

2002 Community Food Projects

Grantee 2003 Annual Report Summary

Shared Harvest – Providence

Southside Community Land Trust
Providence, RI

FY 2002 grantee funded at \$220,000 for three years
Report received December 15, 2003

Project goal: In order to deliver fresh, locally-grown, culturally acceptable produce to inner-city residents, the project will establish a new-entry farmer incubator program, support creation of a farmers' market, and help establish a community supported agriculture (CSA) program to serve low-income urban residents in Providence. With substantial involvement from state and federal agencies, the project will utilize a donated 50-acre parcel of land for new, primarily immigrant farmers who, once established in farming, will be aided by the grantee in getting additional land. The farmers' market will be developed in a low-income neighborhood and be accessible to low-income consumers.

OBJECTIVES

Proposed

1. Create a farm business incubator for recent immigrants and low-income individuals who want to farm.

A. Provide land, technical training, loan capital, and equipment for up to 10 prospective farmers.

B. Aid 75 percent of incubator farmers in eventually moving off the farm incubator to establish commercial agricultural businesses in Rhode Island.

Performance

1. The project to aid immigrant farmers was well underway after the first year, with a VISTA volunteer helping to staff the effort.

A. The grantee completed a 20-year lease with the State for the use of a 50-acre dairy farm which had been idle for 10 years.

The grantee held outreach meetings with neighborhood groups to recruit potential immigrant farmers. Twelve persons applied to the training program; five were accepted and four trained – a Nigerian, a Cambodian, and two Hmong.

B. Collaboration with Johnson & Wales University allowed the project to offer free business and marketing training to participants. Microenterprise workshops covered soil, organic farming, greenhouse usage, pest and disease control, and other

C. Assist incubator farmers in selling produce through the farmers' market, local restaurants, and other markets.

2. Create the Broad Street Farmers' Market in the Southside of Providence to benefit low-income members of the community.

A. Provide for different payment methods at the market, including food stamps, WIC farmers' market coupons, and cash.

B. Offer cooking and nutrition demonstrations each week at the farmers' market.

C. The farmers' market will serve as an outlet for produce grown by incubator farmers.

D. Involve youth in selling produce at the market.

topics. The project also aided trainees with seed selection, marketing plans, equipment and tools (including purchase of a tractor), and loans.

C. With assistance from grantee staff, two of the four farmers who sold produce locally did very well selling value-added products at farmers' markets and to restaurants. Four additional farmers were selected for intense assistance in year two.

2. The Broad Street Farmers' Market, using Indian Council land at no cost, was opened the summer before the project was funded. Additional farmers, cooperative, and community gardeners were recruited for the market as a result of the grant. Local media coverage and signage in various languages on market day helped promote the market.

A. Arrangements were made for the farmers' market to be the first in the state to allow for redemption of electronic food stamp benefits. WIC farmers' market coupons aided the market substantially by accounting for approximately 75 percent of sales in year one.

B. Local chefs provided cooking demonstrations weekly at the market, in addition to local entertainment, a costumed "Vegetable Man," and a nutritional information and recipe exchange area.

C. Four farmers were able to utilize the market to sell their produce in year one.

D. Four youth, hired by a community agency, harvested and sold produce at the coop table at the market during the summer of year one.

3. Create a low-income CSA on the project farm site to serve local families.

A. Offer family and institutional shares to low-income residents of the Southside Providence community.

B. Offer affordable payment plans for low-income families, including food stamps, work shares, subsidy shares, and scheduled payments.

C. Grow a diverse selection of crops to serve the different ethnic groups who are part of the CSA membership.

D. Host cooking and nutrition classes as part of the CSA program.

E. Provide CSA pick-up options at the farmers' market or the grantee's urban farm.

F. Grow a portion of the food produced for the CSA organically.

3. Planning in year one focused on developing a CSA customer base and fee schedule.

A. Year one activities generated a CSA customer base of 50 shareholders for year two operations.

B. A payment plan with a sliding scale to allow the participation of low-income households was devised in year one, supplemented by a scholarship fund. Volunteer labor will also be encouraged among shareholders.

C. CSA crops will be grown at Urban Edge and City Farms, with crops determined, in part, by low-income members.

D. The grantee is negotiating with a local chef to offer cooking demonstrations in return for a CSA share.

E. City Farm has been designated as the CSA pick-up site for year two. Future pick-ups may occur at Urban Edge Farm.

F. Plans call for CSA crops to be grown organically.

Project Self-Sustainability

A long-term, one-dollar per year lease from the state for farmland is one of the key ingredients in future self-sustainability of the project. It is hoped that the CSA will also become self-sufficient.

2002 Community Food Projects

Grantee 2003 Annual Report Summary

Appalachian Spring Cooperative Self-Sustainability Project

Jubilee Project, Inc.
Sneedville, TN

FY 2002 grantee funded at \$182,000 for three years
Report received December 15, 2003

Project goal: Located in a poor Appalachian community where growers are trying to transition from tobacco production to other crops and more sustainable farming practices, the project will strengthen a nascent member-owned cooperative of farmers and food product processors by hiring a business manager and other staff, developing new food product enterprises, and improving marketing strategies.

OBJECTIVES

Proposed

1. Increase the ability of low-income Cooperative members and their families to meet their food needs.

A. Cooperative members will increase available income so that they are better able to purchase food.

B. Cooperative members will make the food products of their business available to other Cooperative members at a cost below retail value.

2. Increase the number of successful, self-sustaining businesses in the communities of Cooperative members.

Performance

1. The Appalachian Spring Cooperative (ASC) was established to help low-income farmers transition to sustainable agriculture, move from tobacco to other crops, and increase the income of members.

A. One hundred percent of 11 ASC members who produced commercial products reported increased income in year one of the project. Sales volumes are expected to triple in year two.

B. ASC members also give each other a five percent discount that helps on food purchases.

2. ASC membership increased from 30 to 45 individuals during year one. Of these, 32 are engaged in honeybee/honey production and 11 are producing a value-added product for commercial sale.

A. 67 percent of the businesses of Cooperative members will show progress toward business success by the end of the grant period.

3. The Appalachian Spring Cooperative will be established as a self-sustaining program benefitting members, farms, and communities in the region.

A. Cooperative revenue will match or exceed expenses by the end of the grant period.

B. The Cooperative will increase the linkages between local growers, local small-scale food product processors, and markets (wholesale, retail, and direct to consumer).

C. At least 50 percent of the food product businesses in the Cooperative will make progress in transitioning toward more sustainable agriculture.

A. In response to written and oral surveys, all makers of commercial products are showing success and increased sales. Others note that the cooperative has been helpful to them in business planning.

3. ASC efforts have provided networking opportunities, financial assistance, labeling help, liability insurance, and other services.

A. By the end of year one, yearly revenue was 15 percent of the goal.

B. ASC has created a link with the Tennessee Farmers Cooperative Association that provides access to retail outlets.

C. Members have been exposed to sustainable agricultural practices in year one, but this was not a major focus of the project at that time.

