



2022  
HARKIN ON WELLNESS SYMPOSIUM  
2022



# HARKIN ON WELLNESS

## 2022 REPORT

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## Forward

In the words of Chef José Andrés “Food is essential both for life and human dignity. Every day, I see hunger, but the hunger I see is not only for calories but for nourishing meals. With a new focus on nutrition security, we embrace a solution that nourishes people, instead of filling them with food but leaving them hungry.”

Fostering the idea of nutrition security is essential to the way we treat hunger in our world today. COVID-19 has made clear that Americans who are most likely to be hungry are also at highest risk of diet-related diseases including diabetes, heart disease, and many cancers – a harsh legacy of inequities and structural racism in our nation.

By prioritizing nutrition security, we can begin to break down the long-standing silos between hunger and nutrition, areas that cannot be and should not be addressed as unique, individual challenges. In order to effectively address today’s hunger and nutrition policies, systems, and environments, we must present solutions that tackle diet-related diseases and disparities in clinical care, government food and food assistance policies, public health investments, and national research.

Nutrition Security should be seen as an opportunity to promote better health, lower health care costs, reduce disparities, improve clinical practices, increase economic vitality, and support sustainable food systems. Innovation in nutrition security should come, and must come, from diverse sectors: clinical interventions like produce prescriptions; innovative screening tools in clinical and community settings to assess nutrition security; a focus on reducing the disparities in healthy food access and purchasing; a focus on nutrition in food banks and charitable food networks.

We believe innovative and progressive wellness and nutrition initiatives that address nutrition security can have a larger impact on catalyzing real solutions that provide not only food but also well-being for everyone. Furthermore, we believe effective policy, system level, and environmental change is necessary to accelerate the adoption, effectiveness, and sustainability of food and nutrition programs.



**Senator Tom Harkin**

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# Introduction

Food is something we all have in common. We all must eat to live, we want to like what we're eating, and we also like to eat food that is "good" or healthy for us. However, ensuring all Americans have access to food they enjoy that provides the nourishment their body needs not an easy task. For years, we have placed an emphasis on ensuring that people have enough calories, without placing a priority on whether those are the right calories. To achieve optimal health for and wellbeing for everyone in our communities, we must shift the focus to not only food security, but also diet quality and equity.

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. Poor diets and nutrition are a leading cause of disease in our country and account for more than 600,000 deaths each year, according to the USDA. What's more, food insecurity and diet-related diseases are more common in historically poor and marginalized communities.

Expanding our focus beyond food insecurity to look at all facets of nutrition security is imperative to improving long-term health and economic outcomes and addressing equity gaps within our food systems.

It is the goal of the Harkin on Wellness Report, to highlight the top wellness and nutrition initiatives in the country that are examples of organizations able to make a large 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.

# Methodology

In the Fall of 2021, 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 nutrition security with health and wellness because we believe that an emphasis on nutrition security can lead to a larger impact on issues related to food, health, and the environment than a focus on food insecurity alone. We received more than 20 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.

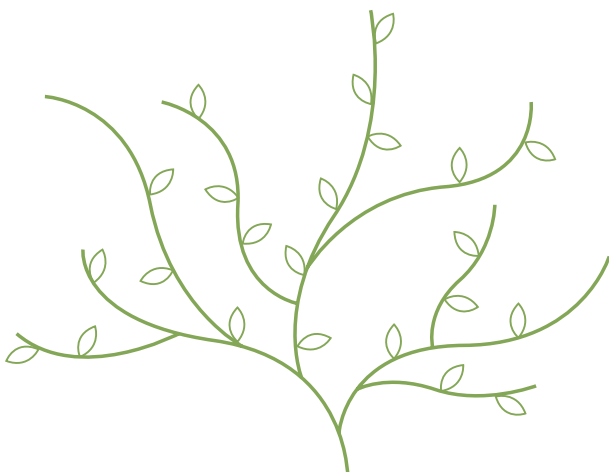
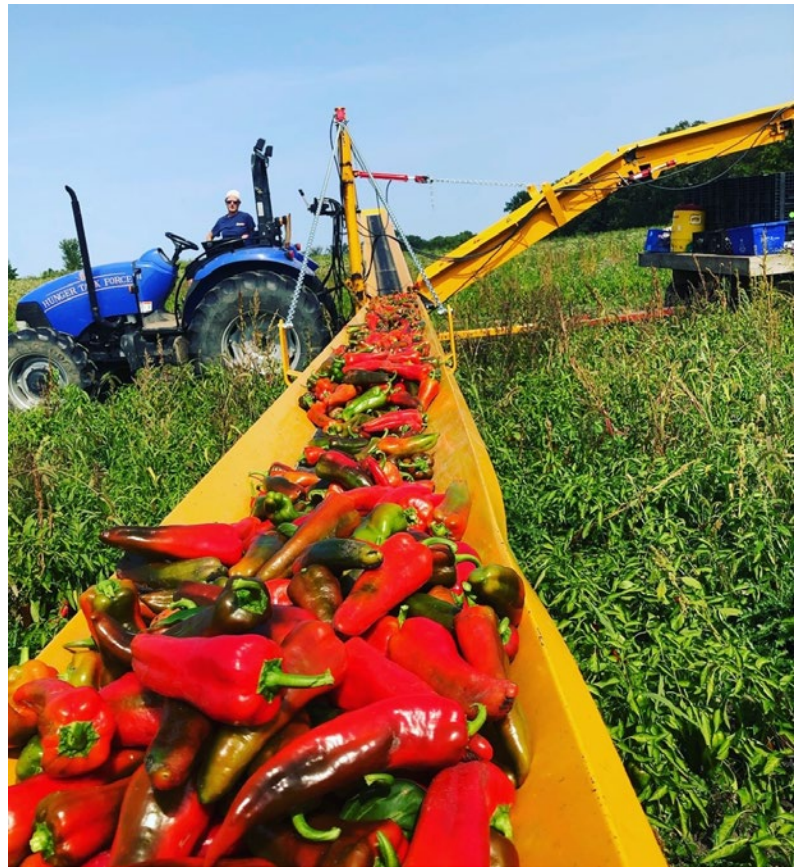
Submissions were rated on relevancy, adaptability, acceptance, implementation, reach, and cost (modified RE-AIM framework). For this report, we took special care to consider the following questions when selecting the top initiatives:

