



# BUILDING COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY

~

## *Lessons from Community Food Projects, 1999-2003*

Kami Pothukuchi, Ph.D., *Author*  
Kai Siedenburg, *Editor*  
Jeanette Abi-Nader, *Project Coordinator*

October 2007





# BUILDING COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY: LESSONS FROM COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS, 1999-2003

Author: Kami Pothukuchi, Ph.D.

Editor: Kai Siedenburg

Project Coordinator: Jeanette Abi-Nader

October 2007

Community Food Security Coalition

P.O. Box 209, Venice, CA 90294

(310) 822-5410

<http://www.foodsecurity.org>

# SPECIAL THANKS

The Community Food Security Coalition would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the CSREES Community Food Projects Program for their ongoing support of Community Food Projects. This report would not have been possible without financial and data support from the Program. Additionally, we send a special thanks to Tammy Morales (research intern for this study), Community Food Projects grantee representatives who shared their insights and experiences in the research, and reviewers of an earlier draft, whose thoughtful feedback helped to strengthen this report.

Thank you to the following individuals who contributed images for the cover:

*Girl holding a harvested tomato*, Submitted by Doug Wubben, **Wisconsin Homegrown Lunch**, