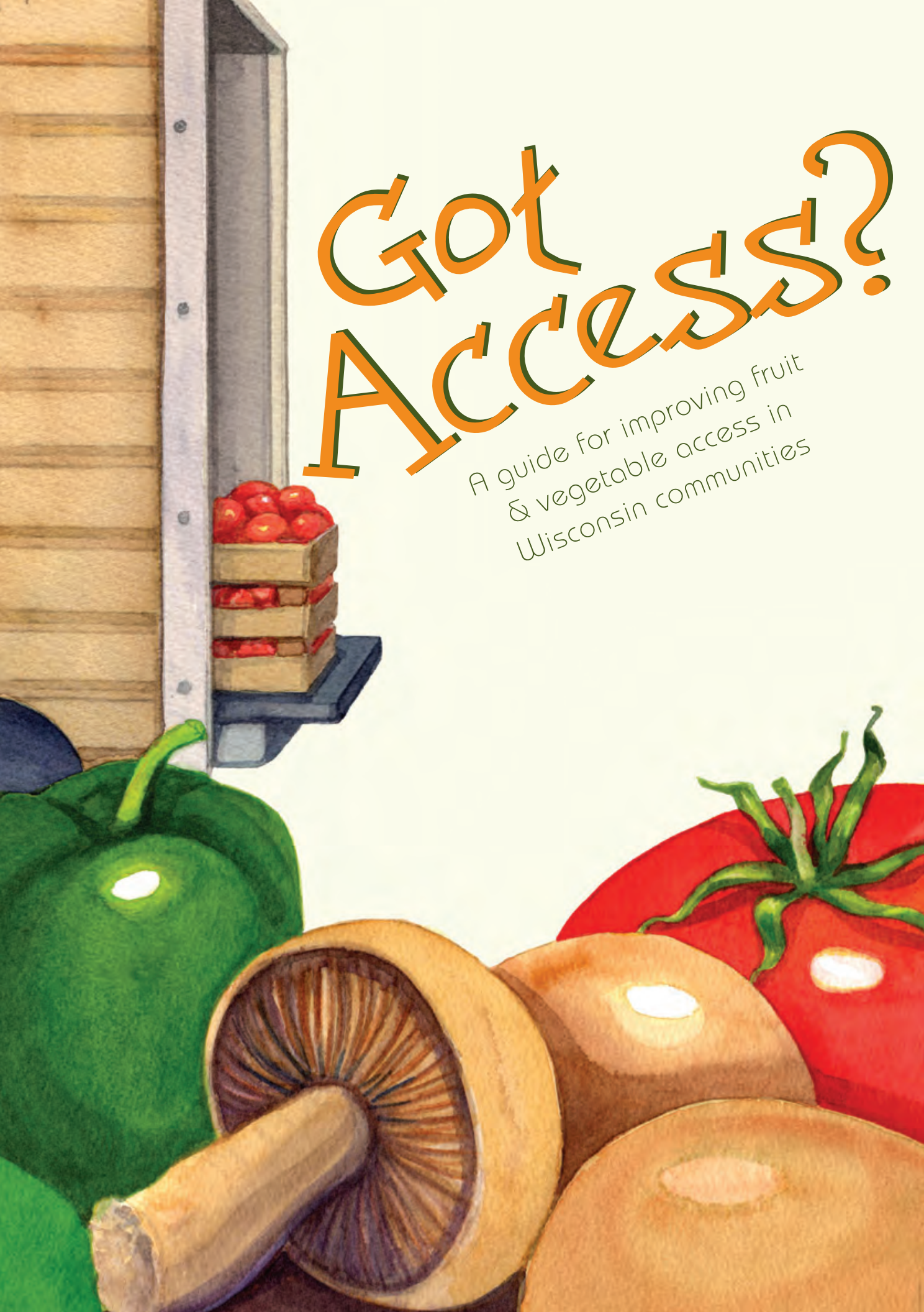

Got Access?

A guide for improving fruit & vegetable access in Wisconsin communities

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Contents

Introduction

What is Got Access?

Got Access? is a guide for improving access to fruits and vegetables in local communities. Local coalitions, community organizations, and mobilized citizens can use the components of this guide to increase the availability of and access to fruits and vegetables. It is important to promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables in all forms, as long as the products maintain a certain level of healthy qualities. *Got Access?* focuses more on fresh produce, but improving access to frozen, canned, or dried fruits and vegetables can also greatly benefit a community. Making quality foods more accessible for all community members is an excellent way to make a positive impact on the local food system.

This guide provides tools to evaluate and understand a community's current fruit and vegetable environment, evidence-based strategies to improve access to fruits and vegetables, and success stories from Wisconsin communities that have implemented these strategies.

Why do we need Got Access?

In 2009 and 2011, only 23% of Wisconsin adults and 20% of high school students consumed the recommended five or more fruits and vegetables per day, respectively (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Youth Risk Behavior Survey). Influences on consumer food choices are complex and involve environmental, system, social, and individual factors. The food environment, including the availability and accessibility of fruits and vegetables, plays a role in which foods people purchase and consume.

For many reasons, not everyone has the same opportunities to choose healthy foods. In 2008-2010, more than 1 in 9 of Wisconsin households were food insecure, meaning they had difficulty providing a variety of quality foods and/or enough food for all their members (USDA, Economic Research Service). Improved access to fruits and vegetables makes it easier for all community members to choose healthy options.

A diet high in fruits and vegetables is associated with a variety of health benefits, including, but not limited to:

- Better weight control
- Lower risk of heart disease and stroke
- Improved blood pressure
- Reduced cancer risk
- Improved gastrointestinal health

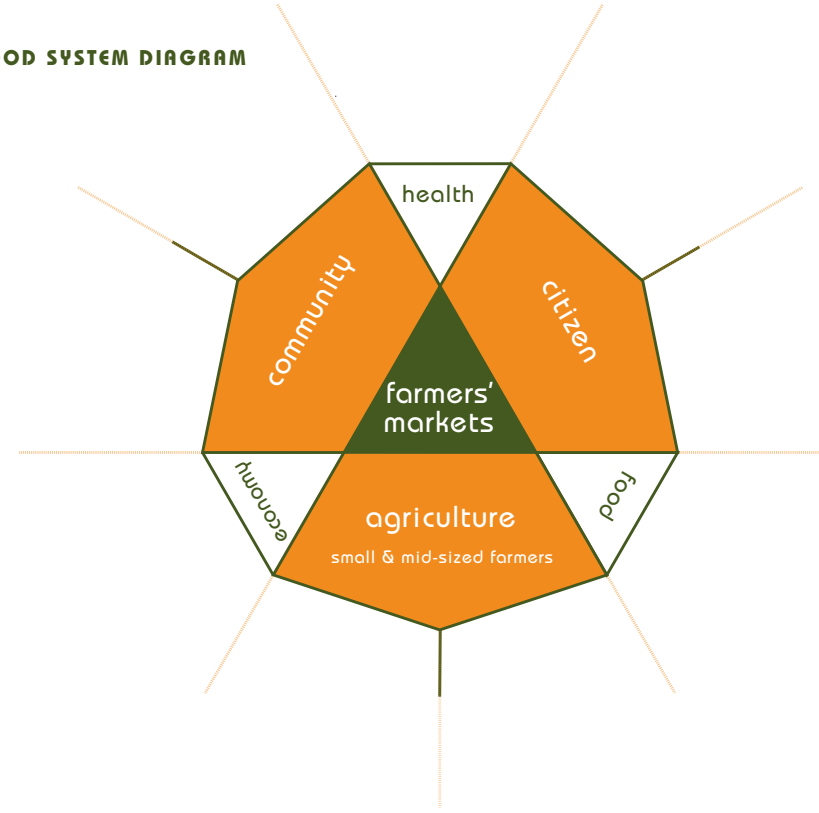
Environmental changes that increase access to fruits and vegetables support consumer purchasing and promote consumption of these healthy choices. Many evidence-based strategies also support local farmers and other agricultural businesses, which can generate local economic growth and can improve the health of the entire community.

How does Got Access? impact the food system?

The food system includes the integration of food production, processing, distribution, and consumption at various levels (local, state, or national). It connects many other systems, helping to stimulate local economies, spur community engagement, create sustainable agricultural systems and practices, and generate social connections through supply and demand.

The strategies outlined in *Got Access?* are linked. If you are interested in a particular setting or sector, almost any of the strategies could apply. When implementing a strategy, your reach and impact will affect much more than health behaviors and outcomes. Every effort you make to improve your community's food environment can create momentum for broader, positive food system change. The diagram below uses "farmers' markets" as an example to show you the different aspects of the food system and how they are intertwined.

THE FOOD SYSTEM DIAGRAM



Wentzel M. and Kimmons J. adapted from Leveraging the Farmers Market Systems to Build Healthy Sustainable Communities. Kimmons J., Wentzel M., Bader M., Harris D., Diamond A., and Miller S. Under review.

How should I use Got Access?

Got Access? is a guide to improving a community's access to fruits and vegetables. This work should follow a process, including assessment, implementation, and continuous evaluation.

The first step in the process is to understand your community's current food environment. *Got Access?* suggests multiple assessment tools and approaches to help you. Start by considering the following questions:

- Do all people in the community have access to quality, affordable fruits and vegetables? If not, what barriers exist?
- Do community members know where they can access quality, affordable fruits and vegetables?
- What are the prevailing community attitudes about fruits and vegetables?

Reviewing existing data, observing the environment, conducting focus groups, or administering surveys may provide additional information to help you better understand where your efforts are most needed.

Once you have collected sufficient information on the food environment, summarize your findings. Looking for recurring ideas or notable challenges to achieving adequate access to fruits and vegetables is a good way to start. It might be helpful to map out the community's current food access points to create a visual depiction of the food environment.

After reviewing your assessment results, use this data to inform and determine which strategies are most appropriate for your community. The strategies each have a level of evidence for effectiveness (see following chart), and this may also be considered when deciding on a strategy. Choose one strategy and a target audience to focus your work. Remember, in regard to policy work related to healthy food access, do what is appropriate for your role in the community.[1] *Got Access?* provides detailed instructions on how to get started and points you to additional resources. As you are planning your intervention, keep in mind how you will evaluate your work. It is important to show how your efforts are making a difference and improving the health of the entire community.

GOT ACCESS? EVIDENCE LEVELS

1. Strategy is proven
(strong or sufficient evidence of effectiveness based on an adequate number of studies)

2. Strategy is promising
(evidence is insufficient to determine if it works or not, but is moving in the direction of effective)

3. Strategy is expert opinion[2]
(evidence and expert consensus-based recommendations, guidelines or standards)

STRATEGY	LEVEL OF EVIDENCE
CSA	2
Farmers' Market	2
Farm to School	2
Farm to Where You Are	2
Food Pantry	3
Food Policy Councils	2
Food Stores	1
Gardens	1

"With the results of the community assessment, Pierce County made a commitment to increase the number of farmers' markets from four to five and to implement electronic benefits transfer (EBT)."

— Katie Bartko, RD, CD, CBE
Public Health Manager and WIC Director,
Pierce County Public Health

Success Story

Pierce County identified low fruit and vegetable intake related to high rates of overweight and obesity as a priority health issue. Pierce County Public Health and the Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) Coalition used the Wisconsin Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Outlet Audit Tool, developed by the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Wisconsin Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program, to conduct an assessment of the availability of fruits and vegetables in the county. The Public Health Nutritionist conducted most of the audit in three days by visiting all of the fruit and vegetable outlets in the county.