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

Based on the responses from the external committee, a total of nine programs were selected as the best examples of wellness programs and initiatives in the United States.





# Harkin On Wellness Designees

## 2022 Designees

Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food & Agriculture – Mount Vernon, Virginia

D.C. Hunger Solutions – Washington, D.C.

Food & Friends – Washington, D.C.

Grow Local Colorado – Denver, CO

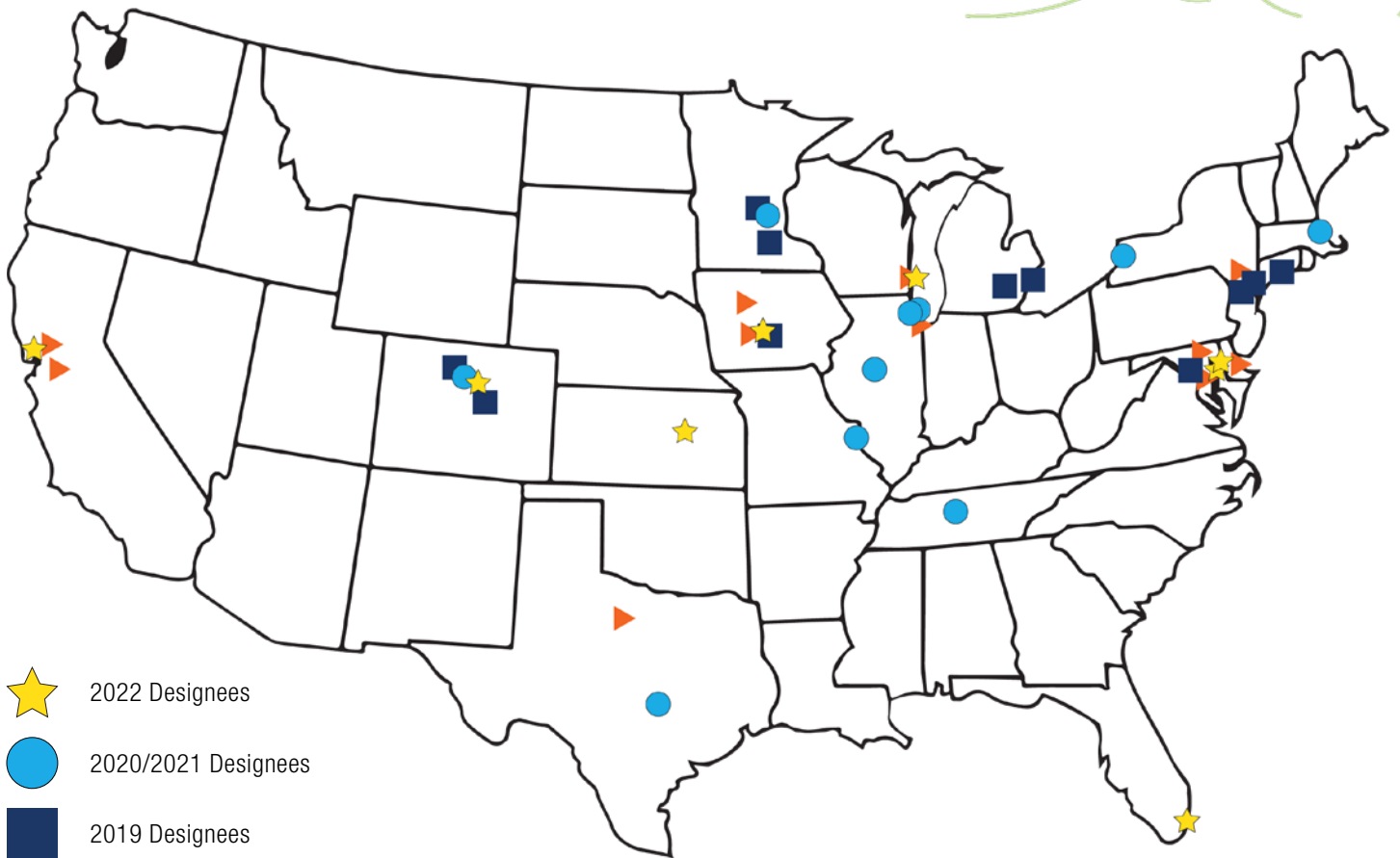
Hunger Task Force – The Farm – Milwaukee, WI

