

Harkin On Wellness Report 2021



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Forward

We are at the apex of understanding the complexities of and seeking solutions to some of the greatest challenges to face our world in generations. At The Harkin Institute for Public Policy & Citizen Engagement at Drake University, we believe it is important to address these hard issues comprehensively and understand all the underlying causes that got us to where we are today.

It would be foolish not to note how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed our world, in some ways for the worse and some ways for the better.

The last year has highlighted the extreme consequences of poor health.

Adults of any age with certain underlying medical conditions are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Cancer, chronic kidney disease, COPD, heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes are all conditions associated with increased risk, and they are all diseases that can be prevented with lifestyle and diet change.

Upstream forces, including lack of access to healthy foods, a food environment overwhelmed with low-quality and non-nutritious food, and higher rates of food insecurity result in

a higher prevalence of obesity and chronic diseases that are ultimately responsible for COVID-19 hospitalization and death in disadvantaged populations.

2020 brought greater focus on our minority populations that for far too long have been overlooked and burdened by inequitable policies, practices, and systems that create health disparities. There is no way to address these issues without addressing the structural racism that has limited minority groups participation in a healthy food system.

I have always been on the side of preventing problems before they occur. This last year is a case study in why we need to do what we can to prevent issues within our systems before they arise. The Food is Medicine model is focused on prevention and the creation of a healthy food system to support everyone in an equitable manner.

We know food is medicine to our bodies. A nutritious, less processed diet can be protective and restorative. But food is medicine is much more than that. Regardless of your knowledge base, we hope the organizations highlighted in this report will provide you with the ideas and skills to implement some of the food is medicine solutions at an individual, community, and policy level.



Senator Tom Harkin (retired)

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Section 1:

Introduction

Food is something we all have in common. We must eat to live but more importantly, we must eat healthy food to live well. Food is the common thread between almost all the national and global challenges today. It drives health, environmental, social, and economic outcomes. Making the right food and nutrition choices to promote multi-sector improvements is nearly impossible if we do not have appropriate laws and guidelines as well as social and physical environments in place to support and encourage healthy choices.

Food and nutrition must be addressed as an opportunity to promote better health, lower health care costs, reduce disparities, improve sustainable agriculture practices, increase economic vitality, and support sustainable development. The Food Is Medicine model outlines the system level change necessary to address all related issues.

The Food is Medicine model, where food is used as a health intervention to prevent and treat chronic diseases, is often used as prescriptive tool (e.g., medically tailored meals or food prescriptions); however, we need to view the model as a tool to solve cross-sectional problems including: economic vitality; biodiversity and the environment; equity; and health & nutrition.

There are increasing opportunities to integrate innovative nutrition and wellness program models into diverse settings. Creating a system that supports and sustains the healthy food systems is important, not just to ongoing nutrition and wellness programming but as a means to expand and enrich broader health preventive efforts.

We believe innovative and progressive wellness and nutrition initiatives that utilize a systems approach to food and nutrition issues are able to have a larger impact on issues. Furthermore, we believe effective policy, system level, and environmental change is necessary to accelerate the adoption, effectiveness, and sustainability of food and nutrition programs.

It is the goal of the Harkin on Wellness Report, to highlight top wellness and nutrition initiatives that are examples of organizations making the larger impact through effective policy, system, and environmental change. We encourage others to use this as a tool to build partnerships and create sustainable, cross-sector coalitions within their own community and beyond.



Section 2:

Methodology

In the Fall of 2019, we began the search for top wellness and nutrition initiatives from across the United States. The call for submissions was distributed nation-wide through professional organizations, public agencies, and publishing resources. We asked that all submissions highlight how their initiative or program strategically connects food systems with health and wellness because we believe that a food systems approach can lead to a larger impact on issues related to food, health, and the environment. We received over 70 submissions which were reviewed internally at The Harkin Institute to narrow down the applicant field. The review process included an analysis of each program that helped identify a series of elements necessary to enhance the quality, acceptability, and impact of health programming.

Submissions were rated on relevancy, adaptability, acceptance, implementation, reach, and cost (modified RE-AIM framework) For this report, we took special care to consider the following questions when selecting the top initiatives:

1. *Is this a relevant wellness or nutrition program for community health?*
2. *Can it be easily adopted by the community?*
3. *Will members of any community accept the program?*
4. *How well will the program be utilized and/or implemented?*
5. *Can it reach a wide population of people within the community?*
6. *And, what is the cost to the community? (fiscal, time, leadership, and infrastructure)*

We used two additional criteria to determine the ability of each organization to use a systems approach to food and nutrition issues, including how they addressed policy, system level, and environmental change necessary to accelerate the adoption, effectiveness, and sustainability of food and nutrition programs.

1. *Work in multi-sector outcomes: health, economic, environmental, and social*
2. *PSE change: working on policy, system, and environmental change*

Following the internal review, an external group of reviewers were asked to select the top programs based on the same criteria used for the internal review. Based on the responses from the external committee, a total of 10 programs were selected as the best examples of wellness programs and initiatives in the United States.