At the same time, several HEAL partners used the Wisconsin Perceptions of Fruit & Vegetable Access Community Survey to assess the opinions of county residents regarding fruit and vegetable availability, accessibility, and consumption. This survey provided insight into where community members bought fruits and vegetables and what factors influenced their purchases.

With the results of their community assessment, Pierce County committed to increasing the number of farmers' markets and implementing electronic benefits transfer at a minimum of three markets. Their results were also invaluable in applying for and receiving a Farmers' Market Promotion grant from USDA.

[1] www.cdc.gov/od/pgo/funding/grants/additional_req.shtm#ar12

[2] Expert opinion refers to strategies with minimal or no peer-reviewed studies that have been published; however, field experts, based on their experience, believe the strategy to be promising.

"Wisconsin agriculture plays a pivotal role in the food system, and improving access to fresh fruits and vegetables is a win-win for both health and agriculture."

— Teresa Engel
Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin,
Economic Development Program
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture,
Trade and Consumer Protection

Understanding Your Community's Access to Fruits & Vegetables

Understanding Your Community's Current Access

Understanding your community's current access to fruits and vegetables is an essential part of the process of improving your food environment. Through various assessment techniques, you can determine baseline information, prioritize areas for improvement, and find the necessary resources to implement chosen strategies to meet your community's needs.

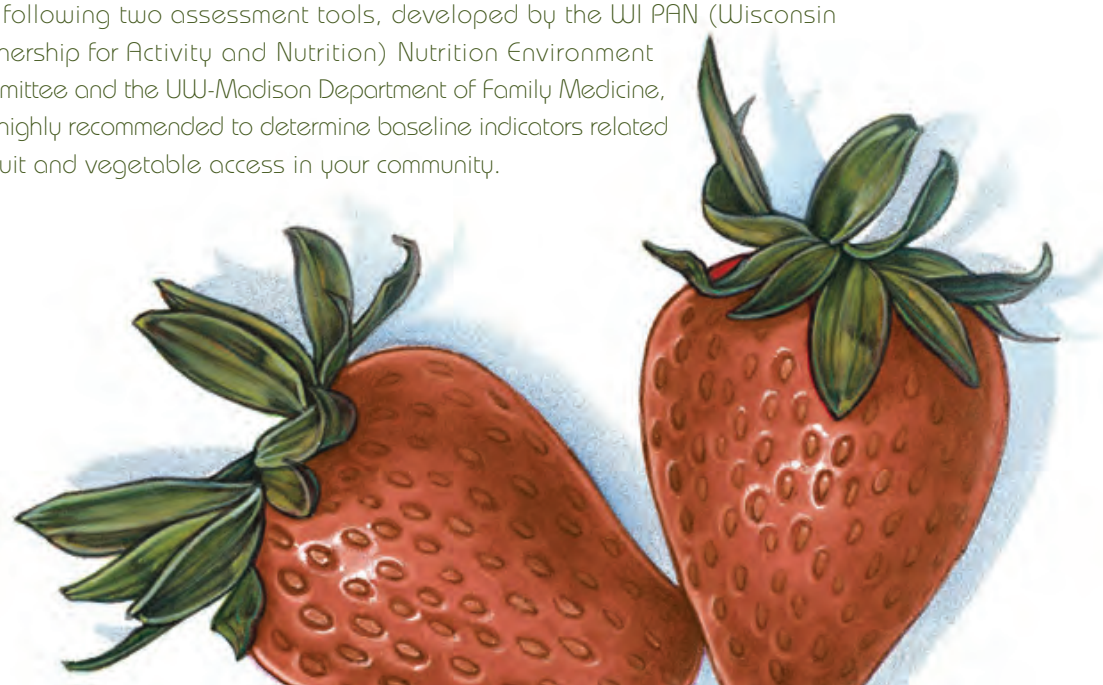
Here are several assessment techniques you can use:

- **Review existing/public datasets** – Review county-, city-, town-, village-, or neighborhood-level data related to food environment indicators
- **Direct observation** – Assess food outlets in person
- **Community surveys** – Distribute questionnaires to community members through hard copy or web-based survey formats
- **Focus groups** – Convene groups of 4-6 individuals to discuss specific questions related to food access
- **Key informant / key stakeholder interviews** – Interview individual community members, including identified community leaders, using a predetermined set of questions related to food access
- **Comprehensive community assessment** – Conduct a wide-reaching, thorough community assessment that includes food environment and/or food access issues

It is best to use a minimum of three different assessment techniques to ensure that you fully understand your community's access to fruits and vegetables. This assessment data can serve as baseline or pre-intervention indicators that you can examine again later to determine if improvements have been made.

Each technique requires a different allocation of resources (i.e., money, time and people) and has been categorized accordingly (minimal, medium or high resources needed).

The following two assessment tools, developed by the WI PAN (Wisconsin Partnership for Activity and Nutrition) Nutrition Environment Committee and the UW-Madison Department of Family Medicine, are highly recommended to determine baseline indicators related to fruit and vegetable access in your community.



To view these tools, visit www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/physical-activity.

1. **Wisconsin Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Outlet Audit Tool** (Direct Observation; medium to high resources needed). This tool can be used to observe your community's food environment to measure the current availability and quality of produce through various outlets.

2. **Wisconsin Perceptions of Fruit & Vegetable Access Community Survey** (Community Survey; minimal to medium resources needed). This survey can help clarify community members' views and opinions on fruit and vegetable access and can be used in hard copy or web-based formats.

Here are additional examples of techniques and tools that you can use to conduct an assessment. This list is not exhaustive but suggests trusted sources for information.

1. Review Existing/Public Datasets

minimal resources needed

These sources of data can help you understand your community's current food environment and provide county- and/or community-level data.

- **USDA Food Desert Locator**: This resource offers maps and data on food deserts, defined as low-income areas with limited access to supermarkets or large grocery stores. www.ers.usda.gov/data/fooddesert
- **USDA Food Environment Atlas**: This resource provides food environment indicators to examine factors related to food choices, diet quality, and access to healthy food. www.ers.usda.gov/foodatlas
- **Wisconsin's County Health Rankings**: The County Health Rankings provide county-level reports on health outcomes and health factors, including an indicator related to healthy food access. www.countyhealthrankings.org/wisconsin
- **Wisconsin's Farm Fresh Atlases**: These annual, regional food guides can be used to identify farms, farmers' markets, restaurants, stores, and other businesses that sell local food and use sustainable production and business practices in your area. www.farmfreshatlas.org
- **SavorWisconsin.com**: This resource can be used to find Wisconsin food products, businesses, and services. It provides an easy way to identify the locations and schedules of farmers' markets in Wisconsin. www.savorwisconsin.com
- **Local Harvest - Farmers' Market and community-supported agriculture (CSA) Farm Locator:** This guide provides a quick way to find existing farmers' markets and CSA farms in your area. www.localharvest.org

2. Direct Observation

medium to high resources needed

- **Environmental Nutrition and Activity Community Tool (ENACT) Community Strategies:** Developed by the Strategic Alliance for Healthy Food and Activity Environments, this tool allows for the assessment of current environments and the prioritization of strategies to make improvements.
  www.eatbettermovemore.org/sa/enact/members/index.php

- **USDA Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit**: This toolkit includes standardized measurement tools for assessing various indicators of food security, including food availability and affordability. The Food Store Survey can assess food in retail outlets.
  www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EFAN02013

- **Nutrition Environment Measures Survey (NEMS)**: This tool measures the type and location of food outlets and the availability of healthier and less-healthy options, pricing, and quality indicators.
  www.med.upenn.edu/nems

  To be trained on using NEMS, visit the online training site:
  www.med.upenn.edu/nems/onlinetraining.shtml

  NEMS-Stores:
  www.med.upenn.edu/nems/docs/NEMS_S_Detailed.pdf

  NEMS-Restaurants:
  www.med.upenn.edu/nems/docs/NEMS_R_Detailed.pdf

- **Michigan's Nutrition Environment Assessment Tool (NEAT)**: This tool is an online assessment of a community's environment and policies related to promoting and supporting healthy eating and the provision of access to healthy foods within the workplace, community, and school settings.
  www.mihealthtools.org/neat

- **What's Cooking in Your Food System: A Guide to Community Food Assessment:** This guide includes tools for conducting and planning a community-wide food assessment and case studies on communities who have used the tool.
  www.foodsecurity.org/CFAguide-whatscookin.pdf

3. Community Surveys

minimal to medium resources needed

- **Environmental Nutrition and Activity Community Tool (ENACT) Community Strategies Tools**: Developed by the Strategic Alliance for Healthy Food and Activity Environments, this tool allows for the assessment of current environments and the prioritization of strategies to make improvements. www.eatbettermovemore.org/sa/enact/members/index.php

4. Focus Groups

medium resources needed

- **Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (NPAO) Program website**: This site describes social marketing and formative assessment resources, including focus group guides. www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/physical-activity
- **USDA Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit—Focus Group Guides and Materials:** This toolkit includes focus group guidelines related to food shopping patterns and community food production. www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efan02013/efan02013appb.pdf

5. Key Informant / Key Stakeholder Interviews

medium resources needed

- **Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (NPAO) Program website**: This site describes social marketing and formative assessment resources, including interview guides. www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/physical-activity

6. Comprehensive Community Assessment

high resources needed

- **Community Health Assessment aNd Group Evaluation (CHANGE) Tool**: Developed by CDC and USDA, this tool can be used to gather and organize data on community assets and can help plan for improvement. www.cdc.gov/healthycommunitiesprogram/tools/change.htm

For additional assistance with assessment, visit the Wisconsin Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program's Obesity Prevention Planning Resource Page: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/physical-activity

"The Wisconsin Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Outlet Audit Tool gave us a good representation of where fruit and vegetable access was lacking in the target area surveyed, and it identified affordability as a key factor in access. The information continues to be very useful and informative to other groups in our community who are now addressing food access and affordability."

— Karen Early, MS, RD,
Nutrition Education Program Coordinator,
Brown County UW-Extension

Summarizing Your Findings

Once you have completed your assessment, you need to summarize and review what you learned. The results of this analysis will help you establish priorities and select a strategy that has the most potential to improve fruit and vegetable access in your community. It can be complicated to compile results from multiple assessment techniques in order to determine a short list of findings. If possible, try to find both quantitative (number-based) and qualitative (descriptive) information.

Here are some suggested ideas for compiling your results into a usable format:

1. Use Themes

One way to simplify the process is to make a list of themes from your assessment results. Finding themes is easier with focus group and interview data but can also be done to combine several types of data into high-level observations. For example, imagine you confirmed the absence of a farmers' market through both the Wisconsin Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Outlet Audit Tool and the Wisconsin Farm Fresh Atlas. Your community survey indicated that residents would like a farmers' market. The need for a farmers' market is an evident theme throughout your assessment.

2. Use a Scoring Technique

Some of the assessment techniques, particularly direct observation, can produce quantitative scores. For example, the Wisconsin Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Audit Tool can be scored by awarding points for farmers' markets or for community gardens. The Nutrition Environment Measures Survey also gives food stores and restaurants overall scores, which can be used to determine necessary changes for food store or restaurant environments.

3. Use Geographic Information System (GIS) Mapping or Google Maps

Several of the suggested assessment techniques involve collecting mailing addresses. The addresses can be mapped using GIS or Google Maps (visit www.maps.google.com), which link locations to data. These maps can depict the locations of fruit and vegetable access points in your community, and you can use these visuals to make decisions according to greatest need. GIS usually requires the help of a partner with mapping experience, while Google Maps is more easily accessible.