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Growing Together Iowa – Urbandale, IA

Konza Prairie Community Health Center (KPCHC) – Junction City, KS

The Poverello Center, Inc. – Wilton Manors, FL

Project Open Hand – San Francisco, CA



## Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food & Agriculture

### Mount Vernon, Virginia

Arcadia is a nonprofit organization serving communities in and around northern Virginia. Established in 2020, their mission is to cultivate vibrant local food systems that prioritize health, equity, and sustainability, from the farm forward. Through their programs, they work to address food access and food justice; support and promote healthy food and its sources; and establish innovative connections between local, sustainable farms and communities. They provide experiential farm education and nutrition programming for school children and youth on their five-acre sustainable fruit and vegetable farm; train military veterans to be farmers; host farm-based volunteer opportunities and community events, and make nourishing food accessible, convenient and affordable through their mobile market and other food justice programs. Arcadia's programs are grouped in three areas: Sustainable Agriculture, Fair Food Access, and farm and Nutrition Education. Sustainable Agriculture includes a production farm, CSA (community-supported agriculture), a veteran farmer training program, and community partnerships for fresh produce donations. Fair Food Access includes the mobile market, local food policy, and community engagement, and initiatives supporting farmers and local fresh produce accessibility. Farm and Nutrition Education includes field trips, summer Farm Camp, hyper-local school salad bars, and school and community gardens.

Nutrition security is central to all of Arcadia's program areas: they produce large quantities of nutrient-dense whole foods on their farm; they introduce children and families to the food through on-farm, in-community, and in-school experiential garden and food education; and they bridge the nutrition divide for nine communities in Washington, D.C. via Mobile Markets, which sell a complete diet of locally and sustainably grown foods exclusively in neighborhoods that traditional grocery stores decline to serve. Their prices are lower than other farmers' markets, and they make the food even more affordable by doubling the purchasing power of federal nutrition benefits for fruits, vegetables, and proteins. Since 2012, the Mobile Market has sold and distributed \$1.7 million in nutrient-dense foods in areas the USDA has declared "food deserts". The Mobile Markets do more than just sell food; they demonstrate the large and growing demand for this food in neighborhoods dismissed by other retailers. What is missing is the supply, not the demand.

Arcadia co-chairs the Food Security Committee of the Fairfax County Food Council and led a successful effort to change regulations that limited the locations of farmers markets in the county. Arcadia has built, mentored, and helped to maintain nine school and community gardens and is beginning the process of building a church garden and a community garden at a Moose lodge that will help feed the surrounding community. They partner

with the Fairfax County Public Schools to provide vegetables and fruits for in-cafeteria salad bars. They have successfully advocated for changes in school procurement rules that allow school cafeterias to use produce grown in school gardens. Arcadia annually sponsors the Farmer-Chef Speed Sourcing Happy House, connecting local farmers directly to the chefs, businesses, and institutional buyers who want to feature their food. The Mobile Markets are purposely built to transition the customers and business base to permanent, community-based food sources when those organizations are ready. They completed their first transition in 2021, and expect to expand to two more locations in the next two years. Arcadia Farm was established on a fallow farm in the suburbs of Alexandria, Va., that once belonged to George Washington. In addition to implementing sustainable growing practices on the five acres they cultivate, they support seven beekeepers and hives with large wildflower plantings. They protect and support native meadow and have planted a one-acre fruit orchard that will bear fruit in 2023. They partner with Veteran Compost, a private company, to compost 12 tons of food scraps every week. The compost is applied to the field to restore fertility, and the diverted food scraps reduce potential climate change emissions that result from food rotting in landfills.

## D.C. Hunger Solutions

### Washington, D.C.

D.C. Hunger Solutions is an initiative of the Food Research & Action Center to address and eradicate hunger for children and families in the District of Columbia. The Food Research & Action Center improves the nutrition, health, and wellbeing of people struggling against poverty-related hunger in the United States through advocacy and partnerships, and by advancing bold and equitable policy solutions. Specifically, they focus on the implications local food has on overall food access in communities with inequitable access to adequate nutrition and resources. They do this by conducting research on the implementation of local food practices and their impacts on the social determinants of health, including economic stability, access to quality education, healthcare and childcare, and safe neighborhoods, in D.C.'s most underrepresented and marginalized communities. The analysis of such research would marry information on the use of federal nutrition programs with research and data from D.C. Hunger Solutions' updated Grocery Store Report – which analyzes accessibility to full-service grocery stores in the district – and other sources. Furthermore, the data could also be used to compare race and healthy equity outcomes to determine how or if the implementation of these practices collectively promotes and improves nutrition security.

D.C. Hunger Solutions identifies the specific threats experienced by underrepresented, marginalized, and underserved populations in D.C., as those threats relate to nutrition security. Once the specific



threats are identified, D.C. Hunger Solutions will be able to propose change through research, technical assistance, and community outreach that encourages and supports strategic local food initiatives securing access to healthy and nutritious food options. This will hopefully be accomplished through a cross-collaboration between D.C. Hunger Solutions, D.C. government agencies, and other local non-profit partners to determine how access to healthy food positively impacts health outcomes, food insecurity, economic security, and overall wellness of D.C. residents.

D.C. Hunger Solutions has used policy, system, and environmental change as a tool to support many of their advocacy efforts. By supporting policies such as the Healthy Tots Act, Healthy Schools Act, and Healthy Students Amendment Act, D.C. Hunger Solutions has remained focused on eliminating hunger across the district by encouraging additional incentives for meals served in schools with local food choices. They have also used policy change through the WIC Expansion Act to support grocery store owners to better equip their businesses with space to accommodate more WIC-approved items, especially in communities where most WIC participants reside. D.C. Hunger Solutions' focus on policy change has allowed for continued systemic change within the organization by allowing the organization to remain dedicated to coalition work, partnering with other groups who share a common vision. Doing so has allowed D.C. Hunger Solutions to offer technical assistance and outreach to communities focused on WIC participation, local food access via the Good Food Purchasing Model, and other initiatives.



## Food & Friends

### Washington, D.C.

Food & Friends is a community-based organization in the Greater Washington Area that prepares medically tailored, home-delivered meals for people facing life-challenging illnesses. Founded on the simple premise that anyone can get sick and everyone can help, they are an essential community resource for people living with a serious or chronic illness. They help clients feel better, connect to their community, and feel empowered to manage their illness. Food & Friends implements its Specialize Nutrition Services (SNS) for clients living with HIV/AIDS in the Greater Washington Area. SNS implements 3 core services:

- the provision of home-delivered “Medically Tailored Meals” which can take the form of either freshly-prepared flash frozen meals or their Groceries-to-Go service;
- Medical Nutrition Therapy – one-on-one consultations consisting of an “Initial Nutrition Assessment” that is given to every client to identify and place them on one of 12 meal plans developed collaboratively by Food & Friends’ professional chefs and staff registered dietitians, as well as “Nutrition Follow-Ups” and counseling, which are conducted on an as-needed basis, initiated either by registered dietitians or accessed anytime by clients on service;
- health and nutrition education classes that take the form of in-person cooking classes/demonstrations and online workshops held once a month with a different theme each time. Every day, they prepare and home-deliver 2,800 medically tailored meals to their clients managing a serious illness. In Fiscal Year 2022, they project to serve up to 4,000 individuals and host up to 5,400 volunteers from the community.

To address the needs that manifest from food and nutrition insecurity and lack of access to healthy foods, Food & Friends will continue its program services for seriously or chronically ill individuals and their family members in the Greater Washington Area. Food & Friends serves people of all ages and ethnicity, free of charge and without regard to income. Clients are referred by clinical partners, which include numerous health care providers and facilities throughout the region. Eligible clients typically begin services within two weeks of referral. Food & Friends provides medically tailored meals or groceries and nutrition counseling to people living with serious illnesses. Clients qualify for services based on their medical need, but client demographics show that many are low-income or are experiencing food insecurity.