Project Self-Sustainability

Sustainability plans emphasize fees from ASC producers to keep the project going. In addition to member fees, an emphasis on other streams of revenue will be increased, including expansion of the successful gift basket program, and the number of new products the Cooperative itself develops and offers to its members to take over. This was partially accomplished in year one and will be accelerated in future years. A Technology Opportunity Grant received by the grantee will also assist cooperative members.

2002 Community Food Projects

Grantee 2003 Annual Report Summary

Navajo Agricultural Technology Empowerment Center

Developing Innovations in Navajo Education

Flagstaff, AZ

FY 2002 grantee funded at \$230,000 for three years

Report received October 16, 2003

Project goal: This project seeks to combat the high incidence of poverty and unemployment in the Navajo Nation by establishing a Center to address community food security issues. The project will increase the availability of locally grown foods to assist needy community members, help in the rediscovery of a traditional Navajo diet and lifestyle, and provide interactive, online agricultural education and job opportunities.

OBJECTIVES

Proposed

Performance

1. Deliver food self-sufficiency for Navajo communities through enhanced family farm production.

1. The project has been successful in aiding family farmers in Navajo communities.

A. Develop a client list of 40 local community farms to participate in the project.

A. Outreach was conducted to identify local families to participate in the project.

B. Integrate 40 regional family farms into the grant program.

B. A total of 42 families signed up to participate in the project in year one. The families are located in the communities of Birdsprings, Dilkon, Leup, Teesto, and Tolani Lake. The average size farm plot was 2.15 acres.

C. Provide access to agricultural equipment necessary for traditional farming.

C. The grantee offered tractor service at no cost to participating families. A total of 28 families benefitted from this service.

2. Develop integrated systems for Navajo community food distribution and agricultural commercial return.

2. The 2002-2003 growing season “was a disaster on the Navajo Nation” due to severe drought. Consequently, there was no surplus produce available to market.

3. Improve nutritional health through advocacy and support of traditional diets.

A. Establish a native seed bank.

B. Provide skills training in traditional culinary arts and marketing.

4. Conserve the natural resources and ecosystems in the Navajo Nation through informed agricultural practices.

A. Analyze traditional and contemporary Navajo agricultural techniques for effectiveness and potential replication.

B. Provide access to marketint training models for family farms.

C. Youth will be involved in the project to deliver informed decisions on agricultural careers.

5. Establish an effective information distribution and communications network serving the unique needs of Navajo citizens in traditional agricultural systems renewal.

A. Set up digital cameras and laptop computer equipment at model farm locations and provide training in their use.

3. Farmers primarily planted corn, squash, and melons, but yields were low due to drought conditions, so the effort had a limited effect on nutritional instruction and health.

A. Most farmers saved seeds, but the grantee did not establish a seed bank in year one.

B. The grantee is prepared to assist farmers who want to market, if any crops survive the drought. Culinary arts training did not occur in year one.

4. Assessments were made on soil composition, plant development, propagation techniques, and pest control.

A. Hands-on activities were employed to provide farming experience.

B. The project owns and operates a stone burr mill or grinder and is looking into more extensive use of it for corn grinding.

C. Activities on this objective did not take place in year one.

5. Workshops and word-of-mouth methods have been used to disseminate project materials. The project was able to install five touchscreen monitors at community sites for public use in year one.

A. Other means of communication, such as the Internet, CDs, and DVDs, are being investigated for use in the project.

B. Custom design model farm websites and initial project data.

B. The grantee and project partner ATTRA are involved in web-based information systems relevant to the project.

6. Build the capacity of indigenous communities in the Navajo Nation to make decisions and carry out plans for their own future.

6. Self-determination is an important aspect of Navajo culture and is included as part of the project's approach.

A. Form a Community Advisory Council to guide and direct the project through strategic planning.

A. A five-member, farm advisory council, or Food Council, was formed in year one to assist the project. The Council met on a monthly basis.

7. Continuously monitor and evaluate project effectiveness.

7. Project monitoring is ongoing.

A. An effective evaluation instrument and data collection processes will be developed and analyzed.

A. No evaluation instrument was developed in year one.

PROJECT SELF-SUSTAINABILITY

The grantee is working with Heifer Project International to establish a community-based self-governing agricultural organization that will aid in perpetuating project objectives.

2002 Community Food Projects

Grantee 2003 Annual Report Summary

Sylmar Cooperative Food and Development Project

Center for Urban Agriculture at Fairview Gardens
Goleta, CA

FY 2002 grantee funded at \$210,000 for three years

Report received December 12, 2003

Project goal: The project will promote the purchase and cultivation of healthy foods at low prices, along with educational programs, for a predominantly Hispanic population Northeast of Los Angeles through: creation of a food buying cooperative for the purchase of produce and staples; encouragement of backyard and community gardening; and establishment of a farmers' market for produce sales.

OBJECTIVES

Proposed

Performance

1. Develop a food buying cooperative.

1. The Buyers' Club was initiated in year one, but faced sporadic participation that did not always let the Club take advantage of bulk purchases.

A. Enroll 180 families in the cooperative.

A. During year one, 64 families participated in the Buyers' Club.

B. The project will participate in Community Supported Agriculture.

B. Twelve households purchased annual memberships in the CSA in year one.

C. Offer produce at a savings of 35 percent over retail market prices.

C. Savings for Club families averaged 15 percent below retail market prices in year one.

D. Encourage the participation of 150 student volunteers.

D. In year one, a total of 73 students volunteered to aid the project.

E. Collect data on produce pricing and demand.

E. Pricing data was collected weekly during year one.

2. Establish community and backyard gardens.

2. Community and backyard gardening programs were implemented during the first year of the project.

A. Assist 150 families with gardening.

B. Assist each family to generate approximately \$6,000 in annual income.

C. Sell excess produce to the cooperative and the farmers' market.

D. Work with high school students in growing seedlings for transplants.

E. Enhance the agricultural skills and knowledge of all families involved in the project.

3. Establish a farmers' market.

A. Establish a farmers' market in the project area.

B. Ensure the participation of 150 families in the farmers' market.

C. Assist 100 participants in learning management skills for operating a small business.

4. Provide community education.

A. In year one, 67 families participated in gardening activities. Thirty-four families gardened at a two-acre community garden site in Sylmar; another 18 households participated in a community garden in San Fernando; and fifteen families had a backyard garden.

B. Families that gardened saved an estimated \$350 annually in retail food costs. Although garden production was high, there was not enough to permit sales of produce.

C. There was not sufficient produce grown in the gardens for marketing.

D. Twenty-eight high school students helped produce seedlings for transplants.

E. The delivery of two workshops per month on gardening and agricultural techniques increased the skill levels of gardeners.

3. Project staff engaged in research and site visits to six existing markets to advance planning for a farmers' market in Sylmar.