Once you have had a chance to review your findings, start to think about which strategy (or strategies) would be the most effective in improving your community's access to quality, affordable fruits and vegetables.

"Grocers across Wisconsin work hard to make sure they have nutritious fruits and vegetables available at the local grocery store that their customers want and need for their families. Whether it's for a healthy snack or serving at mealtime, fruits and vegetables should be at the top of the list."

— Brandon Scholz,
President and CEO of the
Wisconsin Grocers Association

Strategies for Increasing Fruit & Vegetable Access

Strategies

You have completed a community assessment and finished summarizing your findings. Now it is time to look at evidence-based strategies and best practices that have worked to address similar challenges in other Wisconsin communities.

When deciding which strategy will work best in your community, remember to take into account your existing assets. Which potential partners, coalition members, and/or organizations can you identify? What is already happening in your community related to food access? Considering these champions and activities will help you make a better decision about how to move forward.

Best-practice strategies with the level of evidence indicated (more details on page 4) **for improving access to fruits and vegetables in your community:**

in alphabetical order

- Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) Farms (evidence level: 2)
- Farmers' Markets (evidence level: 2)
- Farm to School (FTS) (evidence level: 2)
- Farm to Where You Are (e.g., restaurants, hospitals, or worksites) (evidence level: 2)
- Food Pantries (evidence level: 3)
- Food Policy Councils (evidence level: 2)
- Food Stores (evidence level: 1)
- Gardening (e.g. school, community, or childcare) (evidence level: 1)

You will find each strategy outlined in its own section, detailing the following:

- Wisconsin Success Story
- What is the Primary Strategy?
- How To Start
- Things to Consider When Getting Started
- Secondary Strategies to Expand Your Reach
- Possible Partners
- Funding
- Complementary Practices
- Implementation Resources

Each section describes the "primary" strategy and a "how to" for implementing a basic intervention. For example:

- If your community assessment and partnerships lead you to believe that a farmers' market needs to be developed in your area, the "how to" will describe the necessary first steps to establish a market.

Each section also includes "secondary" strategies for those communities able to advance or expand their efforts further. For example:

- If you already have a farmers' market and would like to try something more innovative to increase market participation, such as accepting FoodShare benefits, review the "secondary strategies" for expansion ideas.

It is always important to start at a baseline and to evaluate your work. If you are successful, you can scale up your efforts! If you are not successful, you can examine your work and either try something new or keep the same strategy and make some changes. There are many different strategies and settings where you can intervene. Choosing the best strategy for your community is essential. Remember, do what is feasible and keep moving forward.

"Community collaboration was the key to our success with EBT at our farmers' market. We brought in non-traditional partners, like FIS Government Solutions and the North Central Community Action Program (AmeriCorps), to help us accomplish our goal of increasing access to our market."

— Amanda Ostrowski, CHES, Public Health Educator
Marathon County Health Department

Important acronyms and definitions of terms that appear throughout this guide:

- **CDC:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- **SNAP:** Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly "Food Stamps"
- **FoodShare:** Wisconsin's assistance program funded federally through SNAP
- **EBT:** Electronic Benefits Transfer is an electronic system that automates the delivery, redemption, and reconciliation of issued public assistance benefits. EBT is the method for distributing Wisconsin's FoodShare benefits.
- **USDA:** United States Department of Agriculture
- **WIC:** Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women and for infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.
- **Food desert:** Low-income census tract (poverty rate of 20% or higher or a median family income at or below 80% of the area's median family income) where a substantial number or share of residents have low access to a supermarket or large grocery store (at least 500 people and/or at least 33% of the population resides more than one mile [10 miles for a rural tract] from a grocery store).

CSA Farms

Community-Supported Agriculture

CSA boxes packed by Wisconsin Rapids Opportunity Development Center

SUCCESS STORY:

Fair Share Coalition, formerly Madison Area Community-Supported Agriculture Coalition, was formed in the early 1990s by a group of farmers and local food activists in the hopes of creating a market for the community-supported agriculture (CSA) farming model. The CSA relationship benefits farmers by guaranteeing income and security and empowers CSA members to participate in a local food system that ensures regular access to fresh, healthy, and seasonal fruits and vegetables.

Fair Share started with just eight farms but expanded to include an impressive 50 farms in 2011. The Coalition is financed in part through fundraising efforts and through sales of the Coalition's cookbook, *From Asparagus to Zucchini: A Guide to Cooking Farm-Fresh, Seasonal Produce*. Their success is largely due to the partnerships that have been created between the farmers, CSA members, and highly invested volunteers.

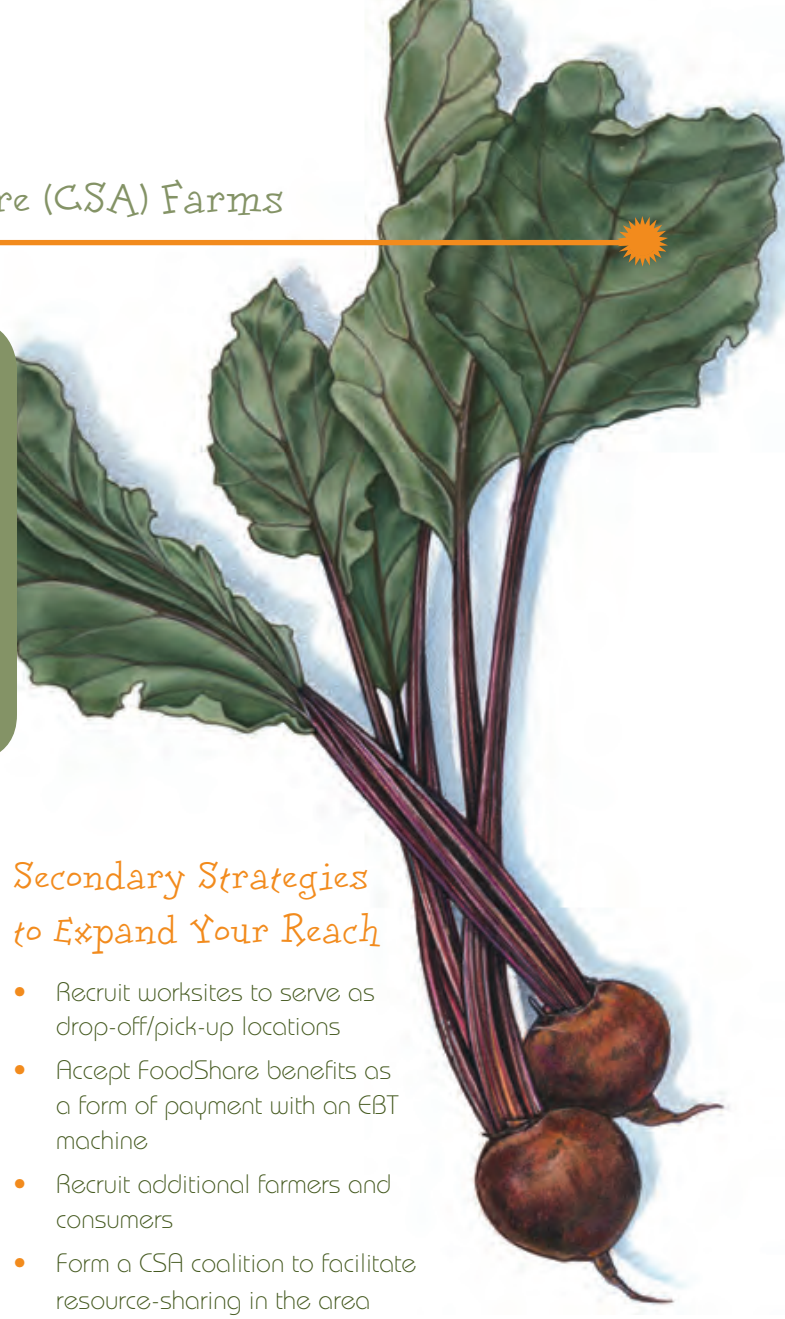
Over the years, Fair Share has made numerous efforts to bring in new CSA members. In 2006, the Coalition established the first CSA Insurance Rebate Program in the nation to help incentivize the public to join CSAs. This innovative partnership between area health plans and the Coalition supports small farmers, keeps local food dollars in Wisconsin, and helps to build healthier communities. Participating health insurance providers encourage their members to eat a greater diversity and quantity of fresh fruits and vegetables by purchasing CSA shares. Insurance members can then receive cash reimbursements if they choose CSA farms within the Coalition. Four insurance plans participated in this program in 2011, and Fair Share is working with insurance companies around the state to encourage the expansion of the program.

In addition to the Insurance Rebate Program, Fair Share also operates its Partner Shares Program, which provides financial assistance to limited-income households for purchasing CSA shares. The Coalition is authorized to accept FoodShare benefits on behalf of all Coalition farms. These initiatives help make CSAs affordable for more community members and have greatly increased enrollment in Coalition farms.

"Physicians Plus launched its 'Eat Healthy Rebate' to reimburse member families up to $200 per year when they purchase annual CSA farm shares. Participation has grown each year, and our local competitors have implemented similar programs, expanding the consumption of healthy, locally-grown food even further. Because Physicians Plus is a locally-owned company committed to improving the health of its community, we're proud to have pioneered this initiative."

— Scott Shoemaker,
Manager of Marketing,
Physicians Plus Insurance
Corporation

Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) Farms



What is the primary strategy?

To partner with a community-supported agriculture (CSA) farm to create an arrangement between community members and a prearranged distribution site in order to provide better access to farm-fresh produce.

How To Start

- ❑ Find a local farmer(s) interested in starting a CSA and community members interested in CSA membership
- ❑ Work with potential providers (farmers) to decide how food will be grown and distributed
- ❑ Collectively set a price, a distribution site, and a schedule approved by all involved parties
- ❑ Develop contracts for CSA members

Things to Consider When Getting Started

- Capacity of farmer(s) to provide produce
- Number of members
- Drop-off/pick-up site location convenience (parking, shade, security, etc.)
- Accommodations for factors affecting crop yield (weather, pests, disease, etc.)

Secondary Strategies to Expand Your Reach

- Recruit worksites to serve as drop-off/pick-up locations
- Accept FoodShare benefits as a form of payment with an EBT machine
- Recruit additional farmers and consumers
- Form a CSA coalition to facilitate resource-sharing in the area

Possible Partners

- Local farmers
- Community members
- Local UW-Extension offices
- Local agriculture organizations and groups
- Local businesses, churches, and civic groups
- Worksites
- Health insurance companies
- Teachers and schools

Funding

USDA-Agricultural Marketing Service Farmers' Market Promotion Program
www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/FMPP

USDA-National Institute of Food and Agriculture Community Food Project Grants
www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/communityfoodprojects.cfm

Complementary Practices

- Develop and articulate membership guidelines for both farmers and consumers
- Encourage health insurance companies to offer reimbursement for members participating in CSAs
- Research federal regulations for the WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition programs to consider allowing CSAs to participate
- Help farmers with distribution by exploring transportation, food hubs, and connections to potential drop-off sites (e.g., stores, government buildings).

