



Community Food Projects Indicators of Success FY 2016



New Entry Sustainable Farming Project

This report was compiled by:

Kristen Aldrich
National Technical Assistance Manager
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project
kristen.aldrich@tufts.edu

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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, 2016).

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 relating 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, 2016).

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 annually from 2005 – 2011. In 2014, the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project (New Entry) became the Training and Technical Assistance provider for CFP grantees, and began conducting the survey. The data for this survey is collected online, and includes both an organizational component for the recipient of the grant as well as a beneficiary component for communities served to gain an understanding of the impact on the projects' beneficiaries. 47 of 58 (81%) projects active in FY 2016 (October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016) completed the survey, which includes planning and implementation grants.

Whole Measures

The Whole Measures for Community Food Systems was developed as a values-based planning and evaluation tool for community food security projects. It was jointly developed by the Community Food Security Coalition and the Center for Popular Research, Education and Policy and it was based on work developed 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 get 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 reporting process was developed to incorporate these 6 components of Whole Measures for Community Food System to evaluate the collective impact of CFPs. These are not discrete topic areas, but rather ones that are synergistically entwined. They are important indicators individually, but collectively, they demonstrate the real value of Community Food Projects.

Overview

58 active grant projects were active in FY 2016 representing 32 different states. 47 of the 58 (81%) active grantees in FY 2016 responded to the survey coming from 26 different states. 433 beneficiaries from 20 different projects (representing 15 states/territory: AL, American Samoa, CA, CO, GA, MA, MI, MN, MO, MT, NY, OH, OR, UT and Washington, DC) responded to the beneficiary survey.

The top 5 activities that are a focus of CFP programs, both by percent of projects participating and overall percent of time spent, 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	77%	23.54%
Nutrition and Health Education	66%	60.87%
Local Food Distribution	53%	13.17%
Job Skills Training	53%	83.42%
Capacity Building within Your Community	49%	N/A
Community Gardens	49%	11.22%
Promoting Local Food Purchases	49%	4.12%

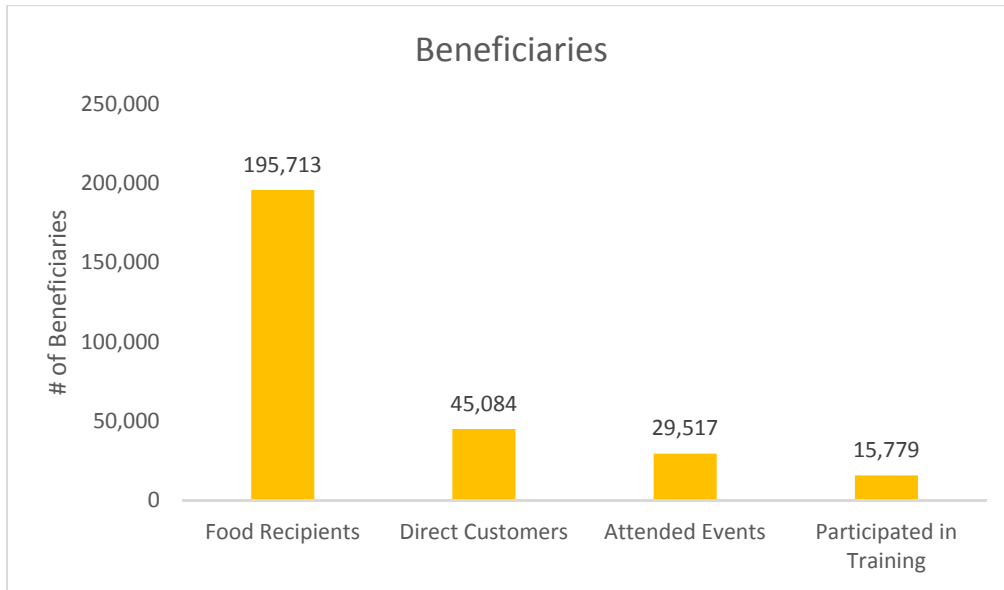
Top 5 Activities	Overall % of time
Food Access and Outreach	10.31%
Local Food Distribution	7.210%
Community Garden	6.65%
Job Skills Training	6.11%
Nutrition and Health Education	5.99%

Healthy People

“[CFP organization] has impacted my life in a way that I strive to eat healthy, look for organic food and even grow my own garden. I’ve learned so much about planting and knowing where your food comes from is important. I am so happy I got this experience because it has really encouraged and fostered a new found passion of gardening/farming.”

