

Community Food Project Profiles in Michigan

In Michigan, 7 CFP grants were awarded between 1997 and 2006. Five of them are profiled below; these five grants amount to \$913,984.

Warren/Conner Development Coalition, Detroit, MI

Grant awarded: \$299,884 in 2006 for a 3-year period

For 23 years, the Warren Conner Development Coalition has worked to revitalize the economically depressed neighborhoods along Conner Avenue on the East side of Detroit. Building on the organization's previous community organizing work, the WCDC's recent grant-winning Wayne County Food Systems Project, "Project GROW", has improved the area's food security, economic self-sufficiency and health. The WCDC has collaborated with a number of local community and university partners to build the capacity of new and existing neighborhood farmers through training, financial assistance, and technical support. One of Project GROW's most important contributions has been in connecting these farmers with existing local markets, establishing new neighborhood fresh food markets and facilitating the development of a produce distribution system.

Allen Neighborhood Center, Lansing, MI

Grant awarded: \$240,000 in 2006 for 3-year period

In two of its recent projects – "From Farm to Neighborhood via the Allen Street Farmers' Market" and "Hunter Park Garden House Project" – the Allen Neighborhood Center is working to rebuild and revitalize the low-income East Side of Lansing. The organization established the Allen Street Farmer's market to provide fresh, nutritious foods to low-income residents; in 2005, the market served 11,000 people. A CFP grant has enabled the ANC to reach out to local food aid recipients, raising awareness of the market. This project has used the market as a starting point for diverse work that has included training youth to work at the market, and linking local farmers to local restaurants and grocery stores. The ANC has also used CFP funding to establish greenhouses as centers of agriculture and education. They offer educational programs on nutrition and urban agriculture for low-income and refugee families and neighborhood groups.

West Michigan Environmental Action Council, Grand Rapids, MI

Grant awarded: \$24,100 in 2006 for 10-month period

The CFP-funded project "Building Food Power in Western Michigan" was organized under the auspices of the Greater Grand Rapids Food System Council to engage two low-income Western Michigan communities in a process of planning for community food security and an improved food system. The program has helped participants to identify community assets and use the results as a tool for food security planning. Building participants' skills and knowledge by opening a dialogue between citizens and agencies that serve them, the project also encouraged program participants to discuss food issues, methodologies, and solutions with each other.

Capuchin Soup Kitchen, Detroit, MI

Grant awarded: \$150,000 in 2003 for 2-year period

Collaborating with a number of other groups, the Capuchin Soup Kitchen launched the Urban Detroit Agriculture and Education Project to promote urban gardening and increased access to nutritious food for Detroiters. Their Garden Resource Program, based at Romanowski Farm Park, has helped gardens across the city by distributing supplies and mobilizing volunteers to help local gardeners. The program also developed neighborhood resource centers, facilitated the selling of local products at low-income health clinics, and offered garden training for youth and adults. As their help enlarged local food production, the program eventually formed the Detroit Agriculture Network, which has become its own self-sustaining non-profit organization. The Soup Kitchen has subsequently been working in collaboration with policymakers to promote the urban production of fresh food, and working with partners to evaluate the success of the project and to assess fruit and vegetable intake of gardeners. These evaluations may facilitate the replication of this successful, efficient project in other parts of the country.

Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems, East Lansing

Grant awarded: \$200,000 in 2002 for 3-year period

With CFP funding, the Food Secure Futures project increased local food production and marketing in three distinct counties by linking producers and consumers and developing alternative food distribution programs, such as food assistance programs. In support of both consumers and producers, the project launched a community garden, a direct farm subscription program, and a new farmers' market, facilitated increased grower participation in the USDA's Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs, and coordinated a "Local Connection" conference for growers and consumers. This culminated in the launching of a "Select Michigan" awareness campaign that featured food tastings, radio advertisements, promotions, interviews, and programs for schoolchildren. Many of these campaigns are continuing under the auspices of the newly-established Michigan Food Policy Council and through the continuing fruits of the Select Michigan campaign.