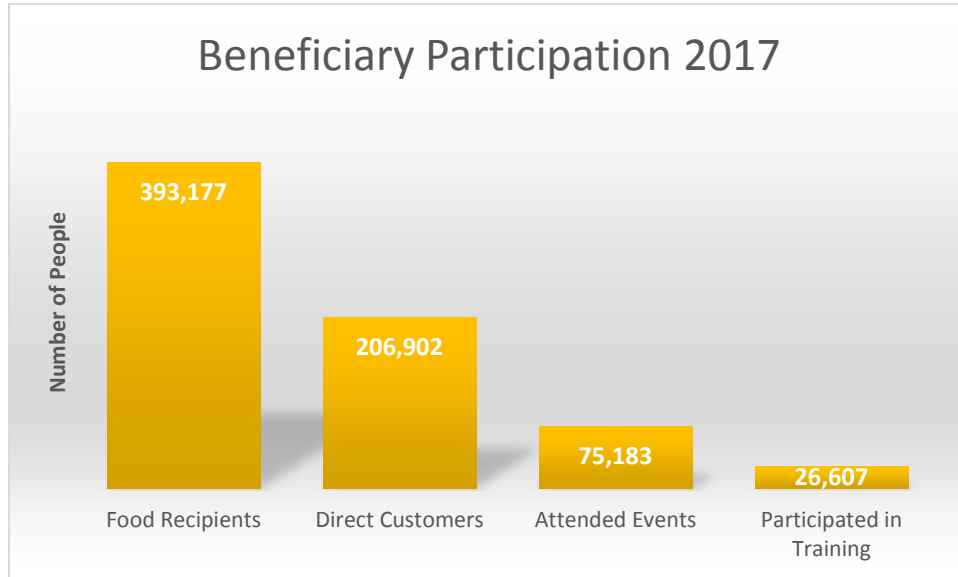
The top 5 activities implemented by CFPs in FY 2017 are represented below. The table in the Appendix contains the full breakdown of all activities.

Top 5 Activities	% of Projects	% Growth since 2010
Food Access and Outreach	73%	23.54%
Nutrition and Health Education	71%	60.87%
Local Food Distribution	49%	13.17%
Job Skills Training	49%	83.42%
Community Gardens	44%	11.22%

### Healthy People

***Whole communities need whole people and community food systems that increase access to healthy food while also cultivating broader dimensions of health.***

Supporting healthy people is at the core of the Community Food Projects grant program. People benefit in a variety of ways, both directly and indirectly, from the work of CFPs nationally. Grantees reported that in FY 2017, overall, 400,597 people benefited directly from these projects, and an estimated 1,049,800 benefited indirectly. People benefited primarily as food recipients, as customers, by attending events or participating in skills trainings. The following chart displays the ways in which beneficiaries participated in projects.



The tables below show the diversity of the populations that these CFPs worked with directly during FY 2017, both as a percent of projects working with the population, and the total number of people from that population.

Beneficiaries	% of Projects	# of Direct Beneficiaries
Black or African American	58%	76,787
Hispanic or Latino	47%	28,338
Asian or Pacific Islander	28%	4,652
Bi-racial or multi-racial	41%	8,954
Native American/Eskimo/Aleut	27%	1,297

Beneficiaries	% of Projects	# of Direct Beneficiaries
People with low income	88%	226,745
Youth	63%	62,984
Farmers	55%	882
Seniors	47%	24,556
Women	55%	65,445
English as a second language	44%	11,895
General Public	33%	121,698
Immigrants	39%	10,704
Vendors/Business Owners	36%	562
Promise Zones	11%	400
Head Start	9%	532
Veterans	19%	6,336
StrikeForce communities	8%	1,500
Other	6%	200

Low income communities are the target audience for the Community Food Projects grant program. Barriers to economic self-sufficiency exist in many areas of life, further challenging individuals and communities on the path to healthier lives. By assisting individuals in accessing healthy foods, CFPs thus work to eliminate one of the many struggles in day to day life for neighbors living on low incomes. One Project Director of a CFP in California noted,

*“Low-income families in fast-developing cities like Oakland often have to make the difficult choice between health and meeting basic needs, like the need for affordable housing that is within the community of their choice. With average rents from single-bedroom units approaching \$2500/month, we know that incomes at the bottom of the spectrum are unable to keep up with those bills. By subsidizing the price of healthy fresh foods, and by providing price supports (like purchase incentives for SNAP customers) we are allowing low-income families to remain in place in their neighborhoods and also access the healthy foods their families need.”*

Outreach to increase participation in federal assistance programs is one of the stated goals of the CFP grant program. By facilitating the use of these benefits through community based projects, recipients are not only able to increase their ability to meet their food needs, but in many cases, they are able to do so with fresh food that was grown or purchased through their local community food system. 22 of the 64 projects that responded to the survey facilitate federal assistance participation in some capacity. 77% of these projects reported that they were able to facilitate an increase in the use of federal benefits in FY 2017. For many projects, facilitating use meant accepting the benefits at their farmers markets, or points of sale, and for some projects this included helping people enroll in benefits. The table below represents the percentage of projects facilitating the use of federal benefits and the number of people impacted.

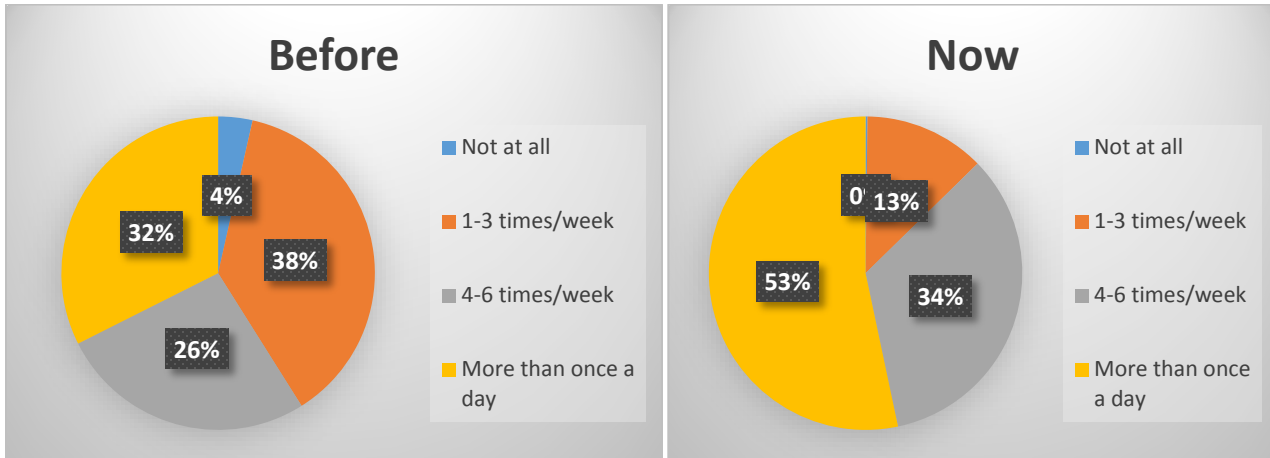
Facilitating Federal Benefits	% of Projects	# of Beneficiaries
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	59%	29,366
Women, Infants and Children (WIC)	26%	3,807
Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program	18%	1,822
Farmers' Market Nutrition Program	18%	2,541
Other Federal benefits	3%	40

