

Community Food Project Profiles in Minnesota

Seven Community Food project grants went to groups in Minnesota between 1997 and 2006. Two projects, with CFP funds totaling, \$502,000, are profiled below.

Youth Farm and Market Project, Minneapolis

Grants awarded: \$170,000 in 1997 for 3-year period; \$180,000 in 2001 for 3-year period; \$25,000 in 2006 for 1-year period.

The Food from the Roots Project has improved three low-income neighborhoods' access to high quality, culturally appropriate food through an innovative youth-centered model. Project collaborators helped local youth to develop a healthy local and culturally-rooted food system. Together, they recruited local immigrant farmers to produce their ethnic vegetables and herbs for neighborhood farmer's markets, and encouraged ethnic food businesses and cultural community representatives to buy from these markets. Youth members also had the opportunity to grow food for their communities, and to conduct a greenhouse program in which they systematically documented plant growth and worked to identify potential improvements in their technique. The project has not only improved the area's access to culturally appropriate, nutritious food; it has trained groups of low-income youth in leadership, organization, and community building.

Land Stewardship Project, Montevideo

Grant awarded: \$127,000 in 2003 for 2-year period.

The Land Stewardship Project's "Pride of the Prairie" program has developed and implemented an extensive consumer education and marketing program to increase the availability of local foods in retail and institutional settings in western Minnesota. In addition, the project aids beginning low-income farmers by providing training and greater access to viable markets for their products. With Community Food Project funding, LSP has been able to work with the University of Minnesota to develop an event-driven approach to incorporating local foods in the dining halls. The University now sponsors an annual local foods day, including an all-local meal, a farmers' market on the quad, and a debate or lecture on sustainable agriculture. As a result, Sodhexho, the University's food service provider, has begun to draw on local distributors, and to work with LSP on such issues as liability insurance for farmers. Some local farmers have used this opportunity to develop a more efficient distribution system by sharing production and marketing costs. LSP has also reached out to public schools, offering field trips, nutrition classes, and education for school boards.