-CFP Beneficiary, FY 2016

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. In FY 2016, overall, 232,674 people benefited directly from these projects, and an estimated 700,000+ benefited indirectly. People benefited primarily as food recipients, as customers, by attending events or participating in trainings.



The tables below show the diversity of the populations that these CFPs worked with directly during FY 2016, 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	43%	5,353
Hispanic or Latino	36%	7,258
Asian or Pacific Islander	30%	3,024
Bi-racial or multi-racial	26%	2,528
Native American/Eskimo/Aleut	15%	352

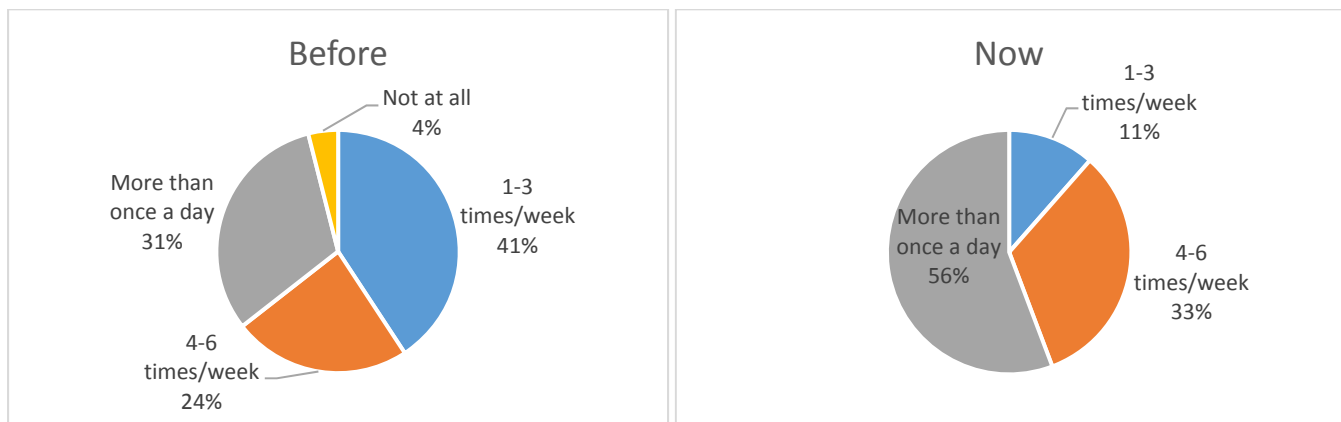
Beneficiaries	% of Projects	# of Direct Beneficiaries
People with low income	70%	68,435
Youth	57%	20,472
Farmers	49%	555
Seniors	47%	8,886
Women	47%	21,002
English as a second language	45%	9,244
General Public	36%	7,671
Immigrants	34%	7,857
Vendors/Business Owners	32%	358
Promise zone	15%	88,017
Head Start	15%	621
Veterans	15%	59
StrikeForce communities	4%	2
Other	4%	17

Outreach to increase participation in federal assistance programs is one of the stated goals of CFP. By facilitating the use of these benefit programs 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. 68% of projects reported that they were able to facilitate an increase in the use of federal benefits in FY 2016. Of the remaining projects, the rest stated that it was their first year working with federal benefits. 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 to enroll in benefits programs. The table below represents the percentage of projects facilitating the use of federal benefits and the number of people impacted.