Increasing access to healthy food and knowledge around healthy eating are two fundamental components of the Community Food Project grant program. Food access and outreach and nutrition and health education were the top two activities among CFPs in FY 2017. To increase beneficiaries' knowledge of nutrition and healthy eating, many Projects offered cooking classes, provided samples of healthy food, and created and shared recipes. To increase accessibility to individuals with low English proficiency, organizations also offer market signage in multiple languages.

The charts below represent responses from CFP beneficiaries when asked how frequently they ate fruits and vegetables before being part of their Project and after participation.

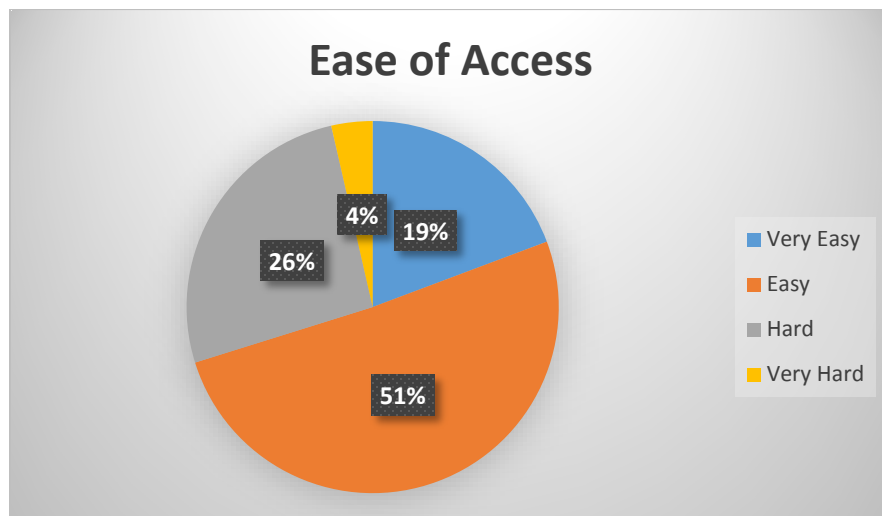


### Weekly Fruits and Vegetables



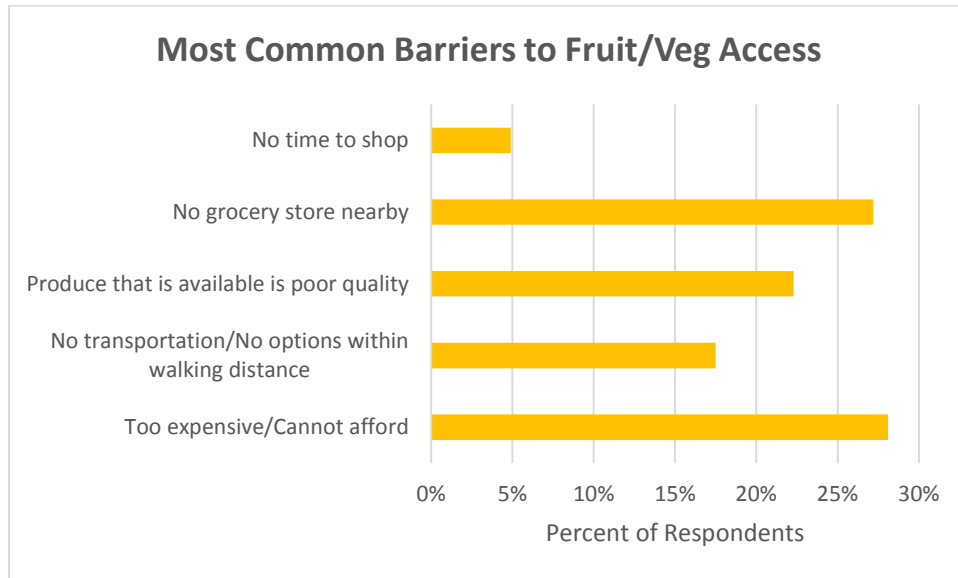
While this represents a small percentage of the overall number of people who were impacted by these CFPs, it clearly shows that these respondents (516 total respondents) have significantly increased their intake of fruits and vegetables. The percentage of participants who recalled not eating fruits and vegetables on a weekly basis dropped from 4% before participation to 0 after participation, while the percentage whose fruit and vegetable consumption was more than once a day increased from 32% to 53%.

While consumption of fruits and vegetables is a critical contribution to a healthy diet and community, not all members of a community have equal ability to access fresh foods. The Community Food Projects grant program encourages grantee organizations to address access in their communities. The chart below represents beneficiary responses to their ease of access to fresh food.



70% of respondents said the CFP they participated in has made it easy or very easy for them to access fresh food. For those still struggling to access fresh food, price and distance to a grocery store were commonly cited reasons. The third most commonly cited barrier to access was the poor quality of the produce that is available at

accessible locations. Additionally, a few people mentioned that it is easier to access fresh food when they are receiving their CSA, but it is more challenging when the CSA season is over.