A. No farmers' market was established in year one.

B. The farmers' market component of the project was not operational in year one.

C. Small business training was not delivered in the first year.

4. Community education was provided through semi-monthly workshops.

A. Deliver an average of two community workshops per month on relevant topics.

5. Increase the academic achievement of youth involved in the project.

A. Enroll 180 students in tutoring programs sponsored by the project.

B. Secure the participation of 30 college and high school students as tutors.

6. Enhance community networking.

A. Establish a community internet site for the project.

B. Create a list server to permit residents to communicate with one another and project staff.

C. Facilitate the ownership and operation of computers by 150 families.

A. Weekly workshops provided information on outreach, networking, nutrition, and healthy life styles.

5. Students were involved in the project through agricultural, tutoring, and adult education programs.

A. In year one, 96 students in K-12 were tutored. An additional 60 adults took English as a Second Language classes.

B. Fifty students participated in the project as tutors.

6. The grantee is involved in networking through various means.

A. The grantee established a project web site in year one to enhance networking.

B. A list serve was started in the project's first year and included 51 families.

C. Fifty-one families were set up with computers through the project during the first year.

Project Self-Sustainability

The income estimated to be generated from backyard and community gardening activities and the Buyers' Club has been acknowledged as not realistic. The grantee will be attempting to better manage its volunteer services and the cost of food production to help move the project toward self-sustainability.

2002 Community Food Projects

Grantee 2003 Annual Report Summary

Growing Girls, Growing Communities

The Lower East Side Girls Club of New York
New York, NY

FY 2002 grantee funded at \$180,000 for three years

Report received December 17, 2003

Project goal: The project will build upon and expand an existing relationship between an inner-city youth development organization, a family farm, and a community health center. Girl-owned and operated “Juice Joints,” which already offer healthy muffins and fruit drinks at two New York public schools, will be opened in additional locations. The project will also start a café, develop and operate an education kiosk, establish a farmers’ market, and open a retail community supported agriculture (CSA) store.

OBJECTIVES

Proposed

Performance

1. Develop and deliver an eight-week training program for groups of 10-12 high school girls.

1. The grantee started an eight-week training course for 12 students at two different schools. Upon completion, trainees successfully opened their own Juice Joints. A new training course is being devised for year two that will include use of the kitchen and development of healthy beverages and snacks as part of a Girls Club Cook Book.

2. Establish “Juice Joints” serving healthy snacks and beverages at two schools, staffed by participants in the training course, so they may practice and develop business skills.

2. Juice Joints are in operation in two schools, staffed by participants from the training courses. Both businesses have been successful at selling healthy drinks and snacks. The grantee will offer business management classes in year two, coupled with development of a Juice Joint at a third school.

3. Train a small group of local adults and older teens in business management to allow them to operate school-based Juice Joints.

3. Trained students have been able to learn, practice, and develop business skills, including product development, advertising, basic economics and accounting, and profit sharing.

4. Open a retail Girls Club Café and Juice Bar in a commercial storefront that will train and employ local mothers.

5. Develop and operate an education kiosk in a local farmers' market.

6. Create a wellness program model with focuses on nutrition and healthy eating habits.

7. Launch a program for Girls Club members to introduce WIC mothers from a nearby health center to locally-produced agricultural products.

8. Open a CSA Market Store and food/farm education center in a new Girls Club facility.

4. The start of the retail Café and Juice Bar has been subject to construction delays, but should open in year two. The business will offer crafts as well as food. Student participants have received entrepreneurial training to operate the business in conjunction with local mothers.

5. The grantee started its own community farmers' market in year one with an educational kiosk.

6. The wellness program focuses on nutrition education and healthy eating. It includes information and observation of the growing and selling of fresh produce, along with meal preparation. Management of the farmers' market, visits to farms, creation of public service announcements, and development of value-added products are also part of the program.

7. WIC mothers are able to use coupons to purchase fresh produce at the grantee's farmers' market. WIC participants will also be invited to use the project kitchen during year two.

8. Opening of the CSA Market Store is not anticipated until near the end of the project. In the meantime, experience at the farmers' market offers training opportunities.

Project Self-Sustainability

Income earned from project operations are proposed to deliver 25 percent of total budget needs to continue services after the grant ends. The grantee is also seeking private and corporate funders.

2002 Community Food Projects

Grantee 2003 Annual Report Summary

New Farmer Development Project

Council on the Environment, Inc.

New York, NY

FY 2002 grantee funded at \$120,000 for two years

Report received December 16, 2003

Project goal: In collaboration with Cornell University Cooperative Extension and the applicant's Greenmarket farmers' market system, this project will assist agriculturally experienced immigrants in New York City to enter farming in the region. The project proposes to provide training, placement, financing, monitoring, and follow-up technical assistance to bridge the urban-rural gap and create an agricultural future for skilled and interested immigrants.

OBJECTIVES

Proposed

1. Provide new farmers with an introduction to the region's agricultural and marketing opportunities, including small scale farming and organic farming.

2. Identify skilled agricultural employment opportunities with farmers participating in Greenmarket and other direct marketing programs.

3. Provide technical assistance for participants establishing independent farm operations.

Performance

1. The project offered participants a wide range of educational opportunities to aid in starting successful farming operations, including training classes covering livestock and vegetable production, sustainable and organic methods, IPM, marketing, financial management, and more. Forty participants took a 14-week course and 32 graduated. Other workshops also provided instruction on selected topics, along with a library or Spanish language materials.

2. Five project participants worked on established farms and others were placed on farms to gain hands-on experience

3. Participants worked at four independent farming operations and others were assisted by finding farm sites, developing lease agreements, support, and one-on-one technical assistance. Land identification was a key service offered, and the project identified 30 potential farm sites, 15 of which

were visited by staff and 10 deemed appropriate. Pro bono legal aid is being offered to help farmers get lease agreements.

4. Assist in providing access to demonstration farms – small parcels of land near the City for training in the production of organic produce.

4. Participants worked on six demonstration farms in the area. The grantee provided planning, technical assistance, machinery, and other inputs to promote success in raising and selling crops at Greenmarkets.

5. Monitor the operations of new farmers.

5. Grantee staff visited all farms at least once during the first year to meet with mentors and extension agents. Site visits and monitoring helped all project participants increase their sales figures.

6. Provide interest-free and low-interest loan opportunities for new farmers in the project.

6. The grantee is developing two new credit programs – a living loan fund which re-pays in-kind contributions (such as chickens to start an egg production business) and a regular loan fund, which is anticipated to begin lending money in year two.

7. Assist new farmers with marketing through the Greenmarket system.

7. In year one, 15 farmers from six farms and training sites sold items at Greenmarkets. The grantee helped with technical assistance, insurance, signage, scales, and tents. More ethnic crops are being developed.

PROJECT SELF-SUSTAINABILITY

Additional funding, sufficient to carry the project through its second year, has been received from USDA's Risk Management Agency, a foundation, and the Growing New Farmers Project. A comprehensive strategic plan is being developed, along with the loan programs, to gain some permanence for the effort.