To address their clients’ health needs, they provide the following services: Home Delivered Meals or Groceries to Go plus medical nutrition therapy, nutrition counseling and education. Food & Friends plans, prepares, and delivers nearly 25,000 medically tailored meals to adults and children living with HIV/AIDS, cancer, diabetes, or other life-challenging illnesses. Food & Friends’ Home-Delivered Meals (HDM) program is well suited for clients

who are unable to prepare their own meals. Food & Friend provides up to 18 meals per week which are freshly prepared in the kitchen and include breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, and nutrition supplements as needed and upon recommendation by a Food & Friends Registered Dietitian. Clients receive one delivery of up to 18 meals per week. Each client will work with one of their staff dietitians to assess their needs and determine their meal plan. To ensure that maximum benefit from the specially prepared meals, Food & Friends can also deliver meals and groceries to the clients’ caregivers and minor dependents.

Food & Friends’ other meal program is Groceries-to-Go (GTG) which works well for clients with a caregiver to help with cooking. GTG provides bi-weekly deliveries of medically tailored groceries including shelf-stable pantry items, fresh fruits and vegetables, frozen proteins (chicken, turkey, and fish), and a few HDM entrees, along with instructions for easy chef-created recipes, and medical nutrition therapy to neighbors living with cancer, HIV/AIDS, and other serious illnesses. Food & Friends’ menus and diets are developed in collaboration between the Nutrition Services team of registered dietitians and the chefs to ensure meals meet the dietary specifications of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics as well as the Food Is Medicine Coalitions’ standards for medically tailored meals. Food & Friends offers 12 diet plans including diabetic, heart healthy, GI friendly, renal, and vegetarian plus two options for clients needing texture modifications. They can also combine up to three diets at a time to customize each client’s meal plan based on what they need to consider as far as dietary needs, symptoms of the illness, and possible side effects from medication. Food & Friends also recognizes that caring for someone with a serious illness places enormous emotional and financial stress on the entire household, so they provide meals for clients’ children and caregivers as well.

Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) and Nutrition Counseling MNT, which consists of one-on-one consultations with staff registered dietitians through Individualized Nutrition Assessments (INA) and Nutrition Follow-ups (NFU), or counseling sessions, are integral to Food & Friends’ core program service. During the Initial Nutrition Assessment, registered dietitians consult with clients to assess which of the 12 diets or combination will be most appropriate for the client. Food & Friends’ registered dietitians then determine, based on the client’s medical and nutritional needs, the frequency of follow-up assessments on a monthly, quarterly, or semi-annual basis. Throughout the nutrition process, dietitians track changes in clients’ nutrition status and help clients set attainable health goals, identifying, and addressing symptoms occurring because of disease or treatment/medication side effects. They engage collaboratively with the clients to provide lifestyle support and long-term management as well as help clients prevent or reduce the impact of nutritional deficiencies that may occur because of illness. Nutrition assessments and counseling sessions average between 30-60 minutes and typically take place by phone. This



allows Food & Friends' registered dietitians to listen and engage in conversation with clients, allowing clients to feel heard. Every client has continuous access to individualized nutrition counseling and assessment, which empowers clients to take an active role in managing their illnesses and supports treatment adherence. Nutrition Services has also embarked on a new series of nutrition education webinars. They intend to provide monthly webinars with topics related to managing chronic illnesses, how nutrition impacts chronic diseases like Type II diabetes, hypertension, renal disease, and cancer. They will also design webinars based on client feedback about what clients are interested in learning related to health and nutrition.



## Grow Local Colorado

Denver, CO

Grow Local Colorado grows vegetables in public spaces such as city parks, the Governor's Mansion, women's shelters, churches, and on state land. All the food grown in their gardens is donated to food pantries, shelters, and soup kitchens. Over 400 volunteers help them tend their 17 garden sites annually. They also glean fruit trees in their community and provide the produce to communities lacking access to fresh, healthy food. This season, they donated 9,500 pounds of fruit to 20 different organizations serving their neighbors in need. Their gardens provide weekly harvests to over a dozen food pantries and shelters in their community. Deliveries are made within hours of the harvest and on that food pantry's distribution day. This reduces the time for loss of flavor and nutrients.

They do not charge a fee for their produce making it easily accessible to those hit hardest by COVID-19 and the current economy. They grow produce requested by the distributing organization to provide fresh foods preferred by their clients. Recipients of the delicious and nutritious food know that others in their community care enough to take the time to grow and deliver this food to them, which contributes to both the recipients' and the volunteers' physical and emotional wellbeing. Delivering the produce and seeing the needs of the community is rewarding for volunteers who share their knowledge of gardening, recipes, and other information that strengthen friendships. The need for fresh, healthy food will only increase with climate change and economic inequality. By providing fresh produce they are making a difference.