The cooking and nutrition classes offered through several Community Food Projects helped boost individual food security and influenced overall community health. One beneficiary noted,

*“When I signed up for this class, I wanted to learn more about healthy eating. I am not one who likes to cook; as a matter of fact I do very little cooking. After attending the class and making some healthy easy to prepare dishes, I felt inspired. I am more aware of what I eat, and what I buy to eat. I enjoyed meeting the people who also took the class, and how well we enjoyed preparing meals together. Also we were able to sit and bond at the end of class.”*

### Strong Communities

***A strong food system builds strong communities across class, race, age, education, and other social categories.***

Building strong communities is at the core of Community Food Projects. This includes not only organizational partnerships, but also stronger local food policies and empowered community leaders. The table below identifies the percent of projects working on various capacity building activities in their communities. In FY 2017, 43% of Projects focused on capacity building within their communities, which ranged from working with local store owners and strengthening relationships among diverse business sectors to training farmers and creating youth leadership programs.

Capacity Building Activities	% of Projects
Capacity building within your community	43%
Training and Technical Assistance	41%
Food Policy Council/Network	32%
Community Food Assessment	22%

In FY 2017, the 64 CFP projects that participated in the survey reported 2,045 organizational partnerships, with 297 of those representing *new* partnerships. These partnerships strengthened projects in a variety of ways, such as participating in project planning, helping with food distribution and program outreach, and offering joint programming. One CFP Project Director stated,

*“The premise of [our project] is to not only increase the capacity of partner organizations to service low-income store owners in food desert communities, but to also increase the capacity of the stores themselves. We view local mom and pop stores as community assets that need investment. They are existing resources that can be vehicles for distributing healthy food to low-income residents. With technical assistance, support and access to high quality low-cost produce we believe we are building capacity of local community markets to better serve the health and wellness of their customers.”*

### VOLUNTEERS

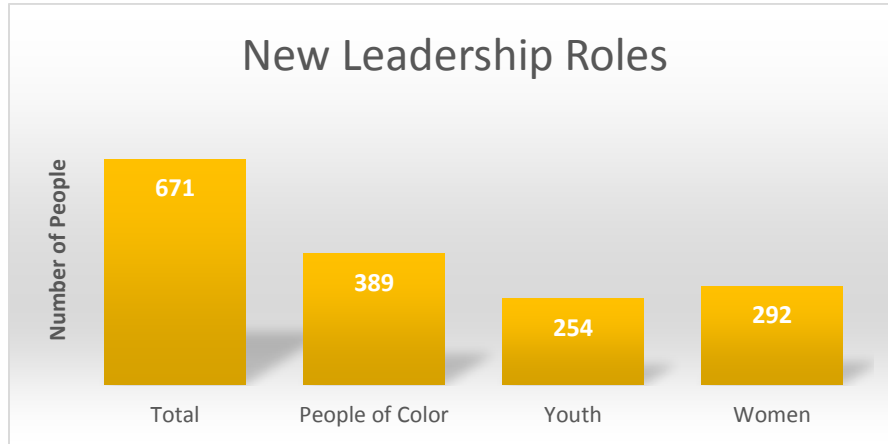
CFPs engaged **37,713** volunteers for a total of **185,966** volunteer hours

In addition to forming new partnerships and getting volunteers involved, CFPs created new leadership opportunities in their communities. Of the 671 new leadership roles created in FY 2017, 58% of those were filled by people of color, and 38% engaged youth.

### Center for Rural Affairs

In 2017 the Center for Rural Affairs began a two-year planning project to improve the food system for all of Nebraska’s people, targeting food access for rural and low-income communities, by creating the Nebraska Food Policy Council (NFPC). The team “re-engaged and activated partners, developed by-laws, the basic structure, gathered the steering committee, and improved the research on the scope of a statewide community food assessment,” reported Sandra Renner, Project Specialist. NFPC looks to nonpartisan civic engagement, including policy recommendations and action, through food a network of food policy coordination in six regions statewide.

Picking the project “back up, dusting it off, and getting the structure piece accomplished” was a major accomplishment, reported Renner. The community actors have a “fuzzy picture” of how policy can impact them, but the program aims for an “a-ha” moment through the engagement of the NFPC. With the critical grounds for success in place, NFPC looks to “capacity build and activate people who may not consider themselves a local food champion right now.”



Community food assessments and food policy councils are two additional ways that CFPs develop strong communities. In FY 2017, 9 projects conducted community food assessments, covering an area with approximately 480,000 residents. Additionally, these CFPs formed 13 food policy councils. These 13 food policy councils represented 194 organizations and had over 391 individuals working on them.

### The Emory Urban Health Initiative

Emory Urban Health Initiative aims to transform Northwest Atlanta into a Healthy Hub using a multi-partner, inter-agency, community-driven approach. The NW Atlanta Healthy Hub offers a set of interconnected initiatives and programs to address issues related to food security, food access, obesity, and other social determinants of health. 2017 proved to be another busy year as the initiative expanded their Community Teaching Garden Program, delivered a multi-methods approach to food literacy education, and created and delivered customized leadership training to young adults.

The community felt the work of Emory Urban Health Initiative as they transformed an unused property into garden space covered in art from local youth. Gardening skills were developed within this food desert community and created a “safe space” for individuals within the community to engage with others. An understanding of the importance of healthy eating has increased, as well as their exposure to healthy food options.

A defining moment for Emory Urban Health Initiative, however, is the Young Ag-Entrepreneurs program. The program had a three-fold goal including: gardening skills & education, business skills pertaining to agriculture (but transferrable to other areas), and leadership development. One of the project’s co-directors stated, “The program was very successful, and we graduated 3 cohorts of youth, ages 14-18. Some of the youth found this program so beneficial that the ones that didn’t get jobs as a result of this training continued to come to subsequent cohorts to continue learning and to help teach the next cohort.” In addition to gaining job positions, students were aided in obtaining state-issued ID cards and driver’s licenses if old enough. Local banks worked with the program to open bank accounts for students, transforming their lives. Many of the students became the only members of their family to have ID cards and bank accounts, unleashing numerous opportunities.

*Photos at right: Emory Urban Health Initiative’s Young Ag Entrepreneurs and community gardeners, courtesy of Emory Urban Health Initiative*



## Thriving Local Economies

***Thriving local economies form decisions that ensure the wellbeing of future generations. They account for hidden costs in decision-making and work to build systems that regenerate output (wastes) into input (resources).***

A key element of creating self-reliant communities is helping to create flourishing local economies. In FY 2017, Community Food Projects impacted their local economies through job creation, creation of new markets and by helping local individuals prepare business plans. Each of these activities will create lasting impacts in their communities and build more resilient communities moving forward. The following table displays several economic impact indicators and activities undertaken by CFPs in FY 2017, with the corresponding number of participants involved or dollar amount generated.