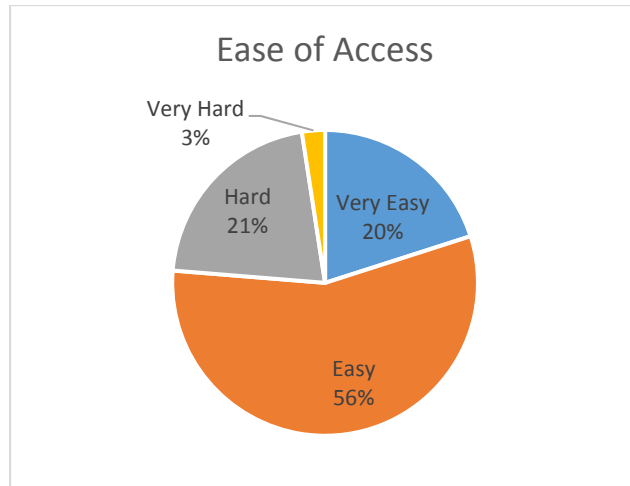
Facilitating Federal Benefits	% of Projects	# of Beneficiaries
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	74%	14,961
Women, Infants and Children (WIC)	38%	1,597
Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program	29%	1127
Farmers' Market Nutrition Program	24%	694
Other Federal benefits	18%	60,995

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 are the top two activities (by percent of projects working on them) and food access and outreach is the top activity in terms of overall time spent. To help educate their beneficiaries, CFPs held cooking classes, provided samples of healthy food, created recipes and had 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 CFP and now.

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 (114 total respondents) have significantly increased their intake of fruits and vegetables. Respondents reporting they ate fruits and vegetables 4-6 times/week increased 40% and eating fruits and vegetables more than once a day increased by 78%. An incredibly important component in increasing intake of fruits and vegetables is being able to access the fresh food. The chart below represents beneficiary responses to their ease of access to fresh food.



Over 91% of respondents said the CFP they participated in has made it easier 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. A few people mentioned that it is easier to access fresh food when they are receiving their CSA share (Community Supported Agriculture), but it is more challenging when the CSA season is over. Over 95% said they are able to find foods that fit their cultural diet.

“I never saw so many purple vegetables until participating in this co-op. Ha! We had purple potatoes, lavender eggplant that's different from the dark purple in the grocery store, and peppers. It was so much fun for our family to look inside the box every 2 weeks and see what surprises there would be. Plus, we enjoyed the well-written newsletters from the staff, including photos of them working and plants growing. They are hard workers and it's good for our cities to grow organic food without pesticides and herbicides--we felt healthier eating their vegetables than mass-produced ones in stores.”

-CFP Beneficiary, FY 2016

Strong Communities

“Refugee farmers in the community have increased their levels of knowledge and awareness through increased access to training and technical assistance. In addition to the farmers, the community at large has benefited from increased access to fresh, locally sourced, nutritious, and culturally-appropriate food, with a particular focus on reaching refugee, immigrant and low-income communities. These mutually-beneficial relationships between farmer and consumer have been established through the project and are intended to sustain themselves and have lasting impacts into the future. Major direct marketing efforts in this regard have included establishing and promoting SNAP/EBT accessible farm stands and CSA delivery sites in target neighborhoods and farmers markets in our region. In addition, youth community members in the Farm & Food Leaders program have accessed hands-on learning opportunities to increase their awareness on issues related to food justice, sustainable agriculture, healthy eating/nutrition, and other important topics, while growing their leadership and job readiness skills. “

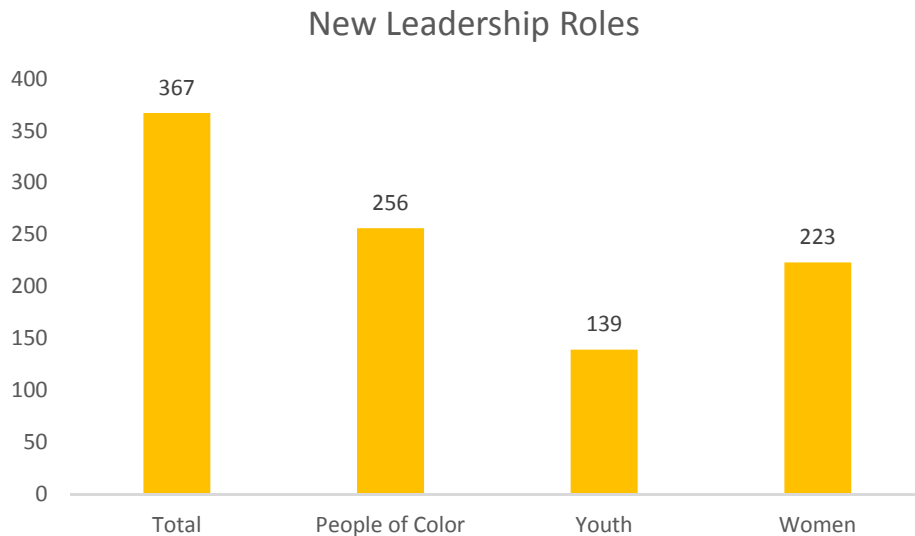
-CFP Grantee, FY 2016

“Community Food Projects are intended to bring together stakeholders from the distinct parts of the food system and to foster understanding of national food security trends and how they might improve local food systems.” (National Institute of Food and Agriculture, 2016)