The more vegetables in a person's diet the healthier they will be. Incidents of cancer, heart disease, and obesity all are reduced when more vegetables are added to an individual's diet. Fresh vegetables taste better as their nutritive values are higher. Therefore, people trying a fresh vegetable will be more likely to try it again as they've had a positive first experience. Clients at food pantries have anecdotally provided feedback that they realize they like certain vegetables after trying them fresh out of the garden. In addition to providing food pantries with these nutritious fruits and vegetables, they also host zero waste events that serve to support and celebrate those involved in urban agriculture, urban homesteading, and a healthy food system. Additionally, they also partner with organizations that encourage schools, communities, and home gardeners across Colorado to plant, grow, and share garden fresh produce with their neighbors. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Grow Local Colorado joined forces with nine other organizations in the Denver Metro area to pool their resources in addressing the growing demand at food pantries. By working together, they were able to cut costs and increase public awareness.



## Hunger Task Force

### The Farm – Milwaukee, WI

The Hunger Task Force operates a 208-acre farm located 20 minutes south of Wisconsin's largest city, Milwaukee. The Farm is a strategic response to an issue that communities all over the nation face: disparities in access to fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables for people in need. The Farm increases that access by growing over half a million pounds of fruits and vegetables annually. All of the Farm's produce is distributed free of charge throughout Hunger Task Force's network of 192 food sites made up of local food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, low-income senior sites, and community organizations across Milwaukee and southeastern Wisconsin. The Farm also provides a robust Nutrition Education Program for low-income youth, utilizes sustainable agricultural practices, manages natural areas restoration efforts throughout the property, and engages thousands of community members through volunteerism to accomplish all the work. A valuable community asset, the Farm is designated as protected Milwaukee County Park land. A 30-year lease agreement with Milwaukee County ensures the property will remain free from development.



The Hunger Task Force also runs a unique child nutrition education program in collaboration with Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). The program employs a full-time dietitian educator who conducts a nutrition curriculum within the MPS school day, a landmark achievement in a school district that previously did not offer nutrition education curriculum.

Three local elementary schools participate in the program. Each school has a free and reduced-price meal participation rate of 90% or more, effectively targeting low-income students. These children receive nutritious school meals throughout the day. The education program provides a unique opportunity to connect those foods with their daily diets or incorporate those foods into healthy eating. The dietitian educator teaches children about nutrition, how to prepare recipes with fresh fruits and vegetables, and how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Students also have weekly opportunities to taste test fresh produce.

During the growing season, children make regular field trips to the Farm to work in the quarter-acre school garden. They receive hands-on experience planting and growing their own fruits and vegetables from the horticulturist and participate in a “farm to table” model of learning. Students can make healthy recipes with their own hand-picked produce in the Farm’s kitchen facility. At the Hunger Task Force Farm, a hunger-free tomorrow also means a strong focus on sustainability that will allow the organization to provide fresh fruits and vegetables for Milwaukee’s hungry well into the future. Sustainability at the Farm takes two forms: restoration of the natural areas and sustainable farming in the fields.

As stewards of the Farm, Hunger Task Force has been actively conserving and restoring 100 acres of natural areas surrounding the Root River including oak savanna, wetland, and prairie. Hunger Task Force is dedicated to increasing the resiliency of the ecosystem and restoring the Farm’s natural areas, both of which provide environmental and practical benefits. The Farm is mechanized, and over the past 10 growing seasons Hunger Task Force has grown and distributed over five million pounds of produce. Hunger Task Force has initiated a fundamental shift from 100% conventional farming practices toward an approach focused on sustainable farming. Much of this process was attributable to key investments in equipment and improved management practices. Hunger Task Force is currently focused on the implementation and enhancement of the following practices in sustainable agriculture: conservation tillage, cover cropping, integrated pest management, crop rotation, succession planting, and drip irrigation. Hunger Task Force receives strong annual support from the greater community. Successful operation of the Hunger Task Force Farm is made possible by thousands of volunteers each year who participate in meaningful volunteer opportunities and assist with planting, weeding, and harvesting fruit and vegetable crops. They create the backbone of labor at The Farm and provide a reliable labor force to ensure all the work gets done to serve the community.





## Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Growing Together Iowa

Urbandale, IA

Growing Together Iowa promotes healthy food access for Iowans with low income through a partnership between Iowa State University's SNAP-Ed program, Master Gardeners, community volunteers, and Iowa food pantries. SNAP-Ed is a USDA-funded program designed to support healthy choices for Americans who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The Growing Together Iowa project funds mini grants for community gardens that donate fresh fruits and vegetables to food pantries, food banks, and meal sites. Partner pantries also received nutrition education resources to distribute alongside the produce. Where possible, nutrition education classes are offered to clients at partner food pantries.