Economic Impact	
Direct jobs created	409
Jobs retained	303
Indirect jobs created	136
Markets expanded	69
New markets established	105
Market sales increase	\$331,954.67
Micro-enterprise opportunities supported	265
Farmers' markets started	15
Farms started or build on	86
CSAs started	2
CSAs operated	17
Projects that prepared business plans	18
Business plans prepared	106

Economic Impact Activities	% of Projects
Job skills training	49%
Local food distribution	43%
Promoting Local Food Purchases	43%
Entrepreneurial food and agricultural activity	43%
Farmers' Market	33%
Micro-enterprise/Entrepreneur skill training	24%
Community or Incubator kitchen	22%
Farm to School	19%
Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)	19%
Food hub	17%
Incubator farm	11%
Farm/Grower Cooperative	10%

## Crossroads Community Food Network

In 2017, Crossroads Community Food Network accomplished amazing things, mainly the opening of a new shared-use community kitchen, where their beneficiaries can launch and expand their small-scale food businesses. The effects of the program, however, are felt throughout the entire network from government official down to business owner. The communities are excited about new food opportunities as the business owners are empowered to begin and expand their food businesses. Referrals from partner organizations are plentiful and government officials are excited to discuss the success of Crossroads Community Food Network.

To achieve this effect, the network focused on two main components in 2017: launching the community kitchen and associated educational programming. Both large tasks, the network had to formulate admissions, conduct three kitchen information sessions (in multiple languages) and configure the Food Corridor software for better usability, payments, and record keeping. In the kitchen, partnerships with vendors were established to maintain the health standards and guide of kitchen operations and procedures were developed. In conjunction with four partner organizations, Crossroads Community Food Network conducted outreach programming, planned the first cohort for the educational program, and redefined the curriculum from Circle of Support.

81% of CFPs (52 of 64) reported working on at least one of the economic impact activities in the table above, and many spent time working on more than one.

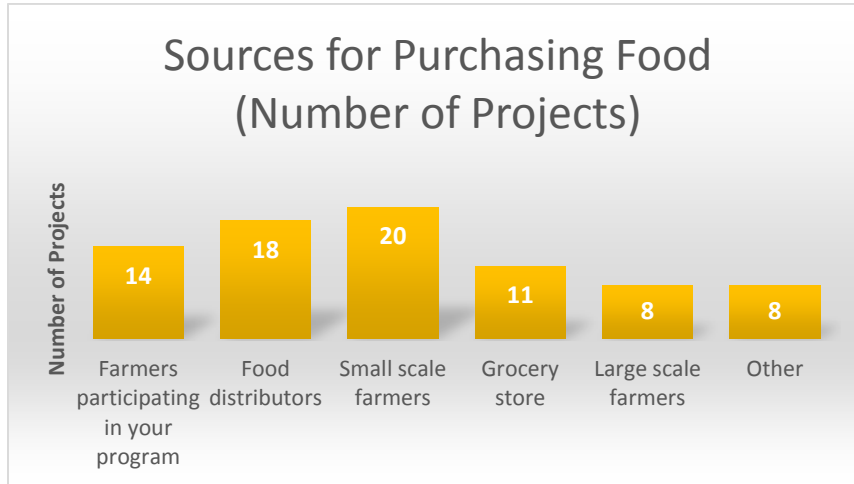
In FY 2017, 18 projects operated a total of 172 farmers' market locations, with approximately 124 mobile markets. One project operates 100 markets, all of which are mobile markets. These markets mostly operated one day per week, for an average of 33 weeks/year, with an average weekly attendance of approximately 138.

The 64 CFP survey respondents worked with 882 farmers in FY 2017. 31% of them (280) are able to live off the farm income as their primary income. Partnering with local farms has positive impacts on farmers' bottom lines as well as a project's community members. One CFP Project Director in Virginia explained,

*"We sourced nearly 33% more local produce than anticipated in FY2017, thanks in part to expanded purchasing power at the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction, a cooperative of more than 400 small farmers in Dayton, VA. We also established new relationships with Local Food Hub in Charlottesville, VA, and The Common Market in Philadelphia, PA, two food hub aggregators of local products, as well as three new farms with whom we formed crop planning partnerships. Our total direct sourcing partnerships rose to 39, up from 20 just two years ago, ensuring that more than \$58,345 was invested in local farms as a direct result of this project."*

In addition to helping individuals gain job readiness skills and supporting the development of businesses, CFPs had an impact in terms of the food they bought, sold and distributed throughout FY 2017. 30 projects (47%) purchased over 9.7 million pounds of food, amounting to over \$3.7 million. Most CFPs purchased food from multiple sources, and 21 of the 30 purchased either from farmers participating in their program, or other small scale farmers.





26 projects sold 10,604,666 pounds of food in their communities. 31 projects distributed over 54.5 million pounds of food, with an overlap of 24,252 pounds between food sold and distributed. 23 projects donated over 7 million pounds in FY 2017.

Customers	Sales	% of Projects	# of Customers	Sales/customers
Direct to consumer	\$733,093.00	48%	19729	\$37
Healthy Corner Store	\$83,747.00	11%	8901	\$9
Restaurants	\$74,159.00	14%	18189	\$4
Schools	\$95,348.00	36%	16	\$5,959
Retail	\$20,335.00	17%	2049	\$10
Hospitals	\$26,040.00	8%	5	\$5,208

The Community Food Projects grant program prioritizes projects that take comprehensive and cross-sector approaches to community economic sustainability. One CFP focusing on business incubation, farm-to-school procurement, and local value chain improvement, stated,

*“Through our shared use kitchen, we have helped 6 women owned businesses launch or grow. We also support local businesses through purchasing from local farms and sourcing goods/services preferentially from local businesses. We spur investment and job creation not only at our food hub, but at other links in the value chains we help to develop.”*



*Mill City Grows first mobile market of the 2017 season; courtesy of Mill City Grows*

## Vibrant Farms and Gardens

***Vibrant farms are often local farms that shorten the gap between farmer and consumer and actively contribute to sustaining and revitalizing regional food systems and economies.***

In FY 2017, 42 CFPs grew 537,665 pounds of food on 667 acres of land. 31 of the 42 projects growing food did so in an urban setting, accounting for 368,660 of the pounds grown on 337 acres. 40 projects grew vegetables, 22 projects grew berries, 19 had orchards and 5 raised animals (either sheep, goats, pigs, cattle or poultry).