Implementation Resources

USDA – Community-Supported Agriculture
Statistics, historical information, resources, and CSA locator tools
www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/csa/csa.shtml

CSA Locator
www.localharvest.org

A Share in the Harvest: An Action Manual for CSAs
www.soilassociation.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=gi5uOJ9swil%3d&tabid=204

CSA-Michigan – CSA Training Manual
Guidelines and recommendations for new CSA farmers
www.csafarms.org/csafarms0656231.asp

Fair Share CSA Coalition
www.csacoalition.org/our-farms/about-csa/how-it-works

Community-Supported Agriculture for the Workplace: A Guide for Developing Workplace Community Supported Agriculture Distributions
www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5073632

Eat Smart North Carolina: Bring Fresh Produce to Your Setting
www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/FreshProduce/FreshProduce.html

"I think that families who use the [FoodShare] program to pay for their CSA share find it very convenient. It's very easy for them to set up a payment plan in the spring with us where we automatically deduct monthly payments towards the cost of their CSA share throughout the season in smaller increments, rather than asking them to pay for their CSA share in 1 or 2 larger, sometimes unmanageable, installments. The program is wonderful because it makes locally-grown organic produce and relationships to food available to some families who may not otherwise be able to afford it."

— Jillian Varney,
Small Family CSA Farm

Farmers' Markets

Marathon County Farmers' Market near Wausau

SUCCESS STORY:

A few years ago, Clark County had three farmers' markets all located in the southern part of the county. The Clark County "Eat Right Be Fit" Nutrition Coalition realized that the location of these markets presented not just an inconvenience but also a hardship for northern Clark County residents, particularly WIC participants and elderly citizens with no way to access the markets. To address this problem, the Coalition developed a plan to establish farmers' markets in the northern part of the county, in the communities of Abbottsford, Thorp, and Owen.

The Coalition developed partnerships and enlisted the expertise of local government and UW-Extension agencies, including the Clark County Economic Development Corporation and the UW-Extension Crop and Soils Agency. The Coalition met with potential market vendors to establish how the markets would operate, when and where markets could be located, and what types of produce they would offer. They also met with potential consumers to ascertain the types of produce people would buy. Three sites were chosen based on need, interest, and easy access to the market itself.

Two major challenges in bringing markets to northern Clark County residents were finding market locations and vendors. Market sites were placed at Shopko and a city park because they did not charge fees for use of their parking lots. The UW-Extension Crop and Soils Agency provided funds that waived weekly vendor fees. Much of the necessary advertising and printing for the markets was donated by the Economic Development Corporation.

The Nutrition Coalition developed market vendor rules, found volunteer managers, and started advertising campaigns that utilized both fliers and sandwich boards. Advertising currently targets clients and customers at WIC clinics, senior centers, and grocery stores. The Coalition, with assistance from the Master Food Preservers and volunteers, does taste tests two to three times per season at the markets and distributes recipes for fruits and vegetables.

The Coalition tracks and analyzes participation in the northern Clark County farmers' markets. Findings indicate that the redemption rate of WIC farmers' market vouchers is high at the three sites and, overall, they have had great success through many years.

The Nutrition Coalition developed market vendor rules, found volunteer managers, and started advertising campaigns.

What is the primary strategy?

To bring fresh produce to consumers through farmers' markets placed in various settings and locations that do not typically provide access to fruits and vegetables.

How To Start

- ❑ Recruit at least 5-10 farmers committed to providing a variety of items over the entire local production season
- ❑ Promote the farmers' market concept to gain community support
- ❑ Fundraise for the costs of marketing, advertising, space rental, insurance, and supplies
- ❑ Inform key-decision makers about the benefits of farmers' markets
- ❑ Check into legalities to provide liability insurance for market organization, management, and employees
- ❑ Check with the planning department to determine if you have appropriate zoning codes or if there are local regulations for establishing a market
- ❑ Choose a location that is easily accessible for both consumers and vendors, with sufficient space for market set-up, parking, and traffic flow
- ❑ Organize the market management by establishing a Board of Directors; deciding the hours, days, and months of operation; setting seller qualifications and fees; and defining responsibilities/authority of the market manager
- ❑ Advertise to consumers by emphasizing quality, adequate quantities, reasonable prices, and conveniently located sites

Wood County Farmers' Market

Things to Consider When Getting Started

- Hours of operation that work best for the community, catering to specific populations you want to reach
- Proximity to customers, including walking/biking accessibility
- Health regulations
- Areas of need versus areas of interest

Secondary Strategies to Expand Your Reach

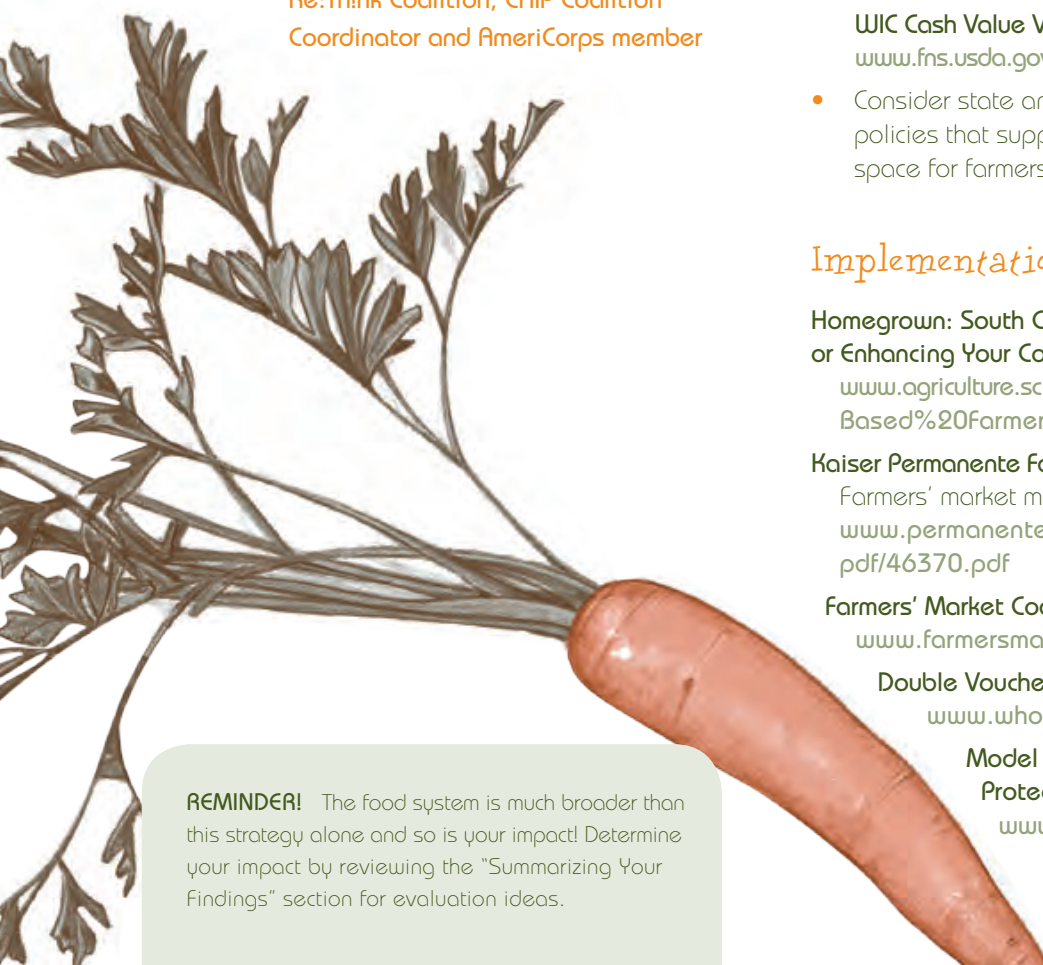
- Allow WIC and Senior Farmers' Market vouchers as accepted forms of payment
- Obtain an EBT machine in order to accept FoodShare dollars through a "token" system
- Locate your market near a wholesaler who buys and sells produce
- Establish your market as a CSA (community-supported agriculture) drop-off/pick-up site
- Establish a Direct Delivery Program to accommodate customers who cannot travel to and from the farmers' market, enabling them to order online and have their items delivered by volunteers

Possible Partners

- County or city officials
- Local health departments
- Local UW-Extension offices
- Planning, development, zoning, and building code officials
- Utility, highway, or city street department officials
- Local businesses, civic clubs, and churches
- Local farmer co-ops or other agriculture suppliers
- Wisconsin WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition programs
- Parks and recreation department
- Business groups
- Neighboring communities

"For any community looking to do an EBT program, begin reaching out to community partners who are key in providing services to lower income residents. Widely promote the program so that more people can take advantage of the opportunity to use their FoodShare benefits to buy healthy, local foods."

— Matt Madsen,
Re:Th!nk Coalition, CHIP Coalition Coordinator and AmeriCorps member



REMINDER! The food system is much broader than this strategy alone and so is your impact! Determine your impact by reviewing the "Summarizing Your Findings" section for evaluation ideas.

Funding

- Seller membership fees and/or stall rental fees
- Commission on sales
- Sponsorship from civic clubs, businesses, and community organizations
- Fundraisers: sell merchandise with your market's logo, create a farmers' market cookbook, start a "Friends of the Market" program for donations
- If your market or a partner is a 501(c)3 organization, you may be able to apply for grants through USDA. www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ebt/fm-scrip-Grant_Resources.htm

Complementary Practices

- Research federal programs that aim to promote access and use of farmers' markets among low-income populations:

  SNAP Farmers' Market Information
  www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ebt/fm.htm

  WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
  www.fns.usda.gov/wic/FMNP/FMNPfaqs.htm

  Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
  www.fns.usda.gov/wic/SeniorFMNP/SFMNPmenu.htm

  WIC Cash Value Voucher Program
  www.fns.usda.gov/wic/EBT/cvvreport.htm

- Consider state and local land use and zoning policies that support small farms and allow space for farmers' markets

Implementation Resources

Homegrown: South Carolina's Guide to Starting or Enhancing Your Community's Farmers' Market
www.agriculture.sc.gov/userfiles/file/Community%20Based%20Farmers%20Markets/scfmguide.pdf

Kaiser Permanente Farmers' Market Resource Guide
Farmers' market models and case studies
www.permanente.net/homepage/kaiser/pdf/46370.pdf

Farmers' Market Coalition Resource Library
www.farmersmarketcoalition.org/resources

Double Voucher Programs for SNAP customers
www.wholesomewave.org

Model General Plan Language to Protect and Expand Farmers' Markets
www.phlpnet.org/healthy-planning

Farm to School

Elementary school students in Wood County taste testing local foods through their Farm to School program.

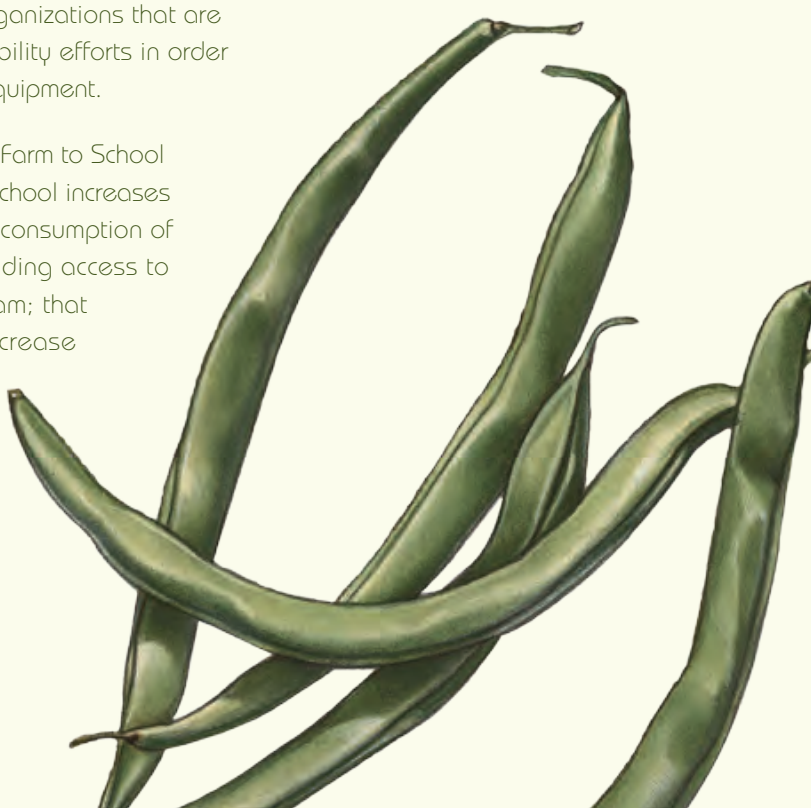
SUCCESS STORY:

Washburn School District planted its first garden with the assistance of AmeriCorps volunteers. Washburn's garden covers 1,600 square feet and has been incorporated into the school curriculum, foodservice program, and community. "Community support is what makes our Farm to School program what it is. It's a source of pride for our community," says Al Krause, principal of Washburn Elementary School. Al emphasized the importance of student ownership of the garden. His advice to schools interested in starting a Farm to School program is, "Just do it, start small, and don't expect to do everything right."