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 percentage of projects working on various capacity building activities in their communities and the overall percent of time devoted to these activities. 49% participated in capacity building in general, and that took various forms, from strengthening relationships within the community to training farmers and youth leaders to help increase their confidence.

Capacity Building Activities	% of Projects	Overall % of time
Capacity building within your community	49%	4.48%
Training and Technical Assistance	36%	4.24%
Food Policy Council/Network	23%	0.89%
Community Food Assessment	23%	3.56%

In FY 2016, the 47 CFP projects that participated in the survey reported 1,273 organizational partnerships, with 192 of those representing new partnerships. These partners strengthened the projects in a variety of ways, such as participating in project planning, helping with food distribution and program outreach and offering joint programming. Additionally, they had 16,617 volunteers for a total of 140,134 volunteer hours. Assigning dollar valuation to volunteer service is estimated based on the nature of their work and varies state to state, but the estimated national average is \$24.14 per hour (Value of Volunteer Time, 2016). Based on this hourly rate, the CFP volunteer time adds up to over \$3.3 million. These volunteer opportunities and partnerships leveraged resources available to community food projects, strengthened relationships and helped create stronger communities. In addition to forming new partnerships and getting volunteers involved, CFPs created new leadership opportunities in their communities. Of the 367 new leadership roles created in FY 2016, 70% of those were filled by people of color, and 38% engaged youth.



Community Food Assessments and Food Policy Councils are two additional ways that CFPs develop strong communities. In FY 2016, at least 4 Community Food Assessments were completed covering an area with approximately 1.7 million residents. Additionally, these CFPs formed 8 food policy councils.

These 8 food policy councils represented 114 organizations and had over 264 individuals working on them.

“We believe the true impact of our project will be felt after the publication of the Community Food Assessments for the Santee and Omaha Nations and development of Food Sovereignty Strategic Plan. In our opinion, the greatest impact of our project in FY 2016 has been creating awareness of ‘food sovereignty’ on the reservations. Awareness prior to the start of the project was very low, but through community meetings and our other work surrounding the food system tribal members (particularly those on the Advisory Committees) are beginning to demonstrate an increase in knowledge regarding growing their own foods, improving access to nutritious and culturally appropriate foods, and what it means to be food sovereign.”
 -CFP Grantee, FY 2016

Thriving Local Economies

“The [CFP organization] reminded me of the importance of eating healthy foods. I did not carry vegetables in my store in the past and now I do. Now I find myself and my customers eating them more.”
 -CFP Beneficiary, FY 2016

A key element of creating self-reliant communities is helping to create flourishing local economies. In FY 2016, these CFPs impacted their local economies through job creation, creation of new markets and by helping prepare business plans. Each of these activities will create lasting impacts in their communities and build more resilient communities moving forward.

Economic Impact	
Direct jobs created	195
Jobs retained	157.75
Indirect jobs created	130
Markets expanded	379
New markets established	149
Market sales increase	\$ 607,716
Micro-enterprise opportunities supported	179
Farmers' markets started	4
Farms started or build on	69
CSAs started	2
CSAs operated	13
Projects that prepared business plans	14
Business plans prepared	67

41 of 47 CFPs reported working on at least one of the economic impact activities in the table below, and many spent time working on more than one.