These projects had various land tenure situations ranging from owning, to leasing, to informal agreements. The table below shows the different land tenure situations among CFPs in FY 2017. Some overlap exists between numbers of projects since some had more than one type of land tenure arrangement. Collectively in FY 2017, these projects worked with over 114 different owners. Most projects worked with fewer than 10 land owners.

## Mill City Grows

Based in Lowell, Massachusetts, Mill City Grows works at the nexus of food access, education and engagement toward achieving their three main goals: advancing sustainable urban agriculture, increasing accessibility of food education, and expanding social entrepreneurship opportunities. Highlights for 2017 include the expansion from one mobile market to two, a record season of mobile market sales, the addition of one community garden (bringing the total to 6), increasing the engagement from 11 public schools to 14, training 158 gardeners, and an additional 107 education opportunities focused on food production and preparation skills training, nutrition, and food justice.

A large effort was made to reach the Cambodian community residing in Lowell in 2017 through the Mobile Market. Translation and interpretation was expanded beyond the Mobile Market and into gardening, nutrition, and cooking classes by partnering with the Lowell Alliance to deliver them in Khmer, the national language of Cambodia. The community gardeners are taking on an entirely new sense of ownership of their gardens and neighborhoods, stepping up to ensure that they are kept safe and clean. Gardeners are sharing stories of their increased consumption of vegetables, and Farm to Table participants have started cooking meals at home and bringing them to class to share with the group. The community gardens, in particular, serve as gathering places and important resources for growing foods that are familiar to immigrants, but not easily found in Lowell.

Land Tenure	# of Projects
Own	14
Short-term lease	14
Informal agreement	12
Long-term lease	11
Other	6
Donated land	4

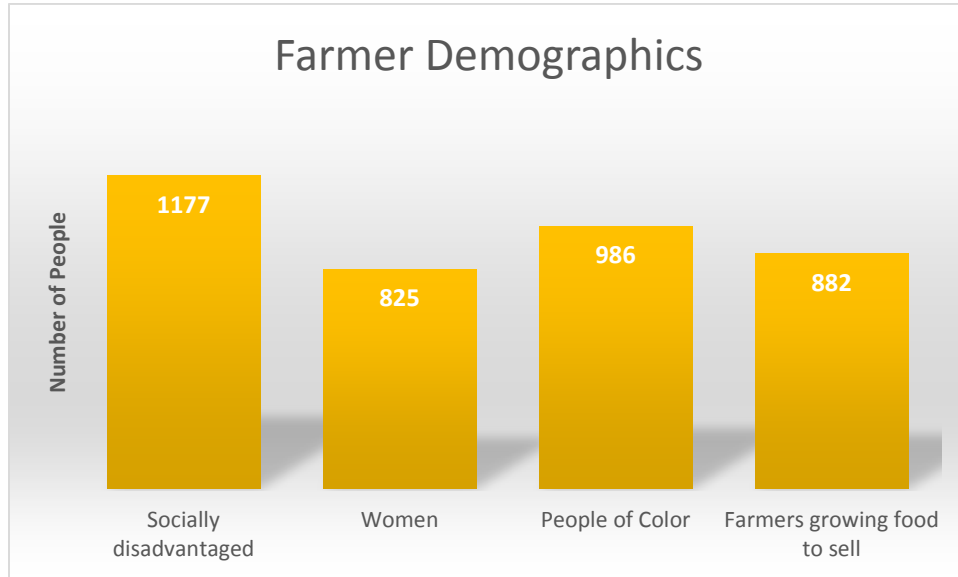
35 projects worked with farmers in some capacity. This work ranged from training, to facilitating market access, to purchasing food from the farmers. 14 of those projects worked with farmers who grew food for use in their other programming. 882 farmer participants grew food to sell. And CFPs in FY 2017 helped start or develop 86 farms.

Whole Measures for Community Food Systems identifies working with socially disadvantaged and immigrant and refugee community members as an indicator of a more just and inclusive food system. One Project Director noted,

*“We have worked with immigrant and refugee farmers to develop planning and tracking systems to help with farm production. We have also trained our farmers on how to be successful in various retail avenues: farmers market, direct to grocery, CSA, to restaurants.”*

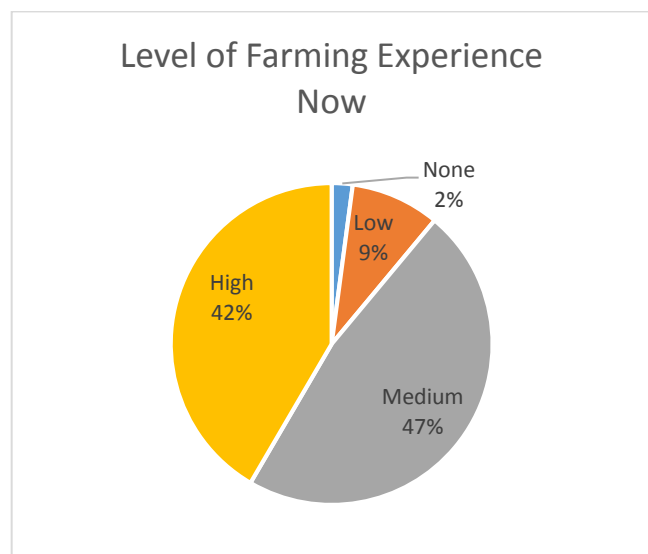
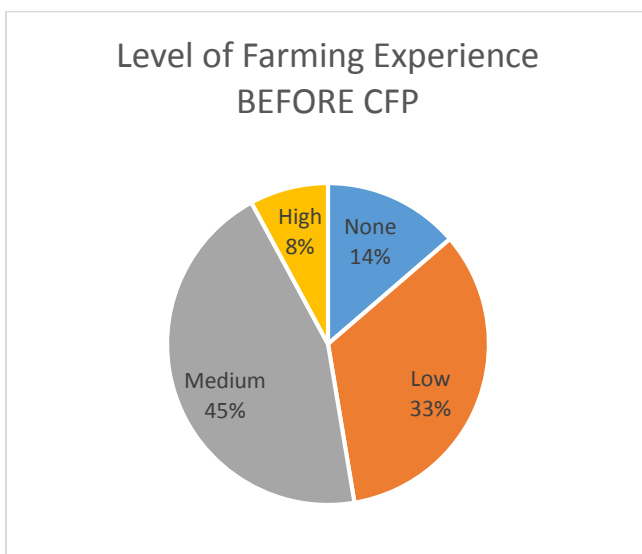
Another stated,