Growing Together Iowa provides fresh local produce through food pantries and meal sites. This approach positions produce at an access point many Iowans with low income already visit and complements the large-scale food provision carried out by Iowa's food banking system. Fresh fruits and vegetables are highly requested at food pantries. Growing Together Iowa projects provide a consistent and quality system of produce donations customized to each pantry's capacity and client preferences. The economic impact of Growing Together Iowa is significant: each dollar invested in the project results in over a pound of produce. It is difficult to buy fresh produce for less than a dollar a pound.

The gardens also have a social impact. The Master Gardener program provides mini grants to help fund materials for volunteer donation garden projects that help volunteers purchase materials like seeds, fencing, and harvest supplies. During the 2021 growing season, Growing Together Iowa projects donated 92,000 pounds of produce to food distribution sites serving 65,000 Iowans with low income. This equates to 276,000 servings of fresh fruits and vegetables. Growing Together Iowa provides systemic change that improves the infrastructure of fresh produce procurement at food distribution sites. Staff or key volunteers from food distribution sites are required to be a part of the Growing Together Iowa mini-grant application, providing recommendations on preferred produce for pantry clients and logistical considerations, such as hours to drop off produce and refrigeration capacity. The systemic change of Growing Together Iowa is built on the needs and preferences of Iowans with low income, empowering the end beneficiary to guide individual projects. In some communities, once the system is in place, the donation gardening process continues without funding support.



## Konza Prairie Community Health Center (KPCHC)

Junction City, KS

The Konza Prairie Community Health Center provides a variety of clinic services and opportunities to improve access to food, healthy food options, educational classes, and local resources. Historically, Federally Qualified Health Centers focused on access to medical services. Food was deemed an integral part of achieving the best health in the early models. KPCHC has gone a step further, focusing on food and prevention of food insecurity as part of treating the whole person. Recently, they initiated food assistance strategies and collaborated with community partners to reduce food insecurity. KPCHC is working at several levels to improve policies, environments, and systems to advance health and well-being. In 2019, they initiated an internal support called Konza Cares to assist clients with prescription and transportation. Food assistance has been added due to the need. Any client identified by a provider

may be eligible for up to \$100 in food support, which is purchased through local Walmart stores, and picked up at an identified time. If a client does not have transportation, adjustments can be made for delivery or transportation assistance. Dietitians work with patients to identify likes and dislikes, order healthy food options, improve intake, and manage medical conditions through nutritional therapies. Dietitian services can be costly, but KPCHC provides the service to clients free-of-charge.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for additional local food access in the community, and in 2021 KPCHC worked with a local Girl Scout to complete her Gold Project Award, a Konza Cupboard, focused on food insecurity and food access. The Girl Scout built a mini-food pantry to be located outside the clinic. A requirement of the Gold Project was developing a sustainability plan. KPCHC's Konza Cares program agreed to provide \$50 per month toward pantry food to sustain the mini pantry into the future. Since the pantry was placed, KPCHC has purchased food nine times, hosted a staff food drive collecting 1,950 pantry items, collaborated with the local food pantry, and monitored and stocked the pantry to ensure adequate food and hygiene supplies.

KPCHC is working on two nutrition prescription implementation plans. KPCHC has clinics in two counties and each county has different funders. The nutrition prescription will be provided to clients identified by present criteria (i.e., diabetes, hypertension, overweight, obesity, or food insecurity). The nutrition prescription is comparable to a drug prescription and details how many fruits and vegetables to eat daily with a goal of increasing to 5-6 servings daily. Information on fruit and vegetable intake is included on the prescription, and dietitians will provide counseling as well. In addition, KPCHC collaborates with community partners to address nutrition security policies, environments, and systems. Staff sits on local boards and committees to assist in identifying, implementing, and monitoring progress to improve the local food system. KPCHC has hosted cooking classes, provided incentives to cooking class participants, and promoted state and local initiatives related to farmer's markets. KPCHC collaborates with the state's WIC program to operate a clinic. The WIC clinic promotes healthy eating to pregnant and postpartum women, and children under age five. Staff is actively engaged in local, state, and national WIC committees to increase reach, partnerships, and leadership.

## The Poverello Center, Inc.

### Wilton Manors, FL

The Poverello Center, Inc. can create healthy meal plans with grocery items in just 17 minutes at their Pop Up Eat Well Centers, available at any location that has more than five parking spaces. The Poverello Center's Pop Up Eat Well Centers use an evidence-informed approach to healthy distribution, utilizing CDC's Vulnerability Index (over 90), USDA's Food Access Research

Atlas (poor healthy food access within five miles), and community partnerships to distribute healthy groceries in areas prioritized by the greatest documented need. To qualify, individuals must live in prioritized areas, be at risk of food insecurity (as measured by the Hunger Vital Sign developed by the American Pediatric Association, with validation for use among adults), and have an income less than 150 percent of the federal poverty level. The food distribution is short term, up to six weeks. It includes SNAP application assistance for those who may be eligible, which can mean up to two years of food assistance. Program participants may select from 115 different nutritionist-curated items to make their grocery orders sufficient to feed the family for one week.