Washburn's garden covers 1,600 square feet and has been incorporated into the school curriculum, foodservice program, and community.

Success in the Washburn school garden inspired the neighboring school districts of Bayfield and Ashland to start gardens of their own. Bayfield School District receives funds from the Department of Public Instruction's Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program to serve morning fresh fruit or vegetable snacks to grades K-5 students. Linda Weber, Grants and Activities Coordinator at Bayfield, reports that as part of their Farm to School program, Bayfield has been seed starting, planting seeds in the school garden, weeding, harvesting, and preparing crops for consumption as well as selling their vegetables at the farmers' market and incorporating garden harvest and local fruits and vegetables into their school foodservice program. They continue to submit grant applications to local, regional, and national organizations that are focused on gardening and community sustainability efforts in order to cover some of the costs of the garden and equipment.

Results from a 2010-2011 Evaluation Report of Farm to School programs across Wisconsin show that Farm to School increases knowledge, improves attitudes, and increases consumption of fruits and vegetables among children by providing access to fruits and vegetables through the lunch program; that improvements in student behaviors tend to increase incrementally with more years of Farm to School programming; and that Farm to School programs may have gradual, positive impacts on student health behaviors.



What is the primary strategy?

To incorporate locally-grown foods, particularly fruits and vegetables, into school meals and snacks to increase student exposure to healthy choices and to improve their knowledge about fruits and vegetables.

How To Start

- ❑ Meet with a foodservice director to explore interest, obtain commitment, and determine who needs to be involved to make the program successful
- ❑ Recruit farmers or local wholesalers who could potentially provide products to schools
- ❑ Determine interest of food system vendors (distributors, processors, purveyors, and/or local food sellers)
- ❑ Bring together farmers, the school foodservice director, school administration members, and parents to develop a start-up plan
- ❑ Take a school inventory to assess receiving and storage facilities, available processing equipment, and labor options
- ❑ Develop "standards for procurement" with the foodservice director
- ❑ Set quality standards, container requirements, price ceilings, and delivery schedules and locations
- ❑ Update the school lunch and snack menus based on product availability
- ❑ Market and promote local food items to students, staff, and parents

Things to Consider When Getting Started

- Availability of sufficient quantities of local products
- Capacity of foodservice staff (skills, time, knowledge, equipment, etc.)
- Incorporation of a strong educational component into the curriculum or cafeteria environment to increase students' understanding and acceptance of new foods and menu formats
- Convenience of fruit and vegetable options (e.g., bags of cut carrots, apples, and pre-packaged salads)
- Competitive pricing of à la carte fruits and vegetables
- Taste testing activities to introduce foods before serving them in school meals

Secondary Strategies to Expand Your Reach

- Expand your program to include school breakfast
- Plan a field trip to a farmers' market or local farm
- Include fruits and vegetables in classroom celebrations
- Educate parents, school administrators, PTA/PTO, and the community about the steps your school is taking to promote fruits and vegetables
- Use local food for school fundraisers
- Promote "Harvest of the Month" in schools and other settings
- Invite local chefs to conduct cooking demonstrations using local produce
- Expand your efforts into your district's 4-year-old kindergarten program

Possible Partners

- Local farmers and agriculture organizations or co-ops
- School foodservice directors, teachers, administrators, and school boards
- Food distributors and processors
- Parents and students
- AmeriCorps members
- Local chefs
- Colleges and universities (students and volunteers)
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
- Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection
- School wellness committees

Funding

Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
Competitive grant and technical assistance program to increase the use of local foods in schools
www.farmtoschool.org/files/publications_341.pdf

Research, Education, Action and Policy (REAP) Food Group School Fundraiser www.reafoodgroup.org/farm-to-school/school-fundraiser

Complementary Practices

- Develop school practices that allow food preparation and tasting in classrooms
- Incorporate Farm to School into school wellness policies
- Consider state Farm to School legislation that provides funding and support for local programs

Implementation Resources

National Farm to School Network
Collaborative project that provides support and technical assistance www.farmtoschool.org

REAP Food Group – Farm to School
Resources and educational materials
www.reapfoodgroup.org/programs-events/farm-to-school

UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems
Toolkits for school nutrition directors and producers www.cias.wisc.edu/toolkits

USDA Farm to School
Resources to assist schools in starting or expanding F2S activities
www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/f2s/Default.htm

Washington State Department of Agriculture – Farm to School Toolkit www.wafarmtoschool.org

Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition – Farm to School Toolkit
www.toolkit.centerfornutrition.org

Network for a Healthy California – Harvest of the Month
Materials and resources to support students' healthy food choices www.harvestofthemonth.com

"Don't be afraid to try Farm to School. There are a lot of obstacles, but I really think the benefits far outweigh the problems you might face. If you can prepare it correctly for the kids, display it well, and provide the education, I think you'll be amazed at what the kids will actually try."

— Mike Gasper,
School Nutrition Supervisor,
Holmen School District

Farm to Where You Are

Sandwich offered at the Mermaid Cafe with locally-grown produce.

Chef Barbara Wright

Photo by Bill Lubing for REAP Food Group

SUCCESS STORY:

Madison's Mermaid Café owner, Lisa Jacobson, models the concept of Farm to Restaurant. Lisa opened her business as an organic, fair-trade coffeehouse and gradually expanded to a full café. Lisa's emphasis is on local foods from small, sustainable Wisconsin farms, but she also uses many organic foods. Her motivation for the idea of local foods originated from a desire to support local farmers and Just Coffee, her coffee provider. She said, "It just makes you feel good to sell their product[s]." This inspired her to sell more and to turn her store into a café where every item is made in-house from fresh, local ingredients. They provide high-quality products, which makes employees and customers at the Mermaid Café feel good about enjoying the food. Mermaid Café also partners with Driftless Organics to run a CSA out of the café. This allows the café to promote CSAs and makes an easy connection to the farm where they receive much of their seasonal produce.

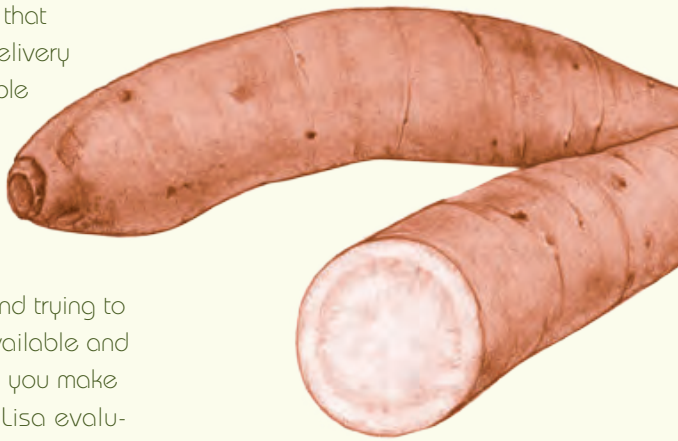
Lisa experiences many challenges in operating a locally-supplied restaurant. She deals with these issues by checking around for the best prices, by working with CSAs, and by trading products. She looks at the conventional price and the local price and finds a median between the two. Local products can sometimes be more expensive than conventional and can pose a challenge to obtaining a price that suits both her customers and the welfare of her business. Delivery schedules are also a challenge because with all local, perishable food, it is difficult to determine the necessary quantity each week. She has developed strong connections with vendors who can be flexible to her changing needs.

Quantity and processing present another obstacle that Lisa overcomes through trial and error. It's all about estimating and trying to extend the season by ordering more when the product is available and lengthening the amount of time local foods are used. When you make everything in-house, there is a greater time commitment. Lisa evaluates her success by how much product she sells at a good price.

Lisa's advice for restaurant owners who want to transition to local ingredients is to "start slow and keep going." She also says, "Know when it's not working." Lisa has seen firsthand that the higher quality and fresher look of locally-sourced ingredients attracts customers and keeps them coming back. With the stiff competition for café dollars in her area, buying locally has really given her an edge that she is proud of.

Lisa's advice for restaurant owners who want to transition to local ingredients is to "start slow and keep going."

— Lisa Jacobson,
Madison's Mermaid Café owner



What is the primary strategy?

To bring locally-grown produce directly to institutions such as restaurants, hospitals, and worksites; to give patrons, employees, and community members more convenient access to local fruits and vegetables; and to create new markets for farmers.

Farm to Restaurant

Restaurants that serve locally-grown produce can incorporate more fresh fruits and vegetables into menus and consumer diets while also supporting the local economy. Restaurants can also benefit by using fresh, local produce as a selling point for customers.

Farm to Hospital

Healthcare facilities are important partners because of their significant reach, their mission to promote health, and their ability to improve health through modeling a value-based food supply chain. Hospitals have the potential to be a community role model for proactive, healthy choices by bringing fresh, local foods into cafeterias, patient meals, and vending.

Farm to Worksite

Worksites that introduce farm stands or farmers' markets or offer fresh, local foods in cafeterias make healthy choices easy for their employees.

How To Start

- ❑ Assess support for the use of local produce in your community institutions
- ❑ Locate partnering organizations and consumer groups who will support the use of locally-grown produce
- ❑ Locate farms that are interested in selling their produce locally and find out what types of produce they have, when they have it, and how much they can provide
- ❑ Approach sites that may be interested in participating in a "Farm to Where You Are" program to discuss the benefits of locally-grown foods, including potential cost savings and customer interest
- ❑ Develop marketing tools for businesses that use local produce
- ❑ Support farmer-institution partnerships with collaborative communications

Things to Consider When Getting Started

- Farmer cooperatives to increase produce diversity, availability, and delivery of local goods
- Use of centralized processing plants
- Hosting events for farmers to meet chefs, managers, foodservice staff, hospital nutrition staff, employers, etc.
- Existing menus and opportunities to incorporate local produce
- Skills and schedule demands of employees preparing food and managing the "Farm to Where You Are" program

- Storage capacity for produce at a site
- USDA guidelines for fresh produce storage
- Promotion of menu items made with local produce (e.g., menu inserts, specials, table tents, or posters for menu boards)
- Physical space needed for a market or farm stand
- Insurance and/or zoning permit requirements if starting a farm stand or market

Secondary Strategies to Expand Your Reach

- Ask hospitals or worksites to serve as CSA drop sites (see CSA section)
- Support "Farm to Where You Are" programs with media communications, including Letters to the Editor highlighting sites, stories, and successes
- Tell the stories of farmers participating in programs and post them at the sites, in newsletters, etc.
- Identify program participants for the public through decals, directories, or signage and distribute throughout the community

Possible Partners

- Farmers and farm organizations
- Chefs
- Farmers' market managers and patrons
- Obesity prevention organizations and coalitions
- Local government and health departments
- Hospitals
- Restaurant managers/owners
- Dietitians
- Foodservice directors
- Health and wellness managers
- Food distributors and processors
- Local businesses
- Wellness staff of institutions

"Buying local from Tri-County Produce Auction has been a very positive experience for Mendota Mental Health Institute. We reap excellent flavor, nutritional value, and cost savings with each purchase. The experience gives you the farmer connection in a very simple format. Our patients ask each spring when we will be starting to serve the produce from the auction. They notice the improvement with the fresh products that are filled with Wisconsin flavor."