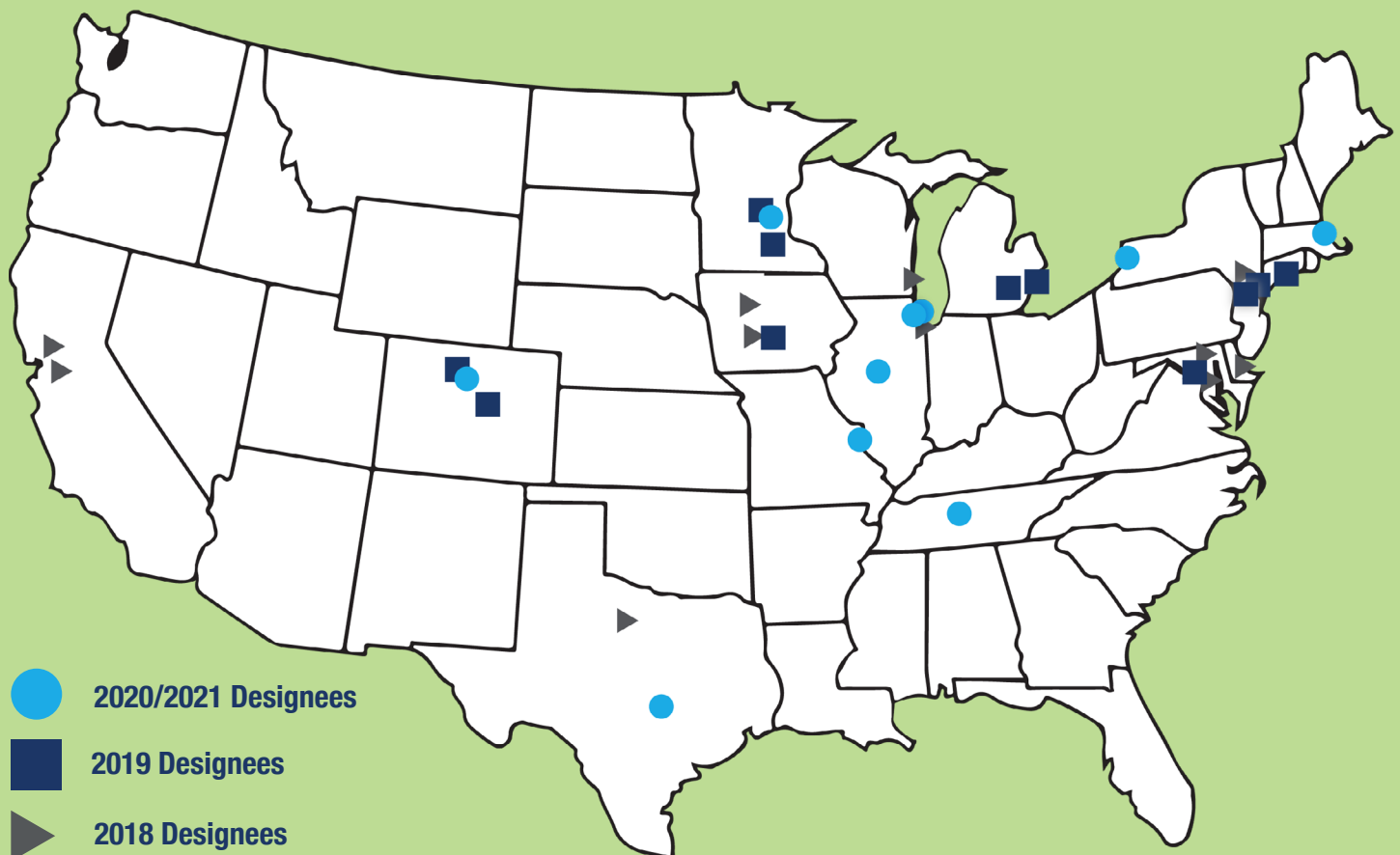


Section 3:

Harkin On Wellness

Designees

Designee Map



2020/2021 Designees

Big Green- Boulder, CO

Brighter Bites- Austin, TX

Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus- Buffalo, NY

Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation- Cambridge, MA

Ending Hunger Together- Tremont, IL

Food Outreach Summary- St. Louis, MO

Open Arms of Minnesota- Minneapolis, MN

National Farm to School Network- Chicago, IL

The Chicago Botanical Garden- Chicago, IL

The Nashville Food Project- Nashville, TN

2019 Designees

New Haven Farms- New Haven, CT

Detroit Food Academy- Detroit, MI

The Food Commons- Minnesota

Green Bronx Machine- Bronx, NYC

Main Street Project- Northfield, MN

DC Central Kitchen/Fighting Hunger Differently-
Washington, DC

Children's Hospital Colorado: Healthy Hospital and the
Food Security Council- Denver, CO

DMARC Food Pantry 2.0- Des Moines, IA

Boulder Valley School District Food Project- Boulder, CO

The Farm at St. Joe's, Saint Mercy Health System- Ann
Arbor, MI

2018 Designees

Cooperative Extension System, RWJF Culture of Health
Partnership- Delaware

Alameda County Nutrition Action Partnership (CNAP)-
Alameda County, CA

Acta Non Verba: Youth Urban Farm Project- Oakland, CA
Hunger Task Force: The Fresh Picks Mobile Market-
Milwaukee, WI

Edible Schoolyard New York- New York City, NY

DC Central Kitchen- Washington, DC

Common Threads, Healthy Cooking and Nutrition
Education- Chicago, IL

Unity Point Health, Berryhill Center- Fort Dodge, IA

Crossroads Community Food Network- Tacoma Park, MD

Dallas County Public Health Nursing Services, Health
Navigation Program- Dallas County, IA

Baylor Scott & White Health, Thrive- Baylor, TX

Big Green

Boulder, CO



Big Green is already taking hold nationwide, working in seven cities to build a healthier future for kids using Learning Gardens and food literacy programs. The specialized Learning Gardens are designed for a learning environment so that children and educators can pair traditional learning with the hands-on gardening experience that benefits students, educators, the school, and extends to the whole community. Big Green was developed with outcomes in mind. The program is driven to 1) increase students' knowledge of real food and increase food literacy within the school community; 2) increase students' acceptance and preference for a variety of vegetables; and 3) increase access to real food in school and the surrounding community.

Each Edible Garden is paired with a Big Green Garden Educator to assist students and teachers use the resources developed by Big Green to meet their three goals of increased food literacy, real food preference, and healthy food access. The Edible Gardens Initiative encourages students to participate in the hands-on planting of their school's gardens.

Their activities include:

- Harvest events such as salad parties, community health fairs, harvest and tasting activities
- Garden-to-cafeteria certification, policy interpretation, and supporting districts in the adoption of regulations
- Communications for broader school, parent, and community engagement
- Creating plans for distribution of their harvest, including farm stands, tasting activities, garden-to-cafeteria, distribution to families, classroom recipe preparation, events

Each Edible Garden sells their produce harvest at local stands through Big Green's Real Food Lab Program. Over half of the produce grown is given to members of the school community to take home and a third of the vegetables grown are served at school meals. The gardens bring the community together and provide many with the fresh produce from the gardens including to those in need. Big Green works in underserved, primarily urban communities: forty-nine of Big Green schools are located in neighborhoods where the median income is below the federal poverty level and ~ 20% of families across Big Green's markets receive food assistance (SNAP). Close to 90% of the students served are students of color, 19% are English-language learners, and 76% are free and reduced lunch recipients.



Brighter Bites

Austin, TX

Brighter Bites is a comprehensive, multi-component school, preschool, and summer camp program that increases access to fresh fruits and vegetables as well as nutrition education for obesity prevention among low-income children and their families. The goal is to help curb the childhood obesity epidemic by increasing the demand for fresh fruits and vegetables, leading to improved family eating habits and ultimately improved health outcomes.

Brighter Bites uses a simple formula: produce distribution, nutrition education, and a fun food experience that includes sampling a recipe of the week to see just how great produce can taste. Parents and community volunteers pack bags of fresh produce for families to take home each week during three eight-week sessions. Each free two-bag set contains approximately 50 servings of eight to 12 different produce items. Since its inception, Brighter Bites has delivered more than 24 million pounds of fresh produce and 100,000s of nutrition education materials to more than 50,000 families.

Brighter Bites is a unique program that has created systemic changes among a collaboration of partners that are involved in the food system—from farms to food banks and healthcare organizations to schools. In its effort to build a movement, it is working with leaders across multiple sectors, including retailers, food distributors and policy-makers that touch the food system. For example, food banks are sending out more fresh food through Brighter Bites to create long-term behavior change. Farms are donating fruits and vegetables that might otherwise be thrown away. Parents are volunteering at weekly distributions, bagging produce and using the fresh food they receive at home. Schools are now engaging with parents on a regular basis at Brighter Bites produce distributions and Parent-Teacher Organizations are forming at schools that never had them previously. Healthcare organizations are partnering on programming and testing children's gut microbiomes to show that produce indeed does affect health in the gut. The collaborations Brighter Bites has established across sectors is having a positive impact on multiple facets of the food system.

A research team at the UTHealth School of Public Health in Houston, TX measures the outcomes of Brighter Bites to determine its impact. Research shows the Brighter Bites model provides consistent opportunities for children and their families to practice healthier behaviors in school and at home:

- 98% of Brighter Bites parents report their children eating more fruits and vegetables while participating in the Brighter Bites program.
- Of those, 96% said they maintained that increased level of consumption after Brighter Bites ended.
- Two years after participating in the program, an average Brighter Bites family consumes 19 additional servings of fresh fruits and vegetables over one week.
- Children who participate in Brighter Bites consume more F&V served at school lunches than children who are not enrolled in Brighter Bites:
- 69% of 704 teachers surveyed agree that Brighter Bites has increased parental engagement at their school.

Children and parents participating in Brighter Bites reported a:

- significant increase in the amount of fruits and vegetables consumed;
- significant increase in serving more fruits and vegetables as snacks;
- two-fold increase in cooking meals from scratch, and a significant increase in eating meals together and serving more produce as part of those meals;
- two-fold increase in using nutrition labels to guide grocery purchases;
- and a significant decrease in added sugars consumed among children.

Brighter Bites has expanded from one to six locations in just five years. The program now operates in Houston, Austin, Dallas, New York City, Washington, D.C., and Southwest Florida. They have worked with 275,000 individuals since the program's inception in 2012.

Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus

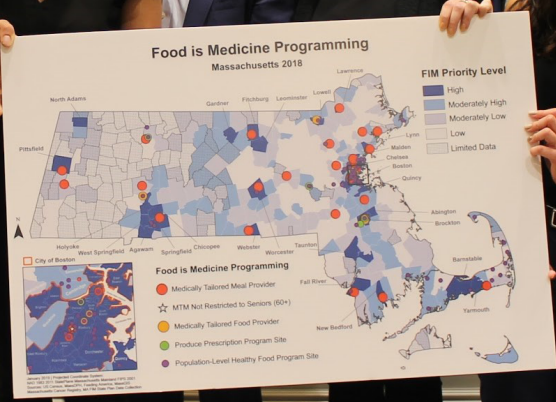
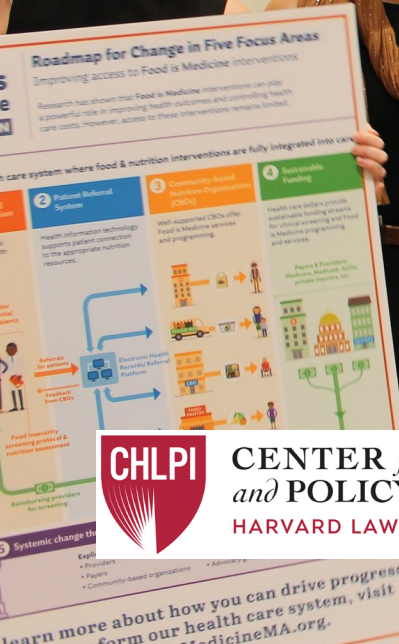
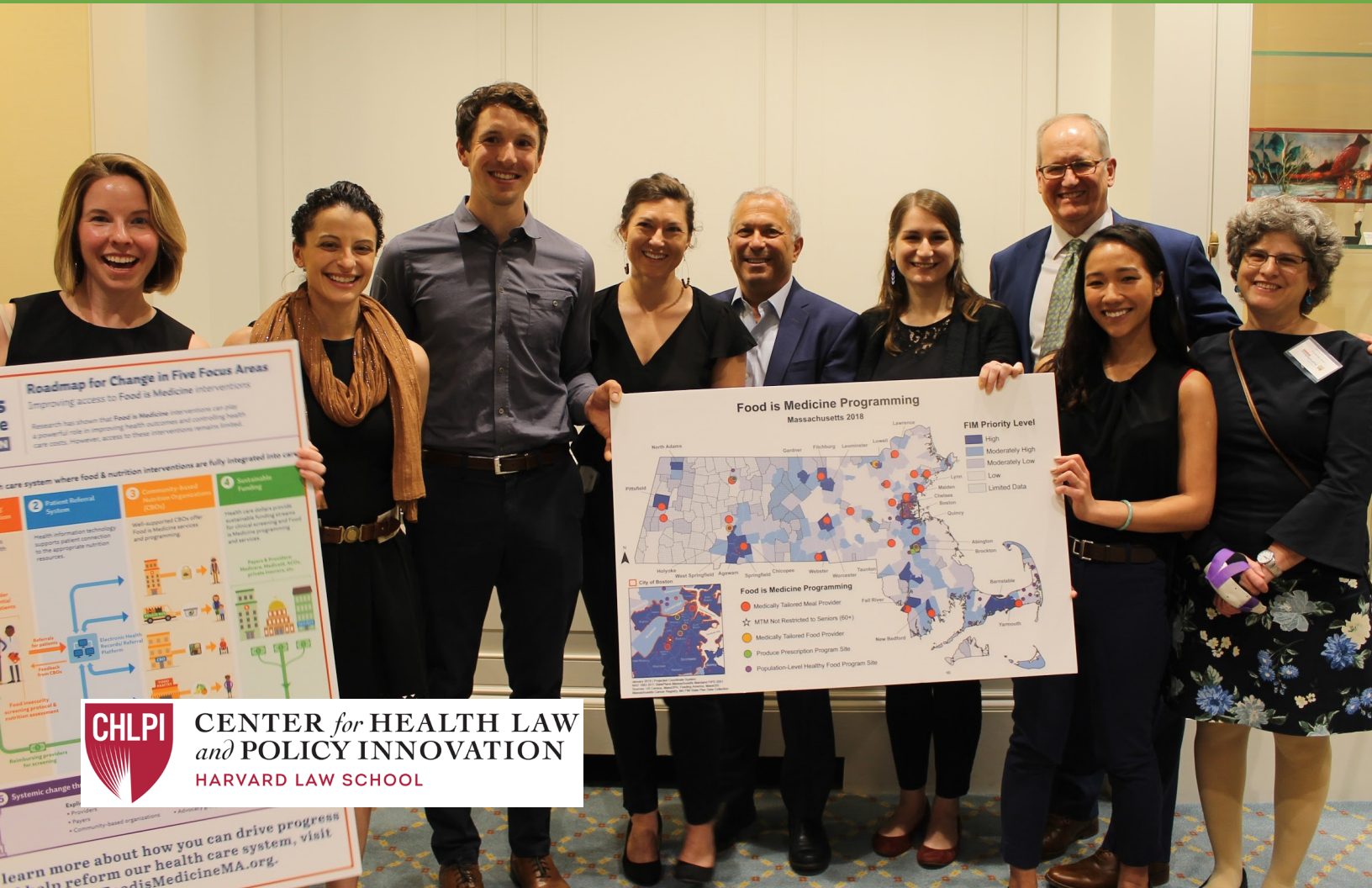
Buffalo, NY

The Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (BNMC) was inspired to make a change after observing that local foods and the environment are not made a priority, and traditional foods in the conventional food system offered are highly processed, non-perishable, include excessive packaging, and fail to support local farmers, ranchers, and processors. After researching national vending models for ways to overhaul their internal vending food system, BNMC discovered that access to healthy, local food is not available in traditional models. The BNMC made it their mission to promote healthy food access while also prioritizing the regional food system to reduce carbon footprint, support the local economy, reduce food miles traveled, as well as increase access to nutritious food. As a result, the Smart Fridge Program was created in 2018 and offers employees 24/7 access to freshly prepared wholesome meals and snacks that are made with 100% ingredients locally sourced and/or locally processed and packaged in reusable containers.