Economic Impact Activities	% of Projects	Overall % of time
Job skills training	53%	6.11%
Local food distribution	53%	7.21%
Promoting Local Food Purchases	49%	5.74%
Farmers' Market	40%	3.38%
Entrepreneurial food and agricultural activity	38%	3.12%
Farm to School	34%	2.50%
Micro-enterprise/Entrepreneur skill training	28%	2.84%
Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)	21%	2.05%
Food hub	21%	4.22%
Community or Incubator kitchen	21%	2.57%
Farm/Grower Cooperative	13%	0.38%
Incubator farm	11%	1.46%

The most overall time was spent on Local food distribution. In FY 2016, 19 projects operated a total of 96 Farmers' Market locations, with approximately 20 mobile markets. These markets mostly operated one day/week, for an average of 24 weeks/year, with an average weekly attendance of approximately 255.

“I live in an area where there has never been a farmers market and the only way to get groceries is taking the taxi to Cub Foods or Rainbow Foods. Getting a taxi usually gets costly so I go to the grocery store only twice a month. Having a farmers market in [my] neighborhood has been a great blessing. In the summer months of July and August there is always great variety of vegetables where I don't ever have to get them at the grocery store. Also, the vegetables are very affordable compared to the store. I am saving more money and everything is more convenient. Having the market in my neighborhood has also brought my community together for events and community gatherings. My kids love the seed planting and even love the entertainers if they are present.”

-CFP Beneficiary, FY 2016

The 47 CFP survey respondents worked with 1,293 farmers in FY 2016. 23% of them (293) are able to live off the farm income as their primary income. 20% of beneficiaries self-reported that they are able to live off their farm income (6 of 30 respondents). 57 of 67 (85%) beneficiaries involved in running a business (farm or otherwise) said they feel prepared to do so thanks to CFPs' services.

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 2016. 18 projects (38%) purchased over 4.6 million pounds of food, or close to \$3.2 million. Most CFPs purchased food from multiple sources, and all but 2 of the 18 purchased either from farmers participating in their program, or small scale farmers.



21 projects sold 602,203 pounds of food in their communities for a value of \$1.1 million. 23 projects distributed over 20.9 million pounds of food, with an overlap of 340,000 pounds between food sold and distributed. 9 projects donated 280,850 pounds in FY 2016.

Customers	Sales	% of Projects	# of Customers	Sales/customers
Direct to consumer	\$ 1,032,154.34	68%	54391	\$19
Healthy Corner Store	\$ 73,244.65	15%	10007	\$7
Restaurants	\$ 50,868.40	32%	50	\$1,017
Schools	\$ 43,181.60	9%	70	\$617
Retail	\$ 25,680.13	32%	18	\$1,427
Hospitals	\$ -	0%	0	\$0

“I am able to seek advice and training from your organization and learn from farmers who have already started their business. I am getting great guidance on which vegetables to grow and sell and how to market my products.”

-CFP Beneficiary, FY 2016

Vibrant Farms and Gardens

“We believe very strongly in community ownership and include community members in all stages of community garden development and management. In doing so, we teach members how to plan, organize and advocate for themselves and their desire to build gardens. We have been working to establish leadership teams at each of the community gardens in an effort to make them self-sustaining. These teams will be the first point of contact for all gardeners and we encourage them to try to solve issues among themselves before coming to us for help. All leadership training has been informal so far, but we intend to teach a full leadership curriculum in year 3.”