Participants select their groceries and a delivery date online with assistance from a community partner's program in the prioritized community. The groceries are delivered to the program participant's home through Door Dash or picked up at a community partner. Partners have included YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, Police Athletic League, City of Hallendale Beach, H.O.M.E.S. and others. The program brings a world class healthy food pantry into areas most likely to contain people who are food insecure. Not only do they provide healthy food to these communities, but they also provide nutrition-related pamphlets, cooking demonstrations, tastings, and education. This adds buying power to areas where it didn't exist previously and specifically brings an estimated \$3 million into the communities where there exists a high risk for food insecurities. The Poverello Center is able to curate grocery orders using nutritional guidelines for those with specific medical conditions, including HIV, diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, and cancer, and individuals who suffer from food insecurity. The Pop Up Eat Well Centers have served more than 1,000 program participants, with family members numbering just over 2,000, for a total of 3,000+ people over the past 20 months.

## Project Open Hand

### San Francisco, CA

Project Open Hand was founded in 1985 in San Francisco by Ruth Brinker at the height of the AIDS crisis. Ruth had witnessed neighbors become malnourished from AIDS, so to help, she began preparing them meals. From this grassroots beginning offering "meals with love" for homebound people living with HIV/AIDS, Project Open Hand has grown to meet the nutritional needs of the critically ill, adults with disabilities, and older adults. Project Open Hand today is a robust, thriving nonprofit organization that provides food and nutritional services to the critically ill in San Francisco and Alameda Counties. Through the Community Nutrition Program, they provide freshly made hot meals to congregate sites as well as frozen meals that can be taken to go. The Wellness Program offers medically tailored meals and groceries to those with qualifying chronic diseases (HIV/AIDS,



hepatitis C, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease, and diabetes) and recent major surgery.

Every day, Project Open Hand prepares 2,500 nutritious meals and provides 200 bags of healthy groceries to help sustain clients as they battle serious illnesses, isolation, or the health challenges of aging. Overall, at Project Open Hand, they ensure those they serve have regular and reliable access to the food and nutrition their unique circumstances require to maintain or improve their health. The Community Nutrition Program improves access to nutritious foods by offering congregate dining options for both breakfast and lunch with the option to take the meals to go. In addition to the Community Nutrition Program, their Wellness Program provides clients with both groceries and meals available for pick up. To further increase access, homebound patients are offered meal and grocery delivery, or the opportunity to shop at a mobile site closer to where they live. Given grant funding, all of their services are free of cost to clients, and health care practitioners refer their patients to Project Open Hand without concern for affordability of services. To ensure provision of quality nutrition in the meals and wellness programs, Project Open Hands' meals are held to rigorous evidenced-based nutrition standards for various chronic health conditions. With the addition of nutrition education and counseling provided by qualified registered dietitians and nutritionists in concert with healthy groceries, their clients are empowered to use food as medicine. Ultimately, nutrition security not only means a nutrition practitioner is involved in the meal planning process for Project Open Hands' clients, considering their medical diagnoses, but it also means that they examine the upstream sources of food they use in their kitchen and offer in their grocery center. Nutrition security even extends to the personal touch that occurs when they deliver food or when a client comes in to pick up food.

As a founding member of the Food is Medicine Coalition (FIMC) and the lead agency for the California Food is Medicine Coalition (CalFIMC), Project Open Hand believes food is medicine. The coalition works to increase nutrition security for their clients through advocacy and research of their model of medical engagement, good nutrition, and case management. This model of care delivery has demonstrated important impacts: decreased hospitalizations, decreased emergency room visits, improved quality of life, and increased medication adherence. Due to FIMC advocacy, an additional \$9.3 million has been approved to enable health plans and providers to offer medically tailored meal services to Medi-Cal patients before the adoption of Community Support programs of California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal. Moreover, health plans will cover medically tailored meals for not only congestive heart failure but also, notably, renal disease, chronic kidney disease, cancer, and malnutrition. From an environmental perspective, Project Open Hand is planning a capital campaign to address all infrastructure and operational needs of its two locations in San Francisco and Oakland. These renovations

include enhancements to the kitchen and food storage facilities, community access to the main facility, and the expansion and/or replacement of the fleet of delivery vehicles. Additionally, Project Open Hand is fundraising to enhance the Information Technology Capacity, with projects and long-term investments, including IT security software and upgrades to the Client Services database that will strengthen their ability to measure impact.





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