*“Farmers often look to us as a resource center for their ag-related needs. 100 percent of farmers we work with are socially disadvantaged farmers and we help lessen the ... barriers they face. For instance, farmers are often facing challenges finding new markets to sell their produce and due to language barriers it is difficult for farmers to negotiate or meet with market managers. We have provided many hours of technical assistance to farmers in helping them establish new partnerships in order to share their produce with the community.”*



1,013 farmers working with these CFPs received some form of training. These trainings varied by program, but topics ranged from production skills through post-harvest handling and market training. The training opportunities had a very positive impact on the project beneficiaries. The charts below represent project beneficiaries' farming experience before participating in their CFP, and now. Overall, the respondents (190 total respondents) indicated an increased level of farm and garden experience as a result of participating in their CFP. The percentage of participants who indicated no or low levels of farming/gardening experience dropped from 47% before participation to 11% after. Those who indicated medium and high levels of experience rose from 53% before participation to 89% after, demonstrating the positive impact of the Projects' trainings on the collective growing and production experience among their communities.

#### Farming and Gardening Experience before Participation Vs. Now



75% of projects participated in at least one of the farm and garden activities in the table below. Nearly half the projects facilitated community gardens, for a total of 170 gardens, with 2,194 plots and 5,481 different gardeners. This is an impact that will last long-term, since not only are people able to provide food for themselves and their families in the short-term, but they gain valuable gardening skills so that they are able to continue to provide for their families into the future.

Farm & Garden Activities	% of Projects
Community Garden	44%
Urban Agriculture	38%
Youth/School gardening or agriculture project	38%
Composting	32%
Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program	19%
Immigrant/Migrant farm project	19%
Restoration of traditional agriculture/foods	16%
Incubator farm	11%

## Sustainable Ecosystems

***Sustainable, balanced ecosystems are built upon interdependent relationships, depend upon clean air and water and healthy soil, and provide the foundation for all life.***

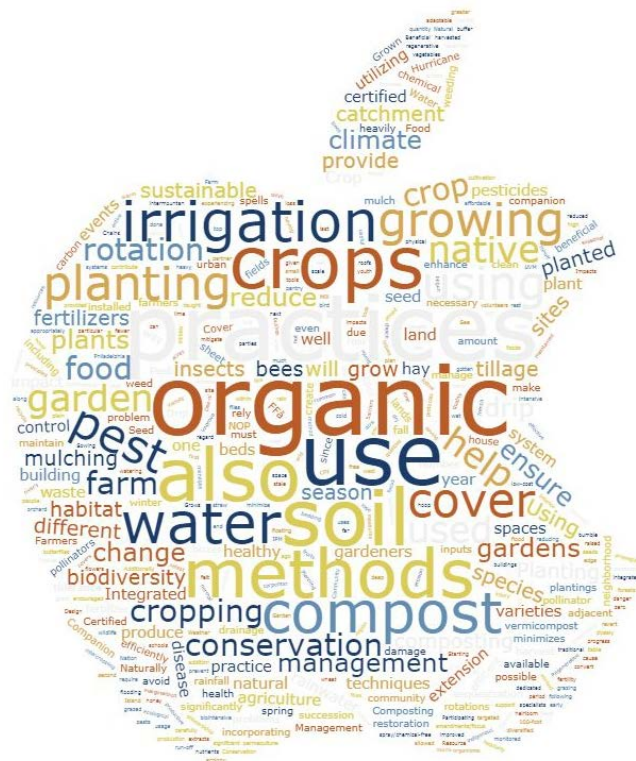
While the primary focus of the CFP grant program is to increase healthy food access for low income communities, many CFPs also have a strong commitment to sustainable practices, both for the food they produce and how they produce it, as well as in the training they provide to farmers and community members. The Whole Measures approach prioritizes the development of projects that protect the air, water, and soil, since nutrition is intrinsically tied to food produced in healthy environments.

One strategy implemented by sustainable farmers and gardeners everywhere is composting. The importance of composting is clear among CFPs as well. 20 projects (31%) composted over 259,353 pounds of food in FY 2017, and many mentioned using compost for soil health as part of their growing practices.

A project in New York notes,

*“Since nutrition starts in the soil, [we] focus on purchasing and making vermicompost. In 2017 we worked with Rochester Institute of Technology to design two composting systems: 1) Robo-Composter designed and engineered to grind and automate recycling of food waste into nutrient dense compost, and 2) Continuous Classroom Vermicomposter for red wiggler worms to process and grate food waste from snacks and garden into vermicast. These systems ensure that the soil in which we plant our heirloom seeds is nutrient dense. The vegetables, fruits and herbs harvested from our garden and consumed by our students is used in our Kid Tested, Kid Approved recipes which are processed into snacks by our entrepreneur student ... and is being developed into a recipe book.”*