2002 Community Food Projects

Grantee 2003 Annual Report Summary

Achieving Sustainable Agriculture Goals by Working with Low-Income Farmers to Meet Islamic Religious Dietary Needs

Center for Neighborhood Technology
Chicago, IL

FY 2002 grantee funded at \$120,000 for two years
Report received November 25, 2003

Project goal: The project will aid both farmers and consumers by linking low-income farmers in the Pembroke community on the urban fringes of Chicago with existing Muslim markets in the Bridgeview section of the Southwest suburbs to help meet Islamic religious dietary requirements with high quality, reliable Halal food.

OBJECTIVES

Proposed

Performance

1. Develop a relationship between African American farmers and Muslim practitioners.

1. First year results were mixed. Muslim consumers expressed interest but were not strong on following through. Organizing farmers into cooperatives to sell to the Muslim community has also been challenging.

A. Educate farmers about the necessary Hala, Zabiha, and Tayyab food standards.

A. Farmers have been introduced to the meat requirements of the Muslim diet, but, with the exception of pastured poultry products, supply has been unable to meet demand.

B. Assist Muslims in understanding farmers' cultural and economic circumstances.

B. Although the project has provided teaching opportunities for the customer base, understanding has not come easily. The maternity leave of the Muslim Outreach Coordinator during year one also hindered project progress.

2. Meet the religious and dietary requirements of a large community of Chicago Muslims.

2. Formation of a religiously-based consumer cooperative for meat has required imagination and perseverance. However, by the end of year one, the cooperative,

TAQWA Eco-Food, with 40 members, had been established with articles of incorporation, by-laws, and licensure completed. Operating expenses were still being explored.

3. Preserve an agricultural lifestyle by developing new skills and opening new markets for farmers with much needed, but little produced food products.

A. Assist farmers to become more economically self-sufficient and constrain urban sprawl.

B Assist farmers in developing new skills, including Internet marketing and new farming techniques to meet religious food requirements.

4. Develop replicable processes for market development, farmland preservation, and skills development that can be transferred to other communities of faith and economics.

3. Working with farmers in the Pembroke community has been challenging. Two farmer cooperatives are operating competitively. Capacity and processing issues, that are beyond the project's ability to resolve, have caused problems.

A. The supply of large animals has not been able to accommodate demand. Equipment costs, particularly lack of walk-in freezers, have been an issue.

B. Internet capacity is lacking in Pembroke, further complicating marketing opportunities.

4. These objectives are being addressed as the project proceeds, but have not been resolved during year one.

PROJECT SELF-SUSTAINABILITY

The TAQWA Eco-Food cooperative has incorporated, is preparing a business plan, and is on track to become self-sufficient by the end of the project period.

2002 Community Food Projects

Grantee 2003 Annual Report Summary

The Local Food Alliance

Community Harvest/Tides Center
Washington, D.C.

FY 2002 grantee funded at \$130,000 for 18 months

Report received December 29, 2003

Project goal: Emphasizing community leadership, the project will establish a Local Food Alliance of community-based organizations and non-profits to expand access to nutritious food through seven farmers' markets and farm stands, aiding small farmers in the region as well as thousands of low-income consumers.

OBJECTIVES

Proposed

Performance

1. Develop community-based food project leadership and outreach teams at community development corporations and non-profit organizations.

1. The grantee's Local Food Alliance (LFA) has brought new partners together and helped advance food security. Community organizations has supported farmers' markets and farm stands.

2. Develop or expand seven farmers' markets and farm stands.

2. The project has assisted five farmers' markets and two farm stands to serve low-income communities and increase access to fresh produce. The LFA markets were in operation from May through November and offered cooking demonstrations. Farmers' Market Nutrition Program coupons provided approximately 50 percent of market sales.

3. Implement a nutrition education program.

3. Nutrition education activities focused on cooking demonstrations.

A. Coordinate nutrition education activities with community volunteers, graduate students, and community-based project partners.

A. Two Health Lifestyle Fairs were held at farmers' markets in year one and provided nutritional information, recipes, and a raffle for cookware items.

B. Present nutrition education services through the Healthy Cooking

B. A total of 30 cooking demonstrations were offered at eight

Project's monthly cooking demonstrations at each market to 1,200 persons in the community.

C. Provide hands-on nutrition courses to 200 youth and adults through the Living, Learning Laboratory.

4. Develop an annual Farmers' Market Leaders' Training to train 50 persons in farmers' market operations.

5. Coordinate quarterly Local Food Alliance Forums, focusing on relevant topics for community-based food project leadership, volunteers, farmers, and community-based organizations.

farmers' markets and farms stands during year one, reaching nearly 6,000 customers. After each cooking demonstration, donated cookware and food baskets were raffled off.

C. Over 1,500 youth and other volunteers worked at the Learning Center. Some 250 youth received hands-on learning in sustainable agriculture, hunger, and nutrition. Eleven youth participated in a summer employment program. Open houses were also held to provide information.

4. A Farmers' Market Leaders' Training session during the first year drew 30 farmers and community residents. Participants gained information on market development, management, and marketing. An evaluation of each farmers' market is planned for year two.

5. In addition to the training noted above, three other LPA forums were held in year one on such topics as outreach and community food assessments.

PROJECT SELF-SUSTAINABILITY

The grantee anticipates that operation of the farmers' markets and farm stands will become a routine part of the operations of project partners.

2002 Community Food Projects

Grantee 2003 Annual Report Summary

Partnership for Food Security

Lincoln Action Program, Inc.

Lincoln, NE

FY 2002 grantee funded at \$180,000 for three years

Report received December 5, 2003

Project goal: The project will focus on food security for low-income persons, refugees, and immigrants, along with expansion of markets for farmers and assistance for families growing their own food. Project components will include a large surplus food distribution effort, creation of community gardens, establishment of a year-round Farmers' Market Store for sales of fresh food through a local farmer coalition, and microenterprise and education programs.

OBJECTIVES

Proposed

1. Substantially increase the availability of nutritious foods to low-income families.

A. Expand the capacity of the grantee's Perishable Food Program to serve 300 more families weekly and distribute 30,000 pounds more food per month.

B. Connect clients to other food resources by offering on-site applications for WIC, food stamp referrals, and other programs.

Performance

1. The grantee expanded the availability of nutritious foods through several agency programs.

A. The Perishable Food Program distributed more than 437,000 pounds of food during year one to an average of 400 families per week. Collaborations with the food bank, grocery stores, a bread company, and the farmers' market helped increase food donations. In total, 6,400 families were served through combined grantee food programming.

B. Food program participants complete a basic intake form to help the agency assess need and make appropriate referrals. A WIC representative is on-site once a month for registration, and a Family Advocate aids households in making applications to food stamps and other programs.

2. Increase the community's self-reliance in providing for its own food needs.

A. Expand the Community Garden Program to make 75 plots available to low-income people.

B. The Gathering Place kitchen will be made available to microenterprise entrepreneurs who are starting food-related small businesses.

C. Use a donated booth at the Farmers' Market Store for low-income gardeners to sell surplus produce.

D. Offer a workshop series to newly arrived refugees, including language classes, computer education, and basic life skills.