Using funds from a New York State Department of Health grant, the BNMC bought five fridges and put them around the campus and downtown Buffalo. All of the food in the Smart Fridges located around the community and on the campus, are sourced from a local grocer and restocked twice a week. The Smart Fridges promote behavior change by making the healthy choice the easy choice, as well as using targeted marketing, promotions, and nudges. In the worksites with Smart Fridges, BNMC facilitates a healthy workplace policy to ensure a healthy food environment. The policy includes: catered meetings; events; at points of purchase (vending machines, cafeterias); and prioritize local vendors over chains who source local foods and products.

The technology offered by the Smart Fridge makes the process simple. The capacity of the Smart Fridge's technology allows for easy tracking of the sales and inventory of the individual fridges. The Smart Fridge Program has the potential to reach more than 1,500 people per day. Not surprisingly, the food in Smart Food Program is has higher nutritional value compared with regular vending machines. The BNMC plans to add additional Smart Fridges to make them more available to the community, since the technology also accepts EBT payments.





**CENTER for HEALTH LAW
and POLICY INNOVATION**
HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

Learn more about how you can drive progress
to help reform our health care system, visit
FoodisMedicineMA.org.

Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation

Cambridge, MA

Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation (CHLPI) takes a multi-pronged approach to fostering these connections through policy, systems, and environmental change.

From a policy perspective, CHLPI seeks to drive change at both the federal and state level through dedicated thought leadership and close collaboration with Food is Medicine organizations and coalitions. CHLPI has published a series of resources highlighting policy strategies and opportunities including: Food is Medicine: Opportunities in Public and Private Health Care for Supporting Nutritional Counseling and Medically-Tailored, Home Delivered Meals; Food is Prevention: The Case for Integrating Food and Nutrition Interventions into Healthcare; and The Food is Medicine Advocacy Toolkit: Using Advocacy to Expand Opportunities for Food and Nutrition Services in Public and Private Healthcare Systems (co-authored by medically tailored meal provider, God's Love We Deliver). CHLPI also partners with Boston-based medically tailored meal provider, Community Servings, to host an annual Food is Medicine Symposium (now in its 7th year), highlighting the latest advances in research and policy related to Food is Medicine interventions.

Working with the national Food is Medicine Coalition, CHLPI empowers organizations across the country to advocate for change to better support access to Food is Medicine services in their communities. The advocacy work includes the launch of the ongoing multi-year, multi-county medically tailored meal pilot in the California Medicaid system.

CHLPI partnered closely with Community Servings to lead the Massachusetts Food is Medicine State Plan, a two-year, statewide initiative that used surveys, regional listening sessions, and GIS mapping to systematically map the need for, access to, and obstacles associated with Food is Medicine interventions in Massachusetts. This initiative culminated in the publication of the Massachusetts Food is Medicine State Plan report, which outlined both the results of our data-gathering and 15 concrete recommendations to expand access moving forward.

Through its close collaborations with nutrition organizations, CHLPI has also had the opportunity to drive critical systems change. Since the launch of the State Plan, CHLPI have seen progress on all of these fronts, including the adoption of the Hunger Vital Sign screener by a major network of health care providers and the launch of a Provider Nutrition Education Task Force led by local health care providers and the Massachusetts Medical Society.

CHLPI continues to think about environmental change and the fundamental challenge of creating access to Food is Medicine services in geographic regions where no programs currently exist. This goal is embedded throughout our state and federal work as we know that establishing sustainable funding streams is vital to fostering new programs. Additionally, CHLPI is currently working with medically tailored meal providers Community Servings and God's Love We Deliver as well as the Nonprofit Finance Fund to develop a curriculum that could be used to foster the creation of new medically tailored meal providers, in particular.

Ending Hunger Together

Tremont, IL

Ending Hunger Together (EHT) is a grant-making arm of the Community Foundation of Central Illinois (CFCI) which provides funding to non-profit organizations making a positive impact on food systems and demonstrating a commitment to inter-organizational commitment. The Healthy Eating/ Active Living (HEAL) Partnership is built to bring three local health departments—Peoria, Tazewell and Woodford Counties—together to collaborate on a joint community health assessment (CHA) and community health improvement plan (CHIP). Using a Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnership (MAPP) tool, public health leaders facilitate strategic thinking and planning within the communities to prioritize public health issues and identify resources to address them (e.g., Community Collaboration Integration Model). In the fall of 2018, CFCI announced Ending Hunger Together (EHT), in which organizations could not apply for funding in the food system work without being committed to collaboration.

The goals of the HEAL partnership/EHT are to improve system connections through the Community Collaboration Integration Model in order to deepen the alignment between collaborative partners as indicated through the (9) key domains. These nine key domains include systems, communications, understanding of roles, goal setting, evidence-based practices, organizational management, organizational buy in, funding, and resources.

EHT's two major projects are as follows: (1) providing their region with consistent access to fresh affordable fruits and vegetables, and (2) improving the proportion of healthy foods offered to and selected by community members.