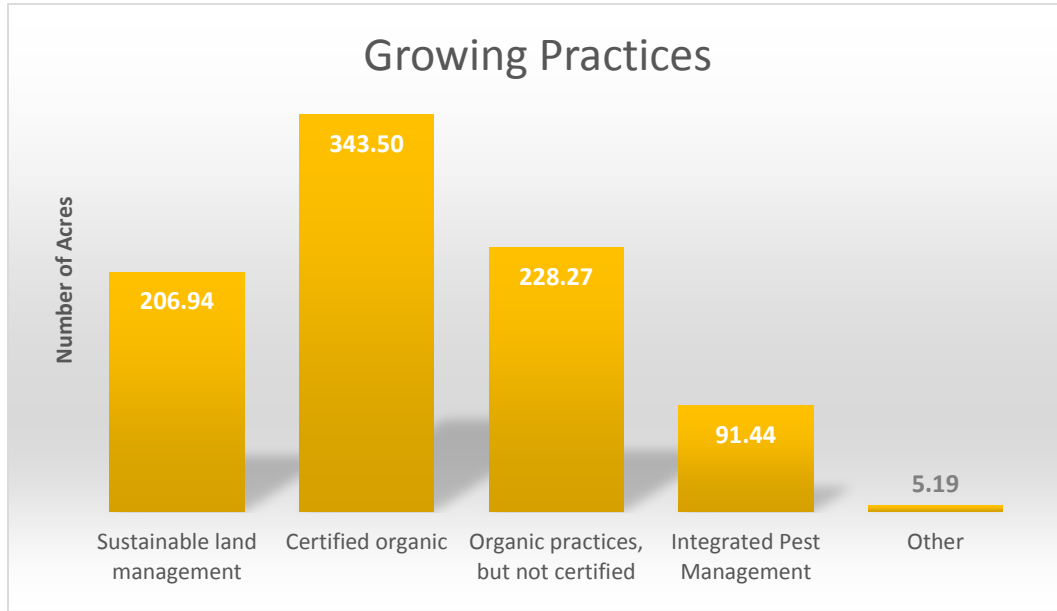
In addition to their own practices, 86% of the projects working with farmers reported that the farmers they worked with had changed their practices to include more sustainable land management in FY 2017. For some, this included organic certification or organic practices, and for others, it included sustainable water use in drought areas. The below image represents common production practices for CFPs.



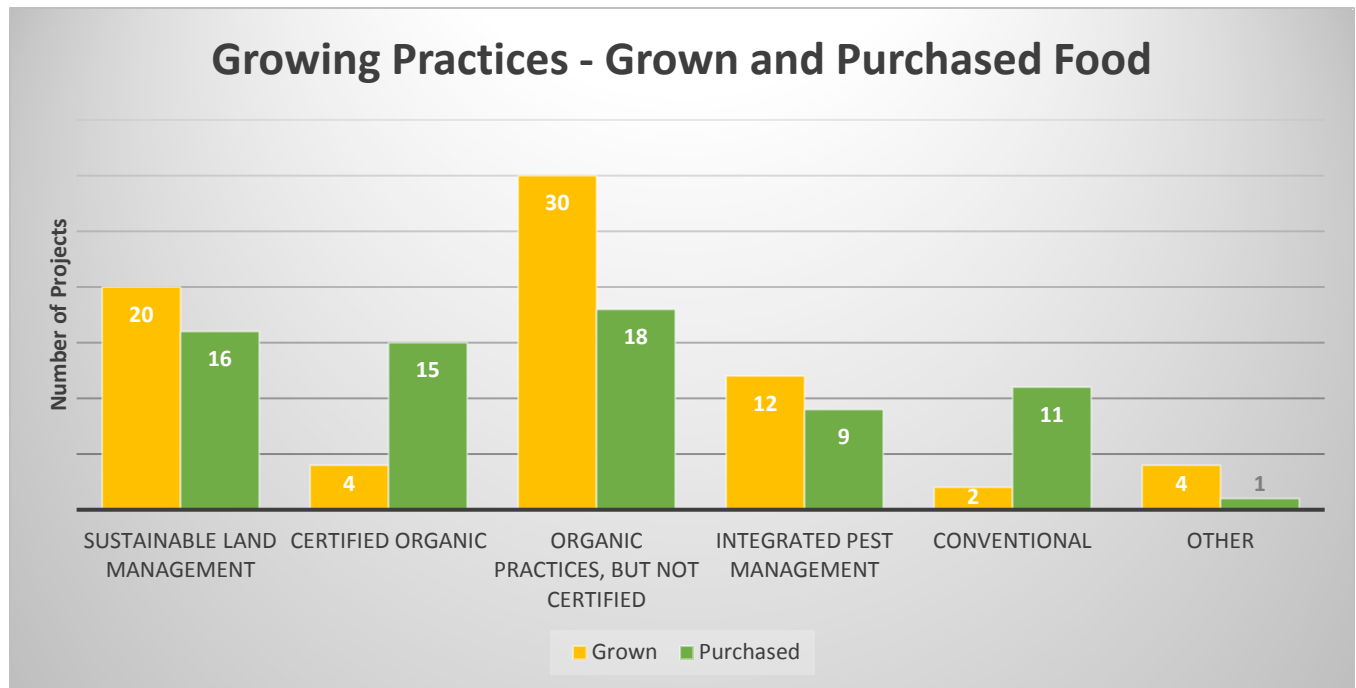
One survey respondent noted, “Our farmers implemented more sustainable agricultural practices such as water conservation, companion planting, and propagation of native plant varieties.” A youth project beneficiary learned “That good soil makes things grow,” while another project’s participant commented that his project showed him “safe and humane ways to farm”.

CFPs grew, purchased or gleaned over 10.6 million pounds of food in FY 2017. 56% of projects grew food, 17% gleaned food and 31% purchased food. The chart below shows acres devoted to different growing practice for the 36 projects that grew food. Some projects used land that fit into more than one category, so there is some overlap between these categories. The chart below accounts for a total of 667.5 acres.





92% of projects growing food used sustainable land management techniques or organic practices (though not all certified), and 88% of projects purchasing food did so from sources that used sustainable land management techniques or organic practices (not all certified).



## Justice and Fairness

***Just and fair food and farms come from food systems deliberately organized to promote social equity, worker rights, and health through all activities.***

Building more self-reliant, resilient communities requires fostering justice, fairness, and inclusivity throughout all sectors. By working with diverse populations and increasing the diversity of leadership roles, communities are able to benefit in the long-term by being stronger and more resilient. These CFPs have fostered justice and fairness by creating leadership opportunities for people of color and women and developing partnerships with business owners and community partners of color. They have expanded to new markets to reach more diverse populations and offered training materials in multiple languages. They are working to understand the diverse needs of those they serve so that they are able to have a lasting impact on their communities. The following table illustrates the role of people of color and women in CFPs.