3. Establish sustainable, comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues.

A. Create a year-round Farmers' Market Store to market the products of local family farmers.

B. Conduct Food and Hunger Coalition meetings every other month.

2. All of the proposed activities – gardens, a kitchen, farmers' market, and training workshops – were undertaken to help increase self-reliance.

A. The grantee made 82 garden plots available to low-income people in three locations. Land, water, seeds, and garden equipment were available free-of-charge, donated by local businesses.

B. No entrepreneurs took advantage of kitchen use during year one, although the opportunity was available.

C. The Centreville Farmers' Market opened in May 2003. Gardeners did not use the market for sales during the first year, but eight microenterprise clients expressed an interest in selling products at the market.

D. A wide variety of trainings and workshops, including basic life skills classes, were offered to newly arrived refugees. A total of 337 immigrants and refugees took computer classes in year one.

3. Grant funds were used to make the year-round Centreville Farmers' Market a reality in the first year. The storefront market is located in an historic section of town near a seasonal, open-air farmers' market.

A. Farmers' Market store vendors are local farmers and businesspeople.

B. Coalition meetings were held every other month during year one. A Partnership for Food Security Advisory Board that meets quarterly was also formed to assist with grant implementation.

C. Prepare and distribute news releases regarding implementation of the project.

C. News releases for the opening of the Farmers' Market were distributed, along with brochures and fliers.

PROJECT SELF-SUSTAINABILITY

Collaborations with service partners and other grant sources, including the United Way and the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, are expected to aid in project maintenance. The Centreville Farmers' Market is expected to develop an income stream to become self-supporting.

2002 Community Food Projects

Grantee 2003 Annual Report Summary

Urban Agriculture Production and Distribution for Improved Community Food Security; Refocusing the CSA Model for Low-Income Households

Re-Vision House, Inc.
Dorchester, MA

FY 2002 grantee funded at \$122,000 for two years
Report received December 16, 2003

Project goal: To involve low-income households in housing developments and a homeless shelter run by the grantee to participate in a community supported agriculture (CSA) program supplied by the grantee's existing urban farm, a partner farm, and other land to be acquired and developed for gardening and farming.

OBJECTIVES

Proposed

1. Increase the participation of low-income community members in the CSA from 10 to 100 by the end of year two.

2. Secure more land to expand the Re-Vision urban farm and urban production

Performance

1. In year one, the CSA had 65 members, due to production limitations and marketing considerations. Twenty-five of the shares were partially subsidized and went to low-income households. The grantee has been approved to accept food stamp benefits for CSA payments, but only one person used this option during year one. In addition, food from the farms participating in the CSA was sold food at farmers' markets and farm stands and donated to the homeless.

During year two, the grantee will survey CSA recipients on food preferences, offer half shares, include fruit in the CSA box, and start a "Winter Shares" program.

2. The grantee is part of a team bidding to get use of 65 acres of state land at the old Boston State Hospital. An advisory committee has recommended the team's development plan.

- | | |
|---|---|
| A. Increase CSA production | A. The proposed plan would increase CSA production by allowing for the cultivation of ten acres. |
| B. Cultivate up to 10 acres for urban agriculture | B. Up to 10 acres of the Hospital site would be used for urban agriculture with an expansion of the CSA. |
| C. Start an aquaculture center | C. The plans of the grantee team include a one-acre greenhouse and aquaculture center at the Hospital site. |
3. Collaborate with more farms outside of the city for greater diversity and volume of farm produce.
3. The grantee is collaborating with other growers in the area to increase product diversity for CSA members. An orchard has been contributed to the food boxes in year one.

PROJECT SELF-SUSTAINABILITY

The grantee is enlisting business, faith-based groups, schools, and others for CSA support, including funds to support low-income shares through an “Adopts a Family” program. Expansion of program acreage will also aid production and the self-sustainability of the project.

2002 Community Food Projects

Grantee 2003 Annual Report Summary

Building a Cooperatively-Based Food System in Northwest Montana that Fosters Social, Environmental, and Economic Health of the Community

Lake County Community Development Corporation
Ronan, MT

FY 2002 grantee funded at \$170,000 for two years
Report received November 19, 2003

Project goal: This rural-based project will develop new market and distribution channels for locally produced farm products, provide local consumers with education and the opportunity to obtain local foods, and encourage the development of value-added food products using local ingredients.

OBJECTIVES

Proposed

1. Develop new market and distribution channels for sustainably produced farm production through cooperative activities.

A. Develop a farmer-owned cooperative which will market and distribute production.

B. Establish a distribution route through the western Montana trade corridor.

C. Partner with AERO's "Buy Local Initiative" campaign.

Performance

1. Concerted efforts have been undertaken to aid farmers in marketing through cooperative activities.

A. The grantee met with a group of 22 producers and surveyed 16 of them. Most had small farms and were interested in cooperative marketing. Eleven producers founded the Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC), which was organized and incorporated in year one and began investigating marketing possibilities.

B. The producer survey found that 93 percent of producers wanted refrigerated delivery truck service and 60 percent of potential markets wanted purchases delivered.

C. Three businesses and the WMGC joined the "Buy Local Food" effort. Other activities included conducting a consumer survey, developing promotional materials, and printing a directory of Montana

2. Provide opportunities and education in producing and obtaining fresh, local and sustainable produced food.

A. Supply 10 buying clubs with fresh, local production.

B. Establish WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs at the local farmers' markets in Sanders and Lake County.

C. Supply local food banks with fresh produce.

D. Promote an education program with Lake County Extension on the safe preparation of fresh food through sanitation and nutrition workshops.

E. Provide resources for the production of high value, nutritious market crops.

F. Develop a farm-to-market program to promote the development of local farmers' markets and marketing of local produce.

3. Develop value added opportunities for local produce.

A. Provide centralized distribution, packaging, storage, and processing infrastructure for local farmers.

B. Identify market opportunities for value-added production.

producers.

2. Local production was highlighted through various media, fliers, displays, and farmers' market advertisements.

A. Although buying clubs were contacted, it was determined that they were not the best method for distribution.

B. Neither the WIC or Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program operates in the area, though a senior program is under development.

C. Unsold, fresh produce from the farmers' market was delivered to the food bank.

D. The Lake County Extension held five sanitation workshops attended by 130 people. Four food stamp workshops attracted 82 persons.

E. A tour and information exchange was held between the WMGC and the NW Agricultural Research Center to review crop varieties and marketing options.

F. The farmers' market was advanced with development of a logo, posters, and a public relations plan.

3. The grantee is pursuing value-added opportunities.

A. The Mission Mountain Market processing center aided nine different businesses, selling a variety of products, during year one.

B. Production assessments and market analyses are being conducted by project collaborators for specific products.

C. Obtain organic certification for the Mission Mountain Market processing center.

D. Provide technical assistance business and market development and food safety in production and processing.

C. The Mission Mountain Processing Center has received organic certification.

D. Technical assistance on business and cooperative development was provided to six entities in year one. Nine businesses received marketing aid. And five businesses received food safety training for production and processing.