-CFP Grantee, FY 2016

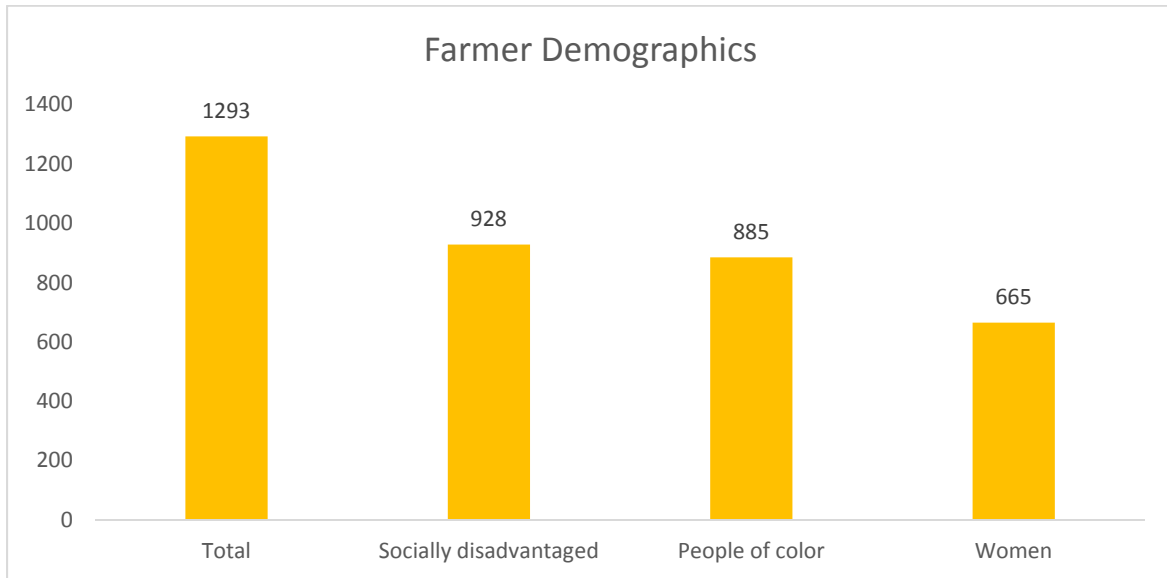
In FY 2016, 30 CFPs grew 1.5 million pounds of food on 347 acres of land. One project grows on 223 acres, comprising the majority of the acreage reported herein. 27 of the 30 projects growing food did so in an urban setting, which accounts for 304,366 of the pounds grown on 336.92 acres. All projects grew

vegetables, 16 projects grew berries or had orchards and 5 raised animals (either sheep, goat, pigs, cattle or poultry).

These projects had various land tenure situations from owning, to leasing, to informal agreements. The table below shows the different land tenure situations. Some overlap exists between numbers of projects since some had more than one type of land tenure arrangement. Collectively in FY 2016, these projects worked with over 180 different owners. One project worked with 100, another with 22, a few with 9 or 10, and the majority with 3 or less.

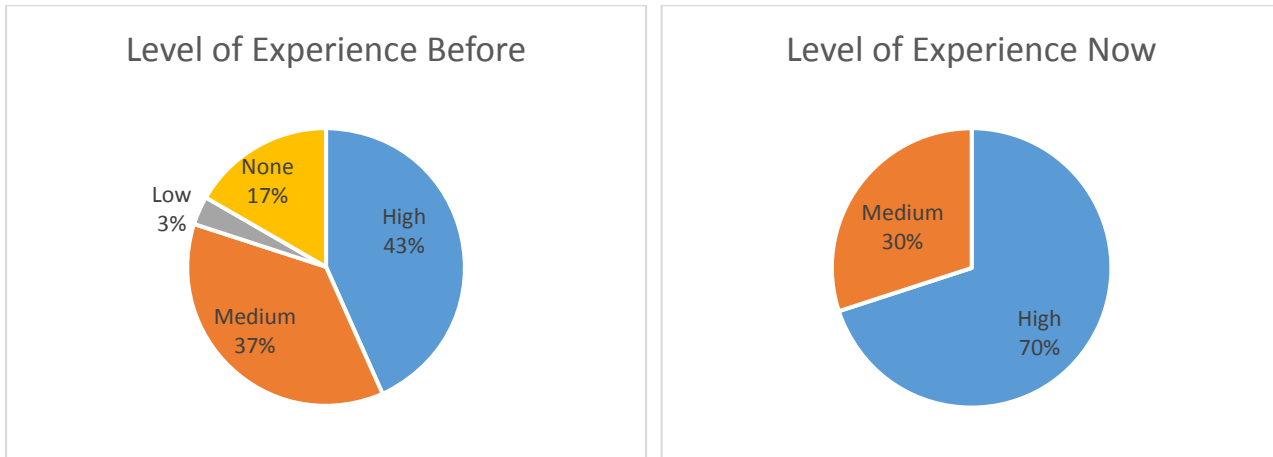
Land Tenure	# of Projects
Own	13
Informal agreement	7
Short-term lease	6
Donated land	6
Long-term lease	4
Other	4

26 projects worked with farmers in some capacity, for a total of 1,293 farmer participants. 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. CFPs in FY 2016 helped start or develop 69 farms.



64% of farmers (831) 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. The respondents (total of 30) indicated an increased level of farm and garden experience as a result of participating in their CFP. Before participating in their CFP, 24 (80%) beneficiaries indicated a medium or high level of experience, and now 30 (100%) indicate a medium or high level of experience.

