

Community Food Project Profiles in Montana

Five Community Food project grants have been awarded to groups in Montana between 1997 and 2006; two of them are described below.

Lake County Development Corporation, Ronan, MT

Grant awarded: \$170,000 in 2002 for 2-year period

The Lake County Development Corporation supports economic development and sustainable food systems in the low-income communities of Lake County and the Flathead Indian Reservation. Their 2002 Community Food Project addressed a sharp decline in small family farming by helping 15 local growers to establish the Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC), and starting a successful “Buy Local” food campaign. With the Mission Mountain Market local processing center, the WMGC has connected local growers to consumers by developing and operating local food-related businesses. LCDC also reaches out to raise awareness of the area farmer’s market, and offers community members education on crop varieties, marketing options for new products, sanitation, food stamps and nutrition.

Missoula Food Bank, Missoula, MT

Grant awarded: \$200,000 in 2005 for 2-year period

The “Community Food Solutions: Farm Viability and Food Security in Missoula County” project has taken on multiple initiatives to improve the county’s food security. One component of their work was the establishment of a Missoula County Food and Farm Policy group to evaluate local policies, focusing on the protection of local agriculture and the improvement of food access and nutrition for low-income people. Based on the group’s initial findings, the program worked with a local community development corporation to establish the North-side Neighborhood Food Project (NNFP), a cooperatively run grocery and community center, with subsidized memberships available to low-income residents. They have reached out to community members by allying with other established community groups, and through educational programs for both kids and adults. The Food Bank’s CFP project has made significant progress in connecting local producers with local consumers, stimulating the development of a sustainable local food system.