Project Self-Sustainability

The project is undergoing evaluation and will continue to partner with AERO and other marketing organizations to aid producers.

2002 Community Food Projects

Grantee 2003 Annual Report Summary

The Field-to-Fork Community Food Security Initiative

The FoodBank of Monmouth & Ocean Counties

Neptune Township, NJ

FY 2002 grantee funded at \$140,000 for two years

Report received December 2, 2003

Project goal: The project will offer a comprehensive approach to local food security that will include skill training in culinary arts for low-income persons, the production of meals for after-school tutoring programs in a community kitchen, youth gardening and education efforts as well as youth-run farm stands to increase access to fresh produce, and the establishment of a farmers' market.

OBJECTIVES

Proposed

Performance

1. Increase family self-reliance.

1. The FoodBank helped develop self-reliance among participants through implementation of a culinary arts training program.

A. Deliver a 12-week training in culinary arts to be completed by at least 10 low-income adults.

A. Four culinary arts training classes of 12 weeks each were held during year one. A total of 40 students received training, with 34 completing the course.

B. Incorporate the knowledge of existing community kitchens in planning one for this project.

B. The grantee is one of 23 kitchens nationwide being supported by an America's Second Harvest Community Kitchen project, with technical assistance provided by the D.C. Central Kitchen. Assistance provided has helped participants in the grantee's training program achieve a first year job retention rate of 80 percent.

C. Provide daily hot meals for youth in after school tutoring programs.

C. During year one, the kitchen provided 100 hot meals daily to an afterschool tutoring program at the local Boys and Girls Club.

D. Establish a one-acre demonstration community garden at the FoodBank.

E. Provide gardening technical assistance from Master Gardeners.

2. Build improved sustainability for local farms.

A. Establish a farmers' market in the target area.

B. Recruit youth to operate a neighborhood farm stand.

C. Purchase produce from local farms for use in the community kitchen's culinary arts program and for catering.

3. Develop entrepreneurial activities that link different components of the food system.

A. Establish a garden to train local people in growing cultural foods for local sale.

D. A one-half acre garden was established in year one. Soil amendments and additional preparations will increase the cultivated area to a full acre in year two.

E. In year one, the grantee employed a part-time Master Gardener through the Cooperative Extension who helped develop the children's garden, greenhouse, and demonstration garden. A second part-time Master Gardener is expected to be added early in year two.

2. Local farms have been aided by the project's marketing efforts.

A. A farmers' market was established at Asbury Park, so the grantee focused instead on developing youth farm stands.

B. Year one was a successful summer of sales and employment for youth. The grantee provided space for the farm stand, a classroom for training, supervisory space, and storage for the operation. The farm stand was open two days a week for two months and one day a week for another month. Youth sold \$1,400 worth of produce and shared in the profits. A new farm stand location and expanded hours are planned for year two.

C. Due to difficulties in obtaining locally grown produce, none was used in the grantee's project during year one.

3. Community gardens are the focal point of activities to link food system elements.

A. A demonstration garden established by volunteers produced 600 pounds of produce in year one. Production

should increase in year two. Technical assistance on gardening is being provided to the Asbury Park Housing Authority.

B. Recruit and train youth to purchase local produce for farm stand sales.

B. The “Purpose at Heart” summer employment camp aided 10 students, six of whom were employed all summer at the farm stand during year one.

C. Develop a business plan for a for-profit catering business.

C. During year one, a business plan was developed for the Hungry Heart Café & Catering business, including a menu, marketing strategy, financial management plan, and revenue projections. Four catering jobs were scheduled for early in year two.

4. Educate youth to promote future sustainability of the food system.

4. The grantee has developed a variety of activities and displays to provide increased understanding of the food system

A. Establish a “living classroom” at the FoodBank with a greenhouse, garden, and indoor classroom space.

A. A “living classroom” was established, with lending library, garden, greenhouse, and informational displays. The garden included fruit trees. Seven school and scouting groups visited the classroom in year one.

B. Deliver basic, hands-on gardening activities through the greenhouse.

B. The greenhouse has been planned for instructional activities and will start to offer them to school and scout groups during year two.

C. Use the greenhouse to provide gardening education for youth.

C. The greenhouse is being used for educational purposes.

D. Use the community garden to provide plots for schools.

D. One additional school and one more scout group have expressed interest in gardening during year two and plans are being made to accommodate them.

Project Self-Sustainability

The business plan for the catering enterprise has been completed and catering events are being scheduled. Some profits are anticipated from the culinary arts training programs, which is

expected to receiving training funds from the state Department of Social Services. Other revenues will come from the youth farm stand and direct mail campaigns.

2002 Community Food Projects

Grantee 2003 Annual Report Summary

Protecting, Preserving, and Expanding Forest Park's Food Security Network

The "X" Main Street Corporation
Springfield, MA

FY 2002 grantee funded at \$160,000 for three years

Report received December 2, 2003

Project goal: The project will increase food security in Springfield by helping the community retain a national chain supermarket as the only urban grocery store in the City, increasing access to and patronage at a grantee-sponsored farmers' market, and creating a community garden.

OBJECTIVES

Proposed

Performance

1. Retain the A&P Super Foodmart in the neighborhood.

1. The A&P store closed seven months into the project's first year, but was ultimately purchased and re-opened under new management early in year two. The new store made significant improvements in the facility and in neighborhood relations.

A. Expand shuttle service operation and promotion.

A. The supermarket shuttle service was successfully expanded from four days per month to eight, operating on Tuesdays and Fridays. Increased promotion of the shuttle led to increased use, including a University of Massachusetts (UM) finding that 65 percent of shuttle passengers shopped more often due to the availability of the service and 76 percent bought more groceries.

B. Implement the existing school-to-work program at the Forest Park store.

B. The closing of the store early in the project precluded addressing this objective.

C. Add and merchandise items reflecting the diversity of the neighborhood.

C. The new store owners were very aware of neighborhood diversity and began stocking an extensive selection of ethnic foods.

D. Support the community garden at the Holy Name Church.

E. Reduce shopping costs for walking customers by offering reusable canvas bags.

F. Improve landscaping at the store.

G. Provide health services for seniors.

H. Install a community bulletin board within the store to promote community activities.

I. Participate in neighborhood clean-up days.

2. Increase access and patronage at the Farmers' Market at the X.

A. Continue the CISA "Be a Local Hero, Buy Locally Grown" campaign.

B. Establish a van service between senior housing complexes and the farmers' market.

C. Increase the number of Kids' days at the market and invite elementary school classes to visit.

D. The grantee was substantially involved in supporting the community garden at the church (see details below).

E. Shopping bags were not provided during the change-over in grocery store management.

F. The new, independent owners of the supermarket made nearly \$2 million in improvements, including landscaping upgrades and an artistic mural covering one side of the building.