EHT funding made the formation of HEAL Food System Partners possible. Over twenty partnering organizations have teamed up to fight food insecurity and hunger in a project designed to improve the healthy food system for all. The anticipated number of individuals served by this organization's projects is 42,985. This includes 10,405 kids and 32,580 adults. The Green Light Labeling and Education program reaches over 200 food pantries, soup kitchens, organizations and homeless shelters in the tri county area. Increasing healthier food options and identifying items in a standardized system promotes "Food as Medicine" impacting over 20,000 households. Preschool nutrition education, classroom gardening and composting along with family food bundle program reaches over 1,200 low income families through Headstart and Bright Futures in the tri county region. Alignment of over 5 large community gardens, hoop houses, and urban agriculture aims to move over 25,000 pounds of fresh locally grown produce through an online donation matching system, Good Food Recovery, to consistently get healthy foods to food pantries in the right quantities at the right times.



Partnership for a
Healthy Community



Food Outreach Summary

St. Louis, MO

Improving the livelihoods of people affected with HIV/AIDS or cancer has been the main goal of Food Outreach. Located in St. Louis, Food Outreach has served people across the state and region. The core of the Food Outreach's mission stems from their focus on nutritional support and education.

Since its creation in 1988, Food Outreach has expanded their services to more than just preparing medically tailored meals for those affected with HIV/AIDS or cancer. Other Food Outreach programs include satellite grocery centers, on-staff Registered Dietitians, a weekly Hot Lunch Program, along with a Meal Home Delivery Program. Food Outreach served a total of 532,293 meals in 2018 to around 2,000 clients. Food Outreach's clients are un- and underinsured, some are the working poor, while others have seen a temporary but significant loss of income due to work missed for treatments and side effects, while others have known poverty their entire lives. Through 31 years, Food Outreach has served as a champion of health equity in our region while addressing social and economic determinants of health. Food Outreach's leadership decided early on in our history to serve clients who are living at up to 300% of the FPL because we believe that food security will help our clients focus on other barriers to their health such as transportation, housing, utilities and child care.

Food Outreach's comprehensive program includes Integrated Frozen Prepared Meal and Grocery Program designed by an on staff Chef and Registered Dietitian, individualized dietetic counseling, nutrition and cooking education classes, a weekly congregate three-course meal, nutrition supplements, and meal home delivery to home-bound clients. Their program provides each client with two nutritious meals per day (28 meals/biweekly;

56 meals, monthly) throughout enrollment, combined with nutrition counseling and monitoring by our Registered Dietitian.

Food Outreach constantly looks to advance ways to serve those in the community battling with HIV/AIDS or cancer. The organization has built relationships with many organizations and institutions to help serve those suffering from diseases. The partnerships that Food Outreach has built with health care providers has allowed for many referrals of patients to the program. The collaboration of Schnucks Specialty Pharmacy with Food Outreach has also aided educational aspects of health throughout program areas. Beyond the health sector, Food Outreach also partners with food retailers. Food Outreach was granted with a grant from Target and their Target Circle program. Nordstrom is also a major retail grantor of Food Outreach. More partner sectors include media outlets such as St. Louis Magazine and Alive Magazine. The variety of partners who support Food Outreach allow for more clients suffering from HIV/AIDS or cancer to have access to meals that benefit their nutritional health.

In 2013, the Journal of Primary Care & Community Health published a study that quantified the healthcare impact of a medically tailored meal program on individuals with serious illnesses. Overall, they found that costs were significantly lower for medically tailored meal clients. When compared to the control group, average monthly healthcare costs were \$13,000 less per month, the number of hospital visits decreased by 50%, and hospital stays were 37% shorter. According to Food Outreach, these results have been influential in educating health plans, hospitals, physicians, and elected officials about the power of using food as medicine, paving the way for further integration of nutrition services into our healthcare landscape.

Open Arms of Minnesota

Minneapolis, MN

The mission of Open Arms of Minnesota is to ensure that individuals with life-threatening illnesses have access to nutritional food. Open Arms of Minnesota serves the Minneapolis and surrounding area with services to those who have severe illnesses primarily through a food delivery program with meals provided and planned by Open Arm's staff. Founded in 1986, Open Arms' founder Bill Rowe began food delivery operations to people diagnosed with AIDS. Open Arms has since expanded into a broad organization serving thousands of meals to people suffering with a variety of chronic diseases. The free delivery of nutritional, home-cooked meals to those who are unable to cook for themselves is a main goal of Open Arms. The primary illnesses that Open Arms of Minnesota serve are HIV/AIDS, cancer, MS, ALS, ESRD, CHF, and COPD.

The Open Arms' team includes a variety of professionals who uphold the mission of the program. The medically tailored meals that Open Arms provides are meant to advance wellness and nutrition in our community. They have 9 menus that our clients can choose from, including heart healthy, flavor neutral/bland, gluten free/dairy free, renal, vegan, and pureed. These are planned by our registered dietitians and chefs to meet the unique medical needs of our clients and match their health care provider's recommendations or diet prescriptions. Open Arms also has strong partnerships with healthcare. For some of our partners, a referral to Open Arms is a routine component of their appointments with patients. Doctors, nurses, dietitians, and social workers in our community refer clients to Open Arms as part of their treatment.

In addition, Open Arm's sources some of the food prepared from local farms which provide organic and healthy food to clients.

During harvest season, between 5-20% of the produce grown at Open Arm's farms is used in client meals, and the rest is used for CSA shares that community members can purchase.

The Open Arm's initiative also provides clients with education and counseling services which solely focus on nutritional aspects that focus that help aide their illness. The education and counseling aspects of the Open Arms initiative is essential to giving clients life-long knowledge to help make healthy choices. Partnerships with organizations are also what boosts the Open Arms impacts. Meals on Wheels and Open arms collaborate to provide access to more people.