— Claire Nagel,
Food Service Administrator,
Mendota Mental Health Institute

Funding

Specialty Crop Block Grants

www.datcp.wi.gov/Business/Grants_and_Financial_Aid/Specialty_Crops_Grants/index.aspx

Complementary Practices

- Develop workplace wellness policies that increase access to fruits and vegetables at the workplace
- Research federal and state policies that provide incentives to institutions to purchase locally-grown agricultural products
- Consider institutional policies and contracts that support local purchasing (e.g., commit to spending 10% of the food budget on local products)
- Educate on the importance of state funding for the Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin program and other similar initiatives

Implementation Resources

CDC DNPAO Program Highlights – Farm to Where You Are

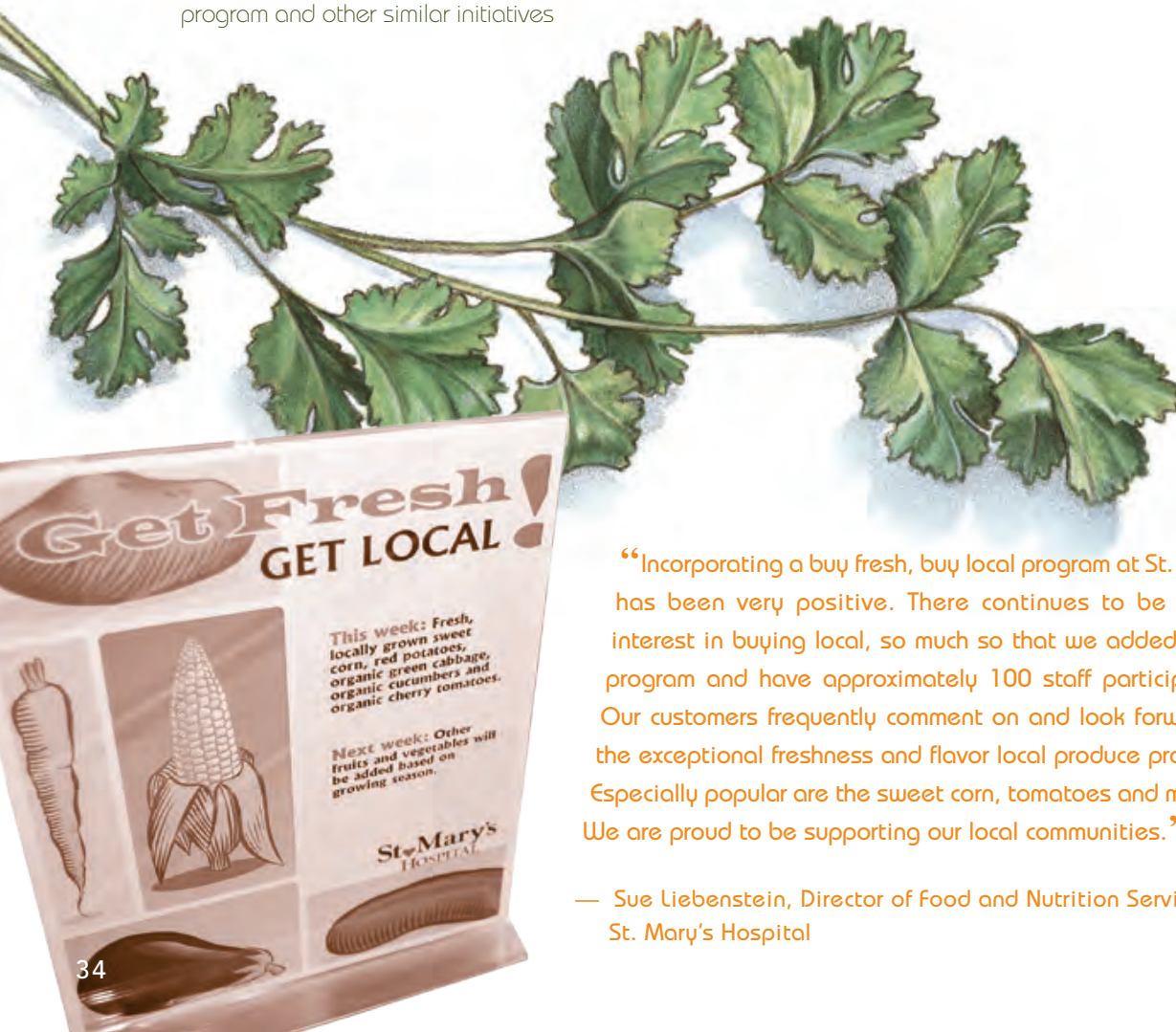
State examples of Farm to Where You Are programs www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/FarmToWhereYouAre.pdf

Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin

Economic development program to increase the purchase of Wisconsin grown/produced food www.datcp.wi.gov/Business/Buy_Local_Buy_Wisconsin/index.aspx

Farm to Cafeteria Connections: Marketing Opportunities for Small Farms in Washington State

www.agr.wa.gov/Marketing/SmallFarm/docs/102-FarmToCafeteriaConnections-Web.pdf



"Incorporating a buy fresh, buy local program at St. Mary's has been very positive. There continues to be strong interest in buying local, so much so that we added a CSA program and have approximately 100 staff participating. Our customers frequently comment on and look forward to the exceptional freshness and flavor local produce provides. Especially popular are the sweet corn, tomatoes and melons. We are proud to be supporting our local communities."

— Sue Liebenstein, Director of Food and Nutrition Services, St. Mary's Hospital

What retail foodservices should know when purchasing local produce directly from farmers
www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM2046.pdf

A Guide to Serving Local Food on Your Menu
www.glynwood.org/files/previous/pdfs/ReportsandGuides/GuideLocalMenu.pdf

Strategic Alliance - Farm to Institution Program
Strategies, tools, examples, and links to organizations
www.eatbettermovemore.org/sa/enact/healthcare/farmtohospital.php

A Guide to Establishing a Worksite Farmers' Market
www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Documents/Network-FV-WP-FarmersMarketTool.pdf

Farm to Work Toolkit: A guide for implementing a local produce delivery program at your worksite
www.dshs.state.tx.us/obesity/pdf/F2WToolkit1008.pdf

Bringing Local Food to Local Institutions: A Resource Guide for Farm to School and Farm to Institution Programs
www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/local_food/marketing.html

Community Food Security Coalition: Farm to College
Program basics, database, and resources
www.Farmtocollege.org

REMINDER! The food system is much broader than this strategy alone and so is your impact! Determine your impact by reviewing the "Summarizing Your Findings" section for evaluation ideas.

Food Pantries

Produce offered at the River Food Pantry in Madison

SUCCESS STORY:

Like many small Wisconsin towns, Bloomer can be described as a blue-collar town with a strong emphasis on the farming community. With just over 3,500 residents, the Bloomer area faces many challenges to food security, including many low-income residents who must rely on family, friends, and neighbors for access to safe, nutritious foods.

Small-town food pantries often struggle with a lack of money, nutritious foods, and volunteers. Walking into the Bloomer Food Pantry you would never guess those struggles occur here. Shelves are stocked with toiletries, canned foods, and fresh, seasonal fruits and vegetables. Coolers are full of milk and eggs, and freezers are full of food.

Bloomer Food Pantry director Roberta Poirier, a retired nurse midwife, is the backbone of the pantry and offers advice on what makes a rural food pantry successful at addressing a community's food insecurity. Poirier states, "Client choice is a must." Even if your facility is small, make it work. Every family has different foods in its cupboards and different food likes and dislikes. Poirier reports that 50% of food sent home in pre-selected bags will be unused. Self-selection allows individuals and families to select foods that will fit into their meal planning. In Poirier's experience, clients are not greedy and generally only take what is needed.

A major factor that makes the Bloomer Food Pantry successful is that it belongs to the whole community. The pantry is housed in a neutral, easily accessible building that is not affiliated with any one faith. In Bloomer, the community agrees, "We are all in this together."

Poirier quotes an old friend when she recites, "If you tell people what you need, you give them the opportunity to serve." When seeking support, Poirier finds it more advantageous to ask for exactly what is needed rather than ask for an unspecified donation. There is a whole community out there willing to give and sometimes you need to reach out to the most unlikely businesses. With wisdom acquired from years of experience, Poirier advises, "Make nice with your neighbors. You may be surprised when the delivery truck pulls up who steps in to help you unload."

Self-selection allows individuals and families to select foods that will fit into their meal planning.

What is the primary strategy?

To glean (or harvest) excess or unmarketable produce from farm fields, gardens, markets, grocery stores, or food distributors in order to donate these fruits and vegetables to food banks or emergency food relief programs.

How To Start

- ❑ Ask local food pantries and food banks what items they would like to receive as donations and what their storage capacity is
- ❑ Contact community or school gardens and farmers' markets to see if they are able to donate produce to local food pantries
- ❑ Contact local Master Gardeners for possible donations through private gardens
- ❑ Check with local grocery and food stores, markets, and distributors about donating fresh, canned, frozen, or dried fruits and vegetables that are not suitable for them to sell or were not sold in an appropriate timeframe

Things to Consider When Getting Started

- Knowledge base of food pantry staff
- Capacity of food pantry, particularly refrigerator and freezer space
- Storage of donated items
- Method of delivery to pantries
- Proper and safe food handling practices
- Best fruits and vegetables to glean
- Best times of the season to glean local crops
- Tools and supplies needed for harvesting (e.g., boxes, crates, and gardening tools)
- Required permits or licenses
- Knowledge base of pantry clients on preparation, use, and safe storage of produce

Secondary Strategies to Expand Your Reach

- Distribute seeds and/or potted plants throughout the community with the intention of donating the excess produce grown
- Ask community members to grow an extra row of crops in their private gardens to donate to local pantries
- Organize a site for community members to drop off produce from their private gardens
- Offer to harvest neighbors' gardens while they are on vacation and donate the produce to local pantries
- Partner with local UW-Extension Nutrition Educators to provide pantry clients with nutrition education to promote the selection, preparation, and safe handling of fresh pantry produce

REMINDER! The food system is much broader than this strategy alone and so is your impact! Determine your impact by reviewing the "Summarizing Your Findings" section for evaluation ideas.