G. In-store health services were not provided in year one due to the changeover in supermarket management.

H. The new store owners did install a community bulletin board.

I. Neighborhood clean-up days did not occur in year one due to the supermarket's temporary closing.

2. The sixth season of the local farmers' market was very successful and resulted in an increase in sales. The once-a-week market attracts some 700 shoppers.

A. The market was listed in the CISA directory and sported a "Be a Local Hero" banner each market day.

B. Although negotiations to establish a van service were held with the state agency serving seniors, complications kept that from happening in year one. However, efforts to start a van service for the elderly will continue.

C. Two Kids' Days at the market were successfully planned and implemented.

They were highlighted by locally grown foods and a storyteller/musician.

D. Place market information on the bulletin board at the A&P.

D. The farmers' market not publicized at the A&P, which closed during the early part of the season.

E. Provide training and technical assistance to farmers on ethnic products.

E. All vendors participated in a pre-season survey on ethnic food production, but results were not reported.

F. Explore sales of fresh produce to local restaurants near the market.

F. Restaurant sales did not occur in year one.

G. Explore the direct sale of produce to the A&P.

G. Although produce was not sold directly to the A&P, the new supermarket owner has made conscious efforts to buy local and organic produce.

3. Create a new community garden at the Holy Name Catholic Church.

3. A school and community garden was established on church property by the grantee.

A. Find corporate sponsors to purchase or donate garden materials.

A. Four corporate sponsors, the County Sheriff's Department, church groups, and residents made substantial donations of tools and equipment.

B. Prepare land at the garden.

B. After testing the ground, significant soil amendments were made to the garden site.

C. Advertise plots for 15 families.

C. Twenty family plots were created, in addition to school and church group plots.

D. Involve neighborhood youth.

D. Religious school students helped develop the garden, along with 15 students from UM. Gardening programs to promote youth leadership are being developed.

PROJECT SELF-SUSTAINABILITY

The grantee is researching other grant opportunities, working to expand shuttle services, and trying to influence local elected officials to support food and agriculture policies.

2002 Community Food Projects

Grantee 2003 Annual Report Summary

Cultivating Community

Cultivating Community

Portland, ME

FY 2002 grantee funded at \$233,019 for three years

Report received January 22, 2004

Project goal: The project will combine community food work with education and technology transfer around sustainable agriculture and youth involvement. A business plan will be developed for the revised use of an existing 12-acre organic farm in Standish that will support development of a food enterprise initiative, the production and donation of food for the local emergency food system and home consumption as well as food for marketing to refugee populations, and training and support for youth programs.

OBJECTIVES

Proposed

1. Alleviate hunger in the short term by infusing the local emergency food system and the grantee's food distribution network with 15,000 pounds of fresh, locally grown, organic produce each summer, with a value in excess of \$20,000.
2. Create economically and environmentally sustainable food enterprises either around niche crops, a processed food product, or both.

Performance

1. In year one, the grantee grew and distributed 14,635 pounds of produce valued at \$24,148. Most of the food went to emergency feeding agencies serving primarily an immigrant clientele who appreciated the fresh produce donations. In addition, youth growers distributed over \$4,000 worth of produce to the homes of 39 low-income elders.
2. A niche crop – strawberries – was identified for the farming partner in the project. An African bean known as “lubea” was identified as a crop for urban gardening and donated seeds were planted and harvested with the food given to low-income Sudanese and Somali families.

Youth participants created value-added products – healing salves and lip balms – that were manufactured and sold at a country fair and at a public market. Project participants also canned produce, some of which was

3. Transfer to an increasing number of youth in the community knowledge and skills critical to the creation of and maintenance of healthy food systems through an established summer program and a planned school year program.

4. Transfer to community volunteers knowledge and skills critical to the creation of and maintenance of healthy food systems through a new community volunteer program.

5. Train and empower youth and volunteers as project educators, able to inform and assist their neighbors around issues of food security, food access, and food self-sufficiency.

donated for emergency food use.

3. Eight high school students enrolled in the grantee's summer Youth Growers program. Food was grown at the farm and at urban gardens for donation to the emergency food system and for sales at two local farmers' markets. Youth participants attended weekly workshops on a variety of food system subjects and received instruction on health issues.

The grantee's school year program included monthly, two-hour sessions with over 100 students at one middle school covering hands-on gardening experience and food justice issues. Fifteen students at another middle school were involved in preparing a garden at a public housing development. And a dozen students at a rural middle school planned, built, and planted a garden. Produce from the rural garden was used for donations, community tastings, and the school cafeteria.

In addition, three one-day workshops on hunger were presented at an elementary school; input was provided for a university conference; and general gardening instruction was provided to home-schooling families. Service learning connections were made with four local colleges.

4. In year one, 542 volunteers – 65 percent of them youth – contributed in excess of 4,000 hours to the project.

5. Youth were empowered to plan and deliver presentations in several venues, including the Country Fair, conferences, and grantee-sponsored events.

6. Add an additional four urban gardens to the community food network and hand off the four gardens directly to neighborhoods under the direction of the project's youth Community Educators.

7. Provide youth employment opportunities and job training skills.

8. Serve as a community model for sustainable agriculture.

9. Bolster the economic health of Cumberland County by building community assets.

10. Increase the community's self reliance in providing for its own food needs.

6. Two new gardens were initiated in the first year of the project, at a homeless shelter and at a middle school.

7. The Youth Growers program created full-time employment for eight high schoolers during the summer of year one, with half of the positions supported by the CFP. Youth participants received job skills training, employment assistance, and enrichment.

8. Food production for local consumption used organic methods. Volunteers also prepared breakfast at a community center and then composted the food wastes from the meal.

9. The emphasis on youth development in the project helped to bolster the overall health of the community.

10. The gardening network, instruction of volunteers, and food preservation all contributed to community self-reliance on food concerns. The grantee is also working with the City of Portland to establish an urban farm.

PROJECT SELF-SUSTAINABILITY

In-kind donations are at the heart of the effort to sustain the project over the long run. Public and private entities have contributed funding for the project's operation. However, the farming partner had to drop a revenue sharing plan to aid the project due to unforeseen tax implications.

2002 Community Food Projects

Grantee 2003 Annual Report Summary

Rural Food Box Program

Rocky Mountain Farmers' Union Cooperative Development Center
Aurora, CO

FY 2002 grantee funded at \$47,900 for one year

Report received December 2, 2003

Project goal: To implement a Food Box Program that will provide for the direct delivery of boxes of fresh, local food to farmworkers and other low-income people in the rural areas of Southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico. The project, though not ministry-based, would center on the involvement of Catholic parishes in the region, with middle class congregations raising funds and purchasing the food boxes for donation to the local poor, including migrant agricultural workers.

OBJECTIVES

Proposed

Performance

1. Plan the Food Box Program with project partners

1. Three project planning meetings were held to organize activities and establish evaluation criteria. Staff participated in the Community Food Security Coalition's evaluation training workshops.

2. Finalize the Food Box Program structure and offerings.

2. Initial activities included announcement of the project, outreach, and training for trainers. However, recruitment and training of on-site coordinators proved difficult.

