

Community Food Projects in Massachusetts

Eighteen CFP grants have been awarded to groups in Massachusetts between 1997 and 2006, amounting to \$2,475,000. The following are profiles of five of these projects.

Nuestras Raices, Holyoke, MA

Grants awarded: \$89,000 in 1996 for 2-year period; \$184,000 in 2002 for 3-year period; \$240,000 in 2005 for 2-year period.

Nuestras Raices used their first CFP grant to transform an abandoned building and a vacant lot into a vibrant agricultural center, which includes a greenhouse and a shared-use kitchen where staff offer community education and small business development opportunities. Building upon this project with subsequent CFP grants, the organization has provided infrastructure and training that have empowered immigrant Puerto Rican farmers to develop a vibrant community-based food system. Nuestras Raices established two new community gardens at public housing projects with plots for six families and forty youth, in addition to a seventeen-plot market garden where adults and youth have begun farming commercially. CFP has also enabled the organization to conduct a Spanish-language promotion program for two farmers' markets, to support a youth-managed stand at one of the markets, and to provide technical assistance and shared tools to residents growing Puerto Rican specialty crops that are not available elsewhere.

Somerville Community Corporation, Somerville, MA

Grant awarded: \$25,000 in 2006 for 1-year period.

Somerville Community Corporation (SCC) is a membership organization that provides leadership for sustaining the city of Somerville as a vibrant, diverse and tolerant community. With a CFP grant, SCC assessed community food security in Somerville's low- and moderate-income communities, creating a place-based economic development strategy around food production. The project established a food security task force, which bears much of the responsibility for this undertaking. The task force is assessing local food production and distribution, and will identify the needs of and economic opportunities for existing, emerging, and potential entrepreneurs in developing and expanding their food related businesses.

The Food Project, Lincoln, MA

Grants awarded: \$74,300 in 1996 for 3-year period; \$45,700 in 1997 for 3-year period; \$140,000 in 2004 for 3-year period.

The Food Project, established in 1991, has demonstrated the economic and social benefits of a sustainable metropolitan food system that links food production with community and youth enterprise. Thanks to CFP grants, the Project employs over 100 young people and 25 full-time staff and engages nearly 2,000 volunteers annually. They grow over 250,000 pounds of chemical-pesticide-free food each season for charitable donation and subsidized sale at farmers' markets. CFP funding has also enabled them to establish a 1,500 square foot urban center where staff engage youth in business start-up and management, working with them to research, design, and test a value-added food enterprise: farm-fresh salsa.

United Teen Equity Center, Lowell, MA**Grant awarded: \$290,000 in 2006 for 3-year period.**

Through the CFP-funded Fresh Roots Project, the United Teen Equity Center seeks to empower youth by enabling them to grow food for themselves and their community. The project is initiating a youth-led agricultural project on 2.5 acres of donated land. Participants gain valuable work skills and leadership experience by assisting in food production and distribution, and taking advantage of the program's educational and employment opportunities. The Fresh Roots Project grows organic, culturally appropriate produce, made available to the low-income community of Lowell through a buyer's club, local farmers' market, and distribution to local food bank clients. Through this program, youth will also market produce and processed food through the local farmers' market, run a buyer's club for low-income families to purchase produce for \$10 per week, and create and maintain a CSA program with shares available through grants, adopt-a-share programs, and other subsidies.

Community Teamwork, Lowell, MA**Grants awarded: \$135,000 in 2000 for 2 years; \$175,000 in 2003 for 2 years.**

The Lowell Farming and Food Project, funded with a CFP grant in 2000, enhanced the food security and economic self-sufficiency of disadvantaged Lowell residents by enabling them to produce and market culturally appropriate, accessible and affordable foods. In 2003, another CFP grant funded the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project (NESFP), an agricultural training program for recent immigrants. NESFP offers participants training and technical assistance in developing their own farm business; they learn about marketing opportunities, farm management, accessing start-up credit, and risk management strategies. The project offers beginning farmers access to land at one of five NESFP training farms. With their CFP grant, NESFP has developed an immigrant marketing cooperative called World Peas, which has begun to sell the farmers' produce through local markets and a CSA.