Possible Partners

- Community sanitarians
- Landfill supervisors
- Grocery and food store owners
- Restaurant owners
- Farmers' market managers
- College and university foodservice directors
- Local health departments and WIC Nutritionists
- Hunger/Food security coalitions
- Master Gardeners and garden clubs
- Food distributors
- Local UW-Extension Nutrition Educators

Funding

USDA Outreach Grants
www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach/grants.htm

USDA Hunger-Free Communities Grants
www.fns.usda.gov/outreach/grants/hfc_grants.htm

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/tefap

Complementary Practices

- Promote zoning policies that allow for community gardens
- Update food pantry/bank safety policies and regulations to allow for safe handling of fresh produce donations
- Promote the Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, which eliminates liability for food donations made to nonprofit organizations

Implementation Resources

Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin, Inc. Information on alleviating hunger, food harvesting, and outreach
www.cacscw.org/food.php

USDA – A Citizen's Guide to Food Recovery
Basic guide about gleaning and food rescue
www.usda.gov/news/pubs/gleaning/content.htm

The National Hunger Clearinghouse
Resources for programs, grants, and policies and procedures
www.whyhunger.org/index.php

Ample Harvest
Nonprofit connecting home garden donations to food pantries www.ampleharvest.org

Building the Bridge: Linking Food Banking and Community Food Security
www.foodsecurity.org/BuildingBridges.pdf

Tips for good handling practices of fresh produce in your store www.iatp.org/files/Produce_Handling_Guide_IATP%20_June_2010.pdf

"Community gardens are a great way to bring all types of people together in a community — young and old, school groups and church groups, health service agencies and food pantries. They are an opportunity to provide fresh, wholesome foods to people who might not have access to them, including food pantry participants and seniors at community centers. They touch every aspect of a community."

— Bev Hall,
Nutrition Educator,
Waupaca County Health Department

Food Policy Councils

Mobile markets offer an outlet for foods in areas of Milwaukee with limited access.

SUCCESS STORY:

Issues surrounding nutrition, food security, food justice, urban agriculture, local food production, and diet-related illnesses have garnered increased attention in recent years. In Milwaukee, these issues brought together a diverse group of urban farmers, community gardeners, health practitioners, and a wide range of people concerned with health, nutrition, food production, and policy. After hearing of emerging food policy councils, a small group of interested actors met to form the Milwaukee Food Council (MFC). Over 40 organizations from the public and private sectors have been represented at the table of the MFC.

The MFC aims to build a healthy, local food system that is ecologically sustainable, economically vibrant, and socially just. The Council is committed to community-building and operates through three work-groups that focus on healthy food access, urban agriculture and land use, and school food issues involving the cafeteria, classroom, and community. Additional workgroups are forming around "food policy and advocacy" and "diversity and inclusiveness."

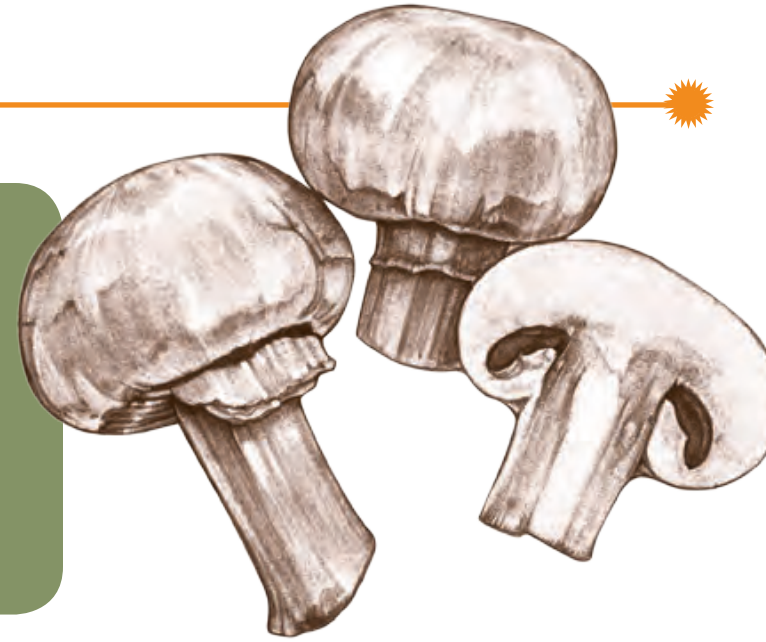
The MFC serves as an advisory council to the Milwaukee city government. The group has successfully pushed for the passage of city ordinances allowing both chicken keeping and beekeeping at Milwaukee residences. MFC members were also extensively involved in a city-wide policy planning process, serving on many work committees seeking to develop sustainable solutions for the city's needs, which led to the adoption of Milwaukee's 2010 Comprehensive Plan.

The MFC received a grant from the Wisconsin Local Food Network to undertake a strategic planning process. Through this initiative, the group intends to identify specific goals, objectives, and activities to pursue in the future. The MFC hopes to focus on policy changes that will have a lasting influence on the city of Milwaukee and on the regional food system. By convening diverse groups interested in food-related issues, the MFC works across sectors to promote policies and programs that improve the food community as a whole.

"The Milwaukee Food Council aims to build a healthy, local food system that is ecologically sustainable, economically vibrant, and socially just."

— Martha Davis Kipcak,
Food Program Manager,
Center for Resilient Cities

Food Policy Councils (FPCs)



What is the primary strategy?

To bring people from different parts of the food system together to examine the operation of a local food system and to provide ideas and recommendations for improvement through food and agricultural practices.

How To Start

- ❑ Bring together interested parties to form a non-appointed FPC or ask a government, nonprofit, or other organization to administer the FPC
- ❑ Recruit stakeholders from public, private, and nonprofit sectors to represent a wide array of interests, including nutrition, health, agriculture, education, policy, community design, and commerce
- ❑ Determine how administrative, programmatic, and/or staffing costs will be funded
- ❑ Set an agenda for the council by conducting a food system assessment to gauge the needs of the community and determine needed improvements

Things to Consider When Getting Started

- Political culture and climate of the community
- "Open door policies" allowing anyone to attend FPC meetings
- Diverse and thorough membership, representing various sectors of the food system and community
- Potential practices/programs to address:
  - Farm to School
  - School/community gardens
  - School breakfast, lunch, and snack programs
  - New/expanded farmers' markets
  - FoodShare acceptance at farmers' markets
  - Institutional food purchasing programs
  - Farmland preservation
  - Gleaning programs to collect excess produce
  - "Buy Local" campaigns
  - New grocery outlet locations in food deserts

Secondary Strategies to Expand Your Reach

- Meet with and educate legislators on the benefits of an appointed FPC
- Educate on the use of a state, local, or tribal law, executive order, or proclamation to create an FPC

Possible Partners / Potential FPC Members

- Farmers
- Community members
- Anti-hunger advocates
- Food pantry/bank managers
- Labor representatives
- Members of the faith community

- Food processors
- Food wholesalers/distributors
- Food retailers/grocers
- Restaurant owners and chefs
- Farm organization representatives
- Community gardeners
- Academics
- Local health departments, UW-Extension, and other government employees
- Healthcare providers, including doctors, nurses, and dietitians

Funding

- FPC member donations (e.g., meeting space, printing, food, and supplies)
- FPC member fees
- Government funding streams for mandated FPCs

Complementary Practices

- Consider city, county, or state resolutions to create FPCs
- Promote organizational wellness initiative mandates for FPC participation

Implementation Resources

Community Food Security Coalition – Food Policy Council Program

Guide to support the development and operation of current and emerging FPCs, including lessons learned

www.foodsecurity.org/FPC/resources.html

CDC – Food Policy Councils

www.cdc.gov/features/fruits&veggies

Wisconsin FPCs

- Dane County Food Council: www.countyofdane.com/foodcouncil
- Milwaukee Food Council: www.resilientcities.org/Resilient_Cities/MILWAUKEE_FOOD_COUNCIL.html

Other FPCs

- Hartford, CT FPC (commissioned by city ordinance): www.hartford.gov/government/FoodCommission/default.htm
- Iowa Food Systems Council (created by executive order): www.iowafoodsystemscouncil.org
- Tacoma, WA FPC (created out of grassroots efforts): www.healthypierce.org/directory/index.php?bus=71

"A wide variety of key players benefit the Dane County Food Council. It's the people who work day in and day out with food system issues, who create a supportive network, and who let people know what's going on who are great contributors towards the Council's work. We hope to create an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable local food system for the Dane County region."

— Ruth Simpson,
Dane County Food Council

REMINDER! The food system is much broader than this strategy alone and so is your impact! Determine your impact by reviewing the "Summarizing Your Findings" section for evaluation ideas.

Food Stores

grocery & convenience stores

Volunteers help unload produce for a local food store in Milwaukee.

SUCCESS STORY:

In 2003, the neighborhood of Northside Madison lost a grocery store. There was another grocery store within a fair distance, but prices were high and the store was not easily accessible for those with limited transportation access. After noticing an increase in food pantry usage, the community strongly felt that a grocery store must be brought back to the neighborhood. To address this problem, interested members of the neighborhood formed a co-op.

As a result of the co-op's efforts, a farmers' market began in 2005. Because of the increased use of food pantries, the co-op ensured the market could accept FoodShare benefits, as well as WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program vouchers. In the spring of 2006, the co-op achieved its ultimate goal: Pierce's Northside Market opened in the neighborhood. The store was a success and continues to enjoy good business from the community. This would not have happened without the efforts of the strong community support.

Partnerships were also critical to this success. The Willy Street Co-op attended the first neighborhood meeting. Grant funds from the Willy Street Co-op were used to conduct a marketing study to show that a grocery store could thrive in the Northside neighborhood. Other important partnerships were formed with the shopping district business owners and with the City of Madison's mayor. The mayor informed the co-op of the Emerging Neighborhood Fund, which was used to purchase an EBT reader that enables FoodShare recipients to use their benefits at the farmers' market.

Publicity also played an important role in the co-op's efforts by keeping their work in the public eye. The co-op organized a rally of 50–100 people who chanted, "We want food!" in front of the closed grocery store. Another rally was organized in conjunction with a meeting between the mayor and the CEO of Roundy's. The rally was at the city building where the meeting was taking place. Local news stations broadcasted both events.

The Northside community succeeded because community members knew that some of their neighbors were suffering without access to healthy food. Partnerships, publicity, and a "never give up" attitude were the ingredients for their success.

"The Northside community succeeded because community members knew that some of their neighbors were suffering without access to healthy food."

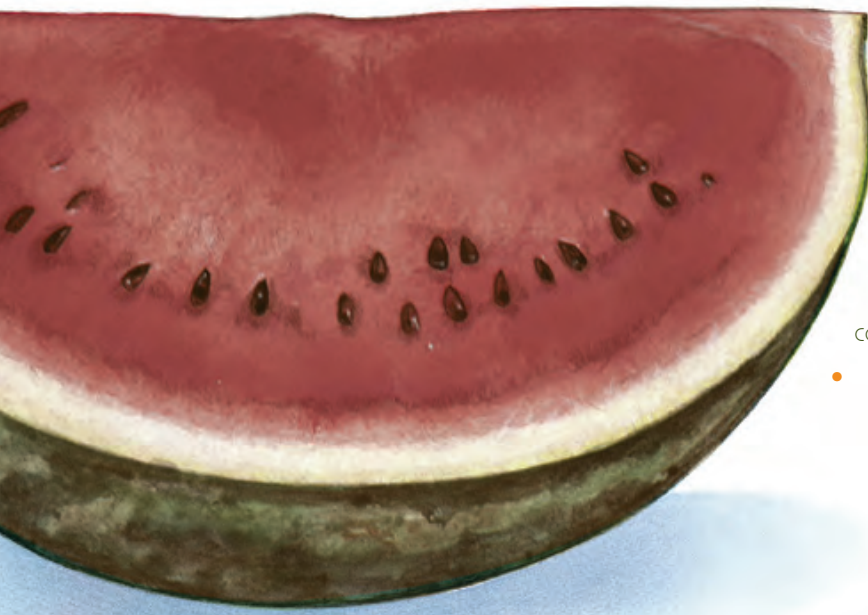
— Lisa Wiese, Manager,
Northside Farmers' Market

What is the primary strategy?