	# of people
<b>Leadership Roles</b>	
People of Color	389
Women	292
<b>Farmers</b>	
People of Color	986
Women	825
Community partners of color	674
Business owners of color	198

## Planting Justice

Planting Justice's programming is focused on the Urban Ag Social Enterprise Incubation for Food and Economic Justice. The project operates a 2-acre empty lot in East Oakland, CA. Using recirculating aquaponics and perennial plant propagation as the main economic tools, this project is employing and is managed by formerly incarcerated change-makers at Planting Justice, almost all of whom grew up in this neighborhood, where much of Oakland's violent crime, unemployment, and poverty are concentrated. In its first 1.5 years, this project has grown to encompass a 30,000 certified organic tree inventory of over a thousand varieties, making it the most biodiverse collection of organic fruit trees of any nursery in North America. Additionally, 12 living-wage jobs with benefits for the community have been created, generating \$300,000 in revenue, serving as an educational site, distributed 5,000 pounds of free produce for the community, and serves as a gathering center for a wide range of events. This project has put \$500,000 in wages and \$200,000 in benefits back into the neighborhood, and staff have maintained a zero percent recidivism rate, with benefits radiating out to partners, children, and the entire community, as mothers and fathers are able to stay free, stay in their children's lives, and help end the cycles of mass incarceration, poverty and hunger.

Cultural sensitivity is a priority for CFP. A project in Oakland, CA, responded,

*“Through our project, we are able to train and build relationships with incarcerated youth, leading to successful employment and leadership opportunities for justice-impacted youth. With the Sogorea 'Te Land Trust, we're also able to provide a place for cultural events, ceremony, and educational offerings with indigenous Ohlone and other native East Oakland residents, who have heretofore lacked access to space to carry on their foodways, ceremonies, and other cultural practices, thus leading to better outreach and participation in our programs with East Oakland's large and underserved American Indian populations.”*

And a Project Director in Florida writes,

*“Based on our experience, we have seen that empowering community members to bring their skills and knowledge and to take on leadership roles is an important practice that has helped energize and move this project forward. Locally we call this a Campesino-to-Campesino program: farmer to farmer, or farmworker to farmworker. The program has also benefited through workshops and speakers, who offer in culture- and language- appropriate ways, knowledge of agroecology that compliments the community's own knowledge and expertise.”*

It is indisputable that immigration and racial justice have been among the most debated topics in political and social spaces during this Administration, and the Community Food Projects program influences and is influenced by decisions at the local, state, and federal level. We – as a community food security movement – believe that justice and fairness can be achieved through Community Food Projects, and those in other fields can continue to look to the CFP program as a model for creating and cultivating whole, healthy, and fair communities through food, farming, and nutrition education in our country's most vulnerable places.

## Conclusion

The Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program allows organizations across the country to impact tens of thousands of lives each year through increased access to fresh food, education and resources on farming to healthy eating and cooking, and increased food security. Since these projects are deeply rooted in the communities they serve, they continue to impact lives after the initial funding is concluded through increased resiliency and self-sufficiency. In both the short and long-term, these projects are making a difference and contributing to a future where our communities are more connected to their food sources, are more confident about their ability to access food and are more equipped to provide healthier food for themselves and their families.

## Appendix

This table shows the percentage of active Community Food Projects engaged in the listed activities.

Activities	2017	2016	2015	2014	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Food Access and Outreach	<b>73%</b>	77%	78%	65%	42%	62%	33%	24%	22%	36%	
Nutrition and Health Education	<b>71%</b>	66%	72%	62%	44%	41%					
Job Skills Training	<b>49%</b>	53%	63%	58%	42%	29%	33%	13%	17%	32%	17%
Local Food Distribution	<b>49%</b>	53%	53%	50%	33%	47%					
Community Garden	<b>44%</b>	49%	53%	54%	42%	44%	48%	32%	24%	30%	21%
Capacity Building within Your Community	<b>43%</b>	49%	66%								
Training and Technical Assistance	<b>43%</b>	36%	53%	46%	53%	47%	30%	21%	20%	32%	33%
Urban Agriculture	<b>41%</b>	47%	50%	50%	35%	29%	21%				
Entrepreneurial Food and Agricultural Activity	<b>38%</b>	38%	56%	54%	49%	50%	33%	32%	39%	34%	42%
Promoting Local Food Purchases	<b>38%</b>	49%	66%	65%	30%	47%	42%	32%	41%	50%	46%
Food-buying Cooperative	<b>32%</b>	9%	0%	8%	5%	0%	3%	3%	7%	10%	8%
Farmers' Market	<b>24%</b>	40%	59%	42%	40%	35%	30%	24%	30%	38%	33%
Micro-enterprise/Entrepreneur skill training	<b>24%</b>	28%	38%	58%	35%	38%	12%	16%	17%	32%	29%
Community or Incubator Kitchen	<b>24%</b>	21%	9%	19%	9%	9%	15%	16%	11%	20%	25%
Planning Grants	<b>24%</b>	6%	13%	0%	14%	3%	9%	18%	15%		
Youth/School Gardening or Agriculture Project	<b>22%</b>	45%	53%	46%	47%	50%	48%	53%	37%	48%	33%
Community Food Assessment	<b>22%</b>	23%	19%	15%	19%	15%	21%	21%	24%	32%	33%
Food Hub	<b>22%</b>	21%	34%								
Immigrant/Migrant Farm Project	<b>19%</b>	21%	22%	15%	9%	9%	3%	8%	7%	14%	12%
Incubator Farm	<b>19%</b>	11%	19%								
Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program	<b>16%</b>	21%	41%	38%	14%	12%	21%	11%	17%	28%	17%
Emergency Food Collection and Distribution	<b>16%</b>	19%	22%	0%	14%	6%	9%	16%	15%	26%	
Restoration of Traditional Foods/Agriculture	<b>16%</b>	15%	28%	31%	16%	18%	15%	8%	4%	18%	21%
Food Policy Council/Network	<b>11%</b>	23%	19%	12%	26%	15%	21%	18%	17%	36%	33%
Composting	<b>5%</b>	30%	47%								
Farm to School	<b>5%</b>	34%	38%	15%	26%	9%	15%	13%	20%	38%	25%
Farm/Grower Cooperative	<b>3%</b>	13%	19%	8%	12%	12%	9%	24%	20%	26%	12%
Other	<b>3%</b>	11%	9%	8%	12%	21%					
Aquaponics	<b>3%</b>	2%									
Hydroponics	<b>0%</b>	0%									

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