Open Arm's Health Food Policy provides a clear written guide for organizational decisions related to the purchase, donation, preparation, and distribution of food and meals that occur as part of our meal program operations.. Additionally, Open Arms has aimed to extend policy to the political sector. Staff members in leadership have advocated for food is medicine programs to Minnesota representatives.

Open Arms relies on the support of the larger community through volunteer work. There are 7,600 volunteers who aide in delivering and ensuring meals are of quality for clients. The work of the volunteers is an essential part of advocating recognition of the impacts Open Arms makes in providing individuals with life-threatening illnesses with healthy food. This year the Open Arms of Minnesota will serve upward of 600,000 meals to assist client's nutritional needs. Clients of Open Arms have seen substantial health benefits towards their nutritional and overall health. Over 90% of those using the Open Arms programs report having a better sense of healthy eating and maintenance of health.



National Farm To School Network

Nationwide (based in Chicago, IL)

The path to improved nutritional education and children's health begins in schools. The mission of Farm to School is to integrate local food sources with schools to engage a movement that includes overall involvement from the regional communities. By sourcing school communities with local food, National Farm to School Network (NFSN) hopes to strengthen the overall engagement in nutritional education for children and their families.

The Farm to School initiative has grown rapidly on a national level going from just a few schools in the 1990s expanding to 42,875 schools in 2020. On a state level, the NFSN focuses on the concepts of information, advocacy and networking to advance the Farm to School initiatives. NFSN emphasizes three key factors to improve wellness and nutrition in individual communities: Kids Win, Farmers Win, and Communities Win. Bringing the Farm to School program into schools has a direct impact on children who benefit from quality nutritious food and a first-hand experience and knowledge on local-grown health food. Since an essential part of the Farm to School initiative is local-grown and produced food, farmers can take advantage of the program which can substantially benefit their livelihood. Bringing the two aspects of children and farmers together through food, overall strengthens community relations and positively impacts the local economy.

The elements at Food to School's programming core are local food procurement, food & nutrition education and school gardens. In addition to school gardens, the programs of Farm to School are successful through the implementation of cooking classes and field trips to farms. Foods that are locally grown are encouraged to be integrated into the school's meal system by being served in the cafeteria.

According to the most recent USDA Farm to School Census, over 42,000 K-12 schools are participating in farm to school, reaching over 23.6 million students. An additional 73,000 children in early care and education (ECE) settings across the

country are participating in and benefiting from farm to school activities. These programs spent over \$789 million in local food, putting this money back into the hands of local farmers and the local economy. There is even greater potential for farm to school to impact more children, families, and communities across the country. Over 56.6 million children in over 100,000 school districts and 11 million children in 250,000 ECE sites nationwide could benefit from farm to school and ECE as reach and implementation expands. NFSN's direct network includes over 200 Core and Supporting Partners and over 20,000 network members.

NFSN has been a key player in advocating for advancing policy initiatives. NFSN advocated for The Healthy Hungry Free Kids Act and continues to do so today. The support that Farm to School provided for the act resulted in the implementation of grant programs in Farm to School's name. The policy impact that Farm to School's initiative promotes is sustainable food, which complies with environmental and system advancement in schools and communities. Farm to School has further positive associations with health. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention encourages the health impacts that the program is instituting on children in school environments. The program has conducted studies that indicate that schools involved the Farm to School program exemplify healthier behaviors, such as a diet that includes an increased amount of fruits and vegetables.

NFSN efforts have propelled advancement of the three farm to school state strategies, which increase institutionalization and sustainability of farm to school implementation. As of April 2019, 31 states have an active farm to school network.⁸ State farm to school networks are key to bringing together diverse sectors and stakeholders and creating a united voice and set of priorities to propel the movement. State farm to school positions within state agencies and university Extension, the second state strategy, are vital to make farm to school initiatives more visible, prevalent, and cohesive across a state.

The Chicago Botanic Garden

Chicago, IL



The Chicago Botanic Garden (CBG) strives to utilize plants to enhance health and wellness of the community. The initiatives that the CBG creates allows for more adequate access to nature focused environments and the healthy food that can be produced there. Furthermore, the Chicago Botanic Garden provides those who visit with plenty opportunities to gain knowledge about the integration of environmental plant research and the impact of the outreach to the local community.

Stemming from the Chicago Botanic Garden's mission is Windy City Harvest which is an agriculturally focused initiative. The initiative serves communities with local farms who have grown over 130,000 pounds of produce annually. The produce is given to communities on the south and west sides of Chicago who lack adequate access to freshly grown produce.

To help provide those who have harder access to fruits and vegetables, the Windy City Harvest initiative added a prescription program called VeggieRx. This program makes fresh produce more accessible to those who might not have the financial capability to have access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Health care professionals can provide VeggieRx to patients in order for them to have access to fresh produce and advance nutrition education provided by Windy City Harvest and the Chicago Botanic Garden. An essential partnership of CBG is with WIC. VeggieRx has also been integrated with the medical health clinic system so that those prescribed can more easily be reminded to receive the fresh produce they need. These relationships benefit the patients to have a better sense of understanding in relation to food security and healthy produce nutritional benefits. In addition the CBG has built connections with partners that support their main mission. Specifically, partners of the CBG include organizations such as; Forest Preserves District of Cook County, Do North, Lake County, Illinois, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Plants of Concern, Chicago Wilderness and Chicagoland Grows.



CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN
Windy City Harvest



GROW COOK SHARE
**THE NASHVILLE
FOOD PROJECT**

The Nashville Food Project

Nashville, TN



The Nashville Food Project works “To bring people together to grow, cook and share nourishing food, with the goals of cultivating community and alleviating hunger in our city.” Their core values are stewardship, learning, transformation, and hospitality. The organizations history begins in June 2007, when Mobile Loaves and Fish expanded into Nashville and began providing meals to the homeless out of St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal church. In 2011 The Nashville Food Project came into its own as an independent nonprofit. In 2012, the meals program adopted a more collaborative approach and formally launched a food recovery program.

Their “Community Meals” program supports local nonprofits by providing local, fresh, and healthy food at regular events in order to support those who have trouble accessing the nutritious foods they need. The Nashville Food Project also conducts the “Food Recovery” program which collects food donations from individuals and organizations. Their community gardens provide a space for nearly 100 community gardeners to grow their own vegetables. They are now constructing a three acre community farm located at Metro Nashville’s Mill Ridge Park. Additionally, these garden areas function as outdoor classrooms, sanctuaries from urban life, and community centers for the families, individuals, and communities who grow in them. These production gardens supply over 25,000 servings of organic fruits and vegetables for our meal programs each year. TNFP meals are shared through partnerships with over 30 local nonprofits. Each garden site provides land, water, shared tools, and educational opportunities to deepen existing knowledge or skills of community members. The “Growing Together” program is currently supporting farmers who have come to the United States from Burma and Bhutan as refugees. This program was designed to expand access and opportunity to land, resources, training and technical assistance, and marketing support for people from underprivileged backgrounds with agrarian experience. After the Nashville Flood in 2010, volunteers delivered nearly 20,000 meals to displaced residents.

The Nashville Food Project has won several notable awards in the last couple years. In 2018, they won the Healing Trust Award for Compassionate Care. This award recognizes “local nonprofits that serve with love and compassion” and serve vulnerable populations with a focus on excellence on and compassionate care. TNFP also won the Bank of America Neighborhood Builder award in 2018. This award recognizes nonprofits that address and advance economic mobility and social progress in their communities. In 2018, TNFP won the Governor’s Environmental Stewardship Award for Excellence in Materials Management for their achievements and positive impact on the state’s natural resources. In 2017, they received the Frist Foundation Award for Excellence in Revenue Development.

Connect with Designees

Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation

Social Media Handles:

Facebook- @HarvardCHLPI

Twitter-@HarvardCHLPI, @FoodisMedMA

Websites:

<https://www.chlpi.org/>

<https://foodismedicinema.org/>

Contact: Katie Garfield, Clinical Instructor- kgarfield@law.harvard.edu, (617) 496-1496

Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus

Social Media Handles:

Facebook-Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus

Instagram-@bnmcbuffalo

LinkedIn-Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, Inc.

Website: bnmc.org/healthyworkplace/

Contact: Elizabeth Machnica, emachnica@bnmc.org, 716-218-7361

Brighter Bites

Social Media Handles and Hashtags:

@brighterbites #brighterbites

Website: www.brighterbites.org

Contacts:

Mike Pomeroy, Senior Program Director- mike.pomeroy@brighterbites.org

Stefanie Cousins, Director of Marketing and Communications- stefanie.cousins@brighterbites.org

General- info@brighterbites.org, nourishflourish@brighterbites.org

Big Green

Social Media Handles and Hashtags:

@biggreen @plantaseeday #growbiggreen #plantaseeday

Website: biggreen.org

Ending Hunger Together

Social Media Hashtag: #partnershipforahealthycommunity

Website: <https://healthyhoi.wildapricot.org/ending-hunger-together>

Contact: Kim Keenan, PhD, LCSW- kkeenan@tchd.net (309) 929-0240

Food Outreach Summary

Social Media Handles:

Facebook- Food Outreach

Twitter- @FoodOutreachSTL

Instagram- @foodoutreachstl

LinkedIn- Food Outreach

Website: www.foodoutreach.org

Contact: Julie Pole, Executive Director- julie@foodoutreach.org, 314-652-3663

Open Arms of Minnesota

Social Media Handles and Hashtags:

Twitter- @openarmsmn

Instagram- @openarmsmn

LinkedIn- Open Arms of Minnesota

Facebook- Open Arms of Minnesota

#foodismedicine #healthyfood #nourishingourneighbors

#medicallytailoredmeals #madefromscratch #nutritiousmeals

Website: <https://www.openarmsmn.org/>

National Farm to School Network

Social Media Handles:

Twitter- @farmtoschool

Facebook- @National Farm to School Network

Instagram- @farmtoschool

LinkedIn- National Farm to School Network

Website: www.farmtoschool.org

Contact: Lacy Stephens, Senior Program Manager- lacy@farmtoschool.org

The Chicago Botanical Garden

Social Media Handles and Hashtags:

Twitter- @wchproduce @chicagobotanic

Instagram- @windycityharvest @Chicagobotanic

Facebook- @windycityharvest @chicagobotanicgarden

Hashtags- #FarmonOgden #windycityharvest #YouthFarm

#northlawndale #freshproduce #veggieRX #wchcorps

Website: www.chicagobotanic.org/urbanagriculture

Contact: Eliza Fournier- EFournier@chicagobotanic.org

The Nashville Food Project

Social Media Handles:

Facebook- @thenashvillefoodproject

Instagram- @thenashvillefoodproject

Twitter- @nashfoodproject

Website: thenashvillefoodproject.org



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