To provide more fruits and vegetables, particularly fresh produce, to a community by increasing their availability in existing grocery, convenience, and corner stores.

How To Start

- ❑ Assess the current quality, price, and quantity of fruits and vegetables (or lack thereof) sold in grocery, convenience, and corner stores in the community
- ❑ Talk to grocers and store owners about selling more fresh, canned, frozen, or dried fruits and vegetables
- ❑ Cultivate relationships with food distributors and processors to develop strategies to provide more fruits and vegetables to stores
- ❑ Work with store owners to troubleshoot problems that arise and to develop placement and pricing strategies for newly introduced food items
- ❑ Promote produce sections in stores to encourage more consumer purchasing of fruits and vegetables



Things to Consider When Getting Started

- Sale of pre-cut/pre-washed produce in addition to whole foods
- Size, quality, and variety of stores' produce sections
- Sample taste tests in the produce section
- Creation of recipe cards for the preparation of fruits and vegetables
- Promotion of new fruits and vegetables being offered
- "Harvest of the Month" promotion

Secondary Strategies to Expand Your Reach

- Organize a neighborhood coalition to raise awareness and attract media coverage of your campaign to increase fruit and vegetable access
- Provide incentives and technical assistance to grocers and store owners to provide more fruits and vegetables in their stores
- Encourage stores to sell more local produce by fostering relationships between store owners and local farmers
- Ensure that all grocery, convenience, and corner stores selling produce accept FoodShare and WIC benefits
- Work with local officials to determine whether the construction of a new grocery or corner store is appropriate
- Work with city planners or local developers to consider areas of the community that could benefit from the establishment of a new grocery or corner store
- Contact the Wisconsin Grocers Association to support your efforts

Possible Partners

- Local health departments
- Local UW-Extension offices
- Agricultural organizations
- Store owners and managers
- Food distributors and processors
- Store customers
- State WIC Vendor Management staff
- Local farmers
- Local government
- City planners
- Wisconsin Grocers Association

Funding

- Grocery store tax incentives for retailers in food deserts and underserved neighborhoods
- City/municipal, county, or state agency budgets
- For cooperative groceries: paid memberships, loans, and private donations
- Healthy Food Financing Initiative (see Implementation Resources below)

Complementary Practices

- Consider incentives (e.g., Double Value Coupon Program) for FoodShare recipients to purchase more fruits and vegetables at local stores
- Research funding opportunities for the development of grocery stores in low-income and underserved communities
- Consider ideas that create permissive zoning laws and regulations, making it more attractive for developers to build grocery stores in underserved communities
- Support store infrastructural changes that allow small scale stores to stock fruits and vegetables
- Connect grocers with resources to add EBT and expand their customer base
- Research store stocking requirements to help stores participate in food assistance programs
- Support in-store healthy food arrangement, education, and sampling activities

Implementation Resources

Baltimore Healthy Stores
Resources for providing and promoting healthy foods in stores
www.healthystores.org/BHS.html

St. Louis Healthy Corner Store Resource Guide
Information on food storage, products, and merchandising
www.extension.missouri.edu/stlouis/healthycorner-store/HCS_Resource_Guidebook_May2011.pdf

Equitable Development Toolkit for Healthy Food Retailing
Ideas for improving access to healthy food in underserved areas
www.policylink.org/site/c.lkIXLbMNJrE/b.5137405/k.6042/Healthy_Food_Retailing.htm

How to Increase Produce in your Local Corner Store
www.chicagofoodpolicy.org/How%20to%20Increase%20Produce%20in%20Your%20Local%20Corner%20Store.pdf

Tips for good handling practices of fresh produce in your store
www.iatp.org/files/Produce_Handling_Guide_IATP%20_June_2010.pdf

Healthy Food Financing Initiative
Resources to help retailers overcome barriers when entering a community
www.thefoodtrust.org/php/programs/hffi.php

Wholesome Wave's Double Value Coupon Program
www.healthystores.org/BHS.html

"In discussions about healthy food options, it has often been said that fresh fruits and vegetables are expensive. At Kwik Trip we aim to offer fresh fruits and vegetables at great prices that provide a value to our guests who are looking for a healthy food choice on the go."

— John McHugh, Corporate Communications and Leadership Development, Kwik Trip

Gardening

Youth garden coordinators and kids digging through a worm bin at Troy Gardens.

SUCCESS STORY:

The Menominee Gardening Coalition began as an informal alliance of local agencies and programs on the Menominee Indian Reservation in response to a number of food and health-related issues. The agencies involved include the Menominee Tribal Clinic Diabetes Prevention Program, Menominee WIC Program, UW-Extension, Menominee Head Start, St. Anthony's Church, Government Housing Department, Historic Preservation, Sustainable Development Institute, and many local volunteers. The main goals were to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables and to increase gardening projects across the reservation. When the only grocery store on the reservation closed, the community was left with only four convenience stores. With the nearest access to fresh fruits and vegetables 20 miles away, the reservation had become a true food desert, inspiring the community to take action.

Two community members, David "Jonesy" Miller and Charlotte Wagner, proposed the idea of a tiller loaning program to help community members plant their own gardens. The Coalition helped purchase tillers and seeds, which were loaned out to those families and school/agency gardens that were interested in growing their own produce or expanding their gardens. Since the inception of this program, it has been expanded tremendously. A greenhouse was built, which prepares starter plants for community and home gardens. Students and youth help elders tend their gardens. Top soil and lumber are also available to the community to build raised beds. To create these programs, the *Got Dirt? Garden Toolkit* was used, along with grow lights, starter kits, and pots used in the Head Start classrooms.

The Gardening Coalition holds workshops for the community on multiple topics, such as composting, rain barrels, and canning, which support various gardening efforts. Using grant funds, this program cost approximately $3,000 to start up and approximately $2,000 annually to maintain and expand.

By reaching out to community members of all ages and by engaging different sectors, the Menominee Gardening Coalition has overcome barriers, increased the community's access to fruits and vegetables, increased awareness of healthy food outlets, promoted consumption of fruits and vegetables through nutrition education, and increased access to target audiences through the use of fruit and vegetable vouchers and public transit discounts. The true impact of their efforts will be measured through an evaluation.

By engaging a number of different sectors, the Menominee Gardening Coalition has overcome barriers to increase the community's access to fruits and vegetables.

What is the primary strategy?

To plant gardens in a variety of settings, including schools, worksites, hospitals, childcare centers, community plots, and private yards, that can benefit a wide range of community members by increasing their access to fresh produce.

How To Start

- ❑ Recruit champions in the community to engage and organize the effort
- ❑ Choose your desired setting (e.g., childcare, school, worksite, or community)
- ❑ Find a place to plant (e.g., vacant lots, school grounds, community parks, farmland, or yards)
- ❑ Design your garden (e.g., raised beds, container, conventional with rows, or square-foot)
- ❑ Figure out which plants will grow best in your climate
- ❑ Discuss how harvested produce will be distributed and to whom
- ❑ Get seeds and tools to prepare the soil and, if necessary, establish standards for sharing equipment
- ❑ Recruit individuals to plant and take care of crops
- ❑ Harvest and distribute produce

Things to Consider When Getting Started

- Necessary tools: rake, garden hoe, shovel, etc.
- Garden layout
- Care of garden plants (e.g., sun, water, pest protection)
- Amount of sun the site receives (aim for at least six hours each day)
- Accessibility of a nearby and adequate water source that you have permission and funds to use
- Organized schedule for watering and crop care
- Soil testing for lead and other contaminants

Secondary Strategies to Expand Your Reach

- Gain access to compost or other organic matter
- Incorporate gardens into science and nutrition curriculum for students
- Serve harvested produce to students at lunch and/or snacks
- Donate harvested produce to food banks or pantries
- Start a CSA or market stand with produce from the garden

Possible Partners

- Master Gardeners (Wisconsin State Master Gardener Association)
- Justice sanctions/community service organizations
- Local UW-Extension offices
- Schools
- Hospitals
- Faith-based facilities
- Childcare centers
- Hunger/Food security coalitions
- Worksites
- Food pantries
- 4H groups
- After-school and summer youth programs

Funding

National Gardening Association

Grants for school and youth gardens

www.kidsgardening.com

Fiskars Project Orange Thumb

Grants and garden makeovers www2.fiskars.com/Activities/Project-Orange-Thumb

General Mills' Champions for Healthy Kids

www.generalmills.com/Responsibility/Community_Engagement/Grants/Champions_for_healthy_kids.aspx

Katie's Krops

Grants for kids to start gardens to feed people in need

www.katieskrops.com

Complementary Practices

- Research opportunities for community gardens through community block grants, land trusts, leases, eminent domains, and allied policy initiatives
- Consider incorporating urban agriculture and gardens into land-use plans and zoning ordinances
- Encourage all new affordable housing units to include designated space for residents to garden
- Include the use of gardens in school and worksite wellness policies

Implementation Resources

Got Dirt? Garden Toolkit

Basic steps to start a garden, examples, and resources www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/pdf_files/GotDirt_09.pdf

National Gardening Association

Array of gardening content for consumers and educators www.garden.org

Ground Rules: A Legal Toolkit for Community Gardens

www.nplanonline.org/nplan/products/CommunityGardenToolkit

Kids Gardening

Comprehensive guide for starting school gardens www.kidsgardening.org

UW-Extension Gardening Resources

www.uwex.edu/ces/ag/teams/hort

What's Right for Young Children II – Childcare Gardens

Resources to improve childcare nutrition environments

www.dpi.wi.gov/fscp/pdf/ne-garden-bk.pdf

Got Veggies? A Youth Garden-Based Nutrition Education Curriculum

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/pdf_files/GotVeggies.pdf

Community GroundWorks Curricula, Guides, and Manuals www.troygardens.org/resources/publications/curricula

> "The staff and parents have all seen how fruitful and fun 'building' a garden can be."
>
> — Bruce Trimble,
> Former Director of a local
> Wisconsin Boys and Girls Club

REMINDER! The food system is much broader than this strategy alone and so is your impact! Determine your impact by reviewing the "Summarizing Your Findings" section for evaluation ideas.

Additional Resources

The CDC Guide to Fruit & Vegetable Strategies to Increase Access, Availability, and Consumption
Evidence supporting fruit and vegetable strategies, program examples, and initial action steps
www.cdph.ca.gov/SiteCollectionDocuments/StratstoIncreaseFruitVegConsumption.pdf

Fruits and Veggies — More Matters™
Resources and tools for promoting fruit and vegetable consumption
www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org
www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Support at the local, state, and federal level to improve public policies and community nutrition environments
www.rwjf.org/childhoodobesity/index.jsp

Improving Access to Healthy Foods – A Guide for Policy-Makers
www.rwjf.org/files/research/accesshealthyfoodslhc2007.pdf

Making the Connection: Linking Policies that Prevent Hunger and Childhood Obesity
www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org

National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity
Document library provides fact sheets, webinars, templates, etc.
www.nplanonline.org

Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity
Connections between science and public policy, developing targeted research
www.yaleruddcenter.org

CDC Community Food Assessment Resource Page
Information on tools and articles related to the food environment
www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/healthyfood/community_assessment.htm

CDC State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, 2009
www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/downloads/StateIndicatorReport2009.pdf

PolicyLink
Webinars and resources to improve access to healthy foods
www.policylink.org

Opportunities for Improving Access to Healthy Foods in Washington
www. depts.washington.edu/waaction/tools/featured_resources/access_report.html

Acknowledgements

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