Farming Experience



70% 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 186 gardens, with 1,449 plots and 3,995 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.

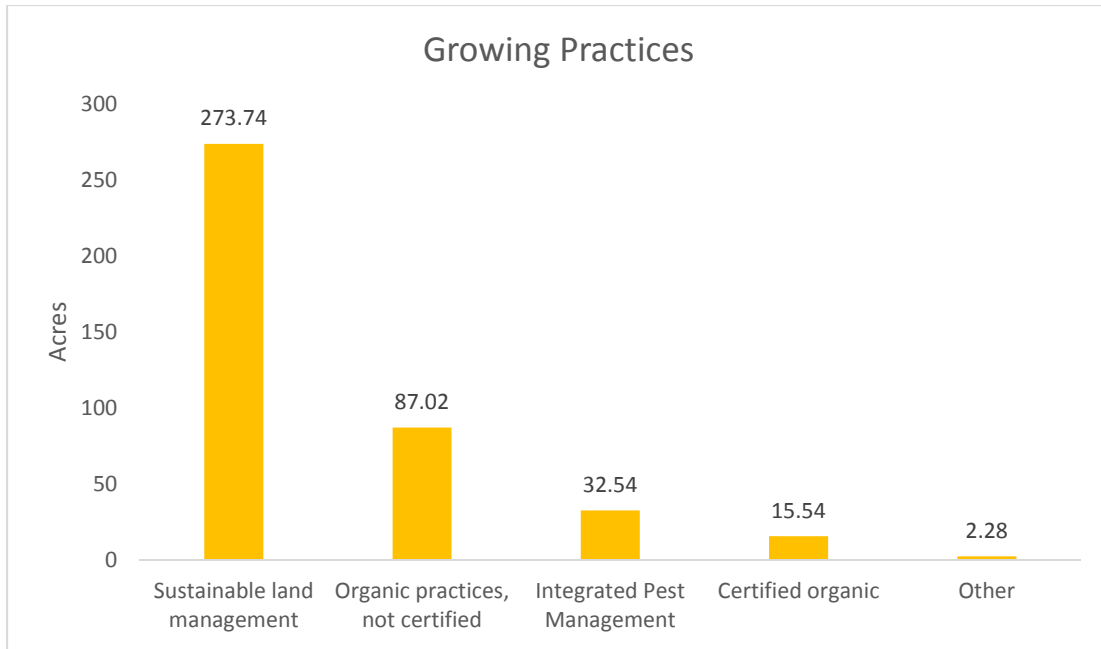
Farm & Garden Activities	% of Projects	Overall % of time
Community Garden	49%	6.66%
Urban Agriculture	47%	5.69%
Youth/School gardening or agriculture project	45%	4.23%
Composting	30%	1.02%
Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program	21%	2.05%
Immigrant/Migrant farm project	21%	2.76%
Restoration of traditional agriculture/foods	15%	1.51%
Incubator farm	11%	1.46%

“This year we have helped farmers find new markets, resulting in new income for their families. We have helped train and develop beginning immigrant and refugee gardeners to not only grow vegetables for their families but are teaching them skills that will help them move up the economic ladder in the long run.”
 -CFP Grantee, FY 2016