Offerings included a produce box and a meat box, priced between \$15 and \$30. A planned bakery box was cancelled. After testing a contract for packing of the boxes, the task fell to staff at the Tres Rios Cooperative. A small grant was received to develop a web site to facilitate and expand the box program.

3. Outreach rural parishes to promote the program and recruit coordinators and a core group.

3. Outreach, conducted under the auspices of the Catholic Rural Life program, focused on three areas – Taos, NM, the San Luis

Valley, and Pueblo County. Effective outreach proved difficult, however.

4. Devise and implement a training program for the coordinators.
 5. Reach consumers of all income levels through the use of EBT.
 6. Develop and implement charitable links to farm laborers.
 7. Develop and circulate quarterly Catholic Rural Life (CRL) newsletter.
 8. Develop agreement between Tres Rios and Pueblo Foods for packing of food boxes.
 9. Develop a marketing/distribution agreement between the Tres Rios and Culebra Cooperatives.
 10. Identify other rural institutional networks to which to extend the program.
4. Trainers completed on-line community nutrition classes through Santa Fe Community College, with emphases on basic nutrition, food systems, and the Food Box program. The trainers conducted sessions and used materials provided.
 5. Parishes were responsible for setting up EBT terminals, but none did so.
 6. The Tres Rios Cooperative arranged several large donations of vegetables and beef to Los Pobres Center of Avondale that benefitted farmworkers.
 7. Three newsletters were published and distributed through farmers' markets, the mail, and in the food boxes.
 8. After an initial agreement with Pueblo Foods was not found to be economical, Tres Rios staff packed boxes in-house.
 9. Severe drought affected the Culebra Cooperative's ability to grow food, limiting marketing opportunities to only one crop.
 10. Near the end of the project, outreach was focused on establishing relationships with institutional buyers, such as the San Luis Valley Nutrition Program for the Elderly, to facilitate the provision of locally produced food to under-served residents.

PROJECT SELF-SUSTAINABILITY

A shift in program activities away from Catholic parishes caused the Pueblo Diocese to withdraw support for the project, and working through rural parishes was determined not to be sustainable. However, with use of the web site, the Food Box program remains viable and its promotion will continue. Moreover, working relationships developed under the project for sales/ordering and delivery/distribution will continue to benefit agricultural cooperatives and provide food to consumers and farm laborers.

2002 Community Food Projects

Grantee 2003 Annual Report Summary

Integrated Development through Urban Agriculture Project

Nuestras Raices, Inc.
Holyoke, MA

FY2002 grantee, funded at \$184,000 for 30 months
Report received December 2, 2003

Project goal: Building upon a previous grant received under this program that funded an urban agriculture center, the grantee will conduct market research and promotion on Puerto Rican specialty produce, assist experienced community gardeners in establishing commercial gardens, aid youth in establishing a market garden, and help coordinate the Holyoke Food Policy Council to further networking and policy development.

OBJECTIVES

Proposed

1. Improve coordination among different sectors of the Greater Holyoke food system through enhancement of the Holyoke Food Policy Council.

A. Map services, problems, gaps, and opportunities in the food system.

B. Coordinate and promote two farmers' markets.

C. Conduct a market study of direct sales possibilities to better understand consumer needs.

Performance

1. The Food Policy Council was active in addressing local food system issues during the first year of the project.

A. The Council conducted a visioning/mapping exercise and interviews with stakeholders in year one to complete a study of the local food system, with the help of two Hunger Fellows. The results found a lack of consistent access to fresh foods, disappearing farms in the area, and a food pantry system overwhelmed by increased demand.

B. Although the local Chamber of Commerce maintained control of the farmers' markets, the grantee offered support and bilingual promotions.

C. A market study is planned for year two, which will explore reduced WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

redemptions, lower vegetable sales, and market location.

D. Identify additional sites for urban agriculture and apply for state funding to obtain them.

D. Two excellent sites have been identified and efforts are being made to obtain them. One is a five-acre, bottom land parcel with river frontage. The other is a hilly, abandoned ski and water recreation facility with up to seven tillable acres, though it is farther from downtown and will need to be adapted for farming.

E. Identify farm land available in the area for rent for new farmers.

E. Due to the potential availability of the land mentioned above, rental property has not been sought.

2. Increase opportunities for poor people of Holyoke to increase income.

2. Gardening and production of value-added foods are the key methods being developed for income generation.

A. Establish urban market gardens on vacant lots and assist market gardeners to sell produce.

A. Two new community gardens were established at public housing projects with plots for six families and 40 youth. An existing, 17-plot community garden was transformed into a market garden with five community plots and three market garden plots. The market garden is aiding two adults and one group of youth to begin commercial farming.

The grantee is also supporting a youth-managed stand at the farmers' market, as well as providing technical assistance and shared tools to residents growing Puerto Rican specialty crops not available elsewhere. Two adult and 15 youth farmers are renting land and equipment with the help of the grantee.

B. Offer access to the shared-use community kitchen to increase sales of value-added products.

B. Farmers did not use the kitchen during year one due to the tough permitting process that is a barrier for new businesses. Instead, growers have been investigating selling their fresh produce to established businesses already using the community

kitchen, including a bakery, pie maker, caterer, and *sofrito* producer. In addition, a restaurant that has opened at the grantee's *Centro Agricola* is using fresh Puerto Rican ingredients.

C. Investigate the expansion of urban agriculture in the Holyoke area.

C. The grantee continues to investigate new possible sites for community gardens and urban farms.

D. Promote farmers' markets.

D. The grantee, which has promoted two area farmers' markets with an aggressive campaign in Spanish, has helped increase sales for new and existing farmers.

3. Involve youth in agriculture and community building.

3. Youth are involved in virtually all aspects of the project.

A. Six youth will be involved in developing a market garden for sales of fresh produce.

A. In year one, 15 youth developed, planted, and harvested in the market garden. Three youth sold produce at the stand in the farmers' market. Another five youth have been substantially involved in the grantee's efforts to purchase nearby farmland and are working on a business plan for a farm operation once land is secured. Youth leaders and staff also assisted 40 youth from the Boys and Girls Club to develop new gardens at housing developments.

4. Increase access to culturally appropriate fresh produce for Latinos in Holyoke and the region.

4. One of the grantee's primary objectives in the project is to provide Puerto Rican foods to Latinos in Holyoke.

A. Work through the Holyoke Food Policy Council to promote local farmers' markets.

A. Culturally appropriate crops and seed sources are being developed and sold at local farmers' markets.

B. Increase the number of market gardens to augment the supply of fresh produce.

B. Two adult community gardeners and one group of youth have begun selling large quantities of fresh produce from the garden, though demand still exceeds supply.

C. Conduct market research to increase outlets for the produce grown.

C. Market research was not undertaken in year one.

PROJECT SELF-SUSTAINABILITY

The grantee has applied for multi-year funding from major foundations to assist in land purchases and management of farm and economic development initiatives. Other collaborations being built by the project will aid in achieving sustainability through business development.