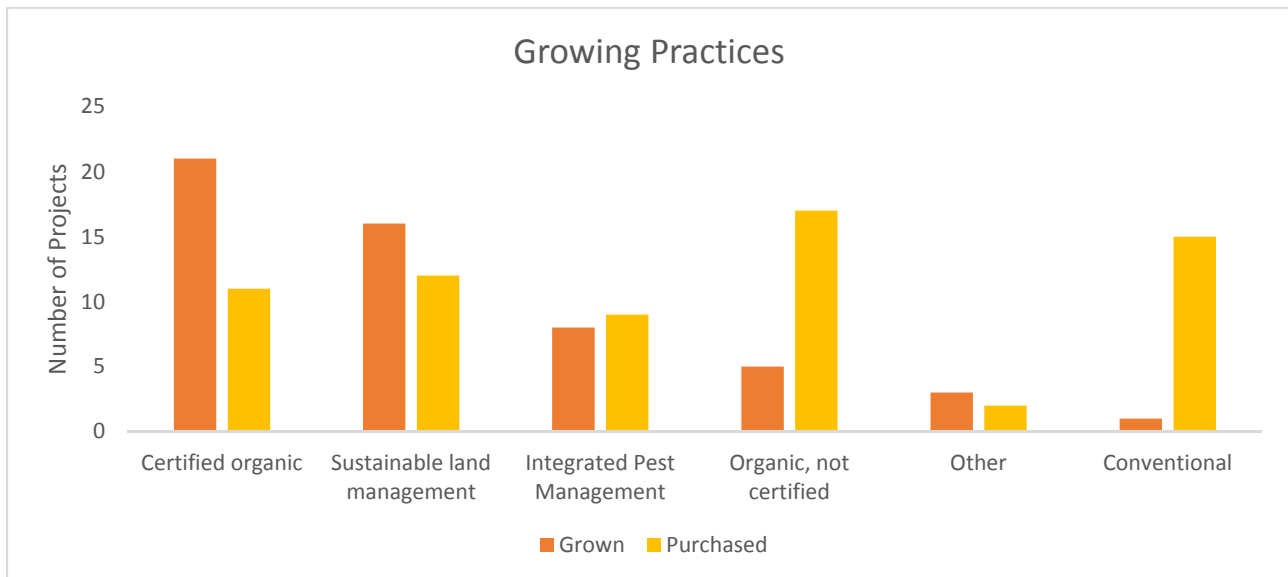
Sustainable Ecosystems

“Farmers participating in our program received workshops and one-on-one technical assistance to introduce them to new methods that would assist in increasing productivity and conservation of the farm's key resources including soil and water. This included helping farmers plant one crop per bed and improve crop rotations, introduction and more prevalent use of tools like scuffle hoes, digging forks, floating row cover, and trellising materials used for the "Florida weave" trellising method. Farmers also became more familiar with drip irrigation through participation in the farm and the importance of wise use of water in the arid intermountain west. Finally, farmers improved their weed management practices this year implementing low-cost methods in line with organic practices, particularly stale seed bedding to reduce weed growth in high density crops.”

-CFP Grantee, FY 2016



90% of projects growing food used sustainable land management techniques or organic practices (though not all certified), and 95% of projects purchasing food did so from sources that used sustainable land management techniques or organic practices (not all certified).



“[I learned] that it is better to harvest and consume organic products that benefit your health, your family, your economy, because I have seen and enjoyed my family as they enjoy harvesting and eating directly from the garden tomatoes, carrots, chilies, cabbage, etc. At the same time we teach children the taste for healthy eating and natural care. For this and more I want to continue with the classes I receive from the Project.”

-CFP Beneficiary, FY 2016

Justice and Fairness

“People of all ages are engaged in learning around nutrition and culinary education, food justice, and gardening. In all of our longer term courses and programs, friendships are built, participants deeply explore food and economic issues that impact them directly, and they learn how to make change in their personal behaviors as well as in the community and beyond. Our 28 community chefs received training and now earn well-paying stipends to lead our culinary education work. This has resulted in many of them further deepening their careers around food and community work.”

-CFP Grantee, FY 2016

Building more self-reliant, resilient communities requires fostering justice and fairness throughout the community. 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.

	# of people
Leadership Roles	
People of Color	256
Women	223
Farmers	
People of Color	885
Women	665
Community partners of color	461
Business owners of color	242

“I have always loved gardening. Growing up in another country, my family relied on growing our own source of food. As a child I used to watch and learn from my father, who was a farmer. He taught me many things about gardening/farming. However, in St. Louis, the climate and soil is very much different from in Vietnam. I learned a lot from the tips sheet and asking one of the coordinators questions on different types of fruits/vegetables that I can grow here in St. Louis. He has helped me a lot to be able to maintain what I started to learn from my father. Growing fresh fruits and vegetables helped to sustain our livelihood growing up and still continues to help me now as an adult. Thanks so much for what this program provides to me. I have passed along what I have learned to others to help them to eat healthier and to live longer lives.”

- CFP Beneficiary, FY 2016

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 and 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

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

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Case Studies

The following case studies were prepared by Andy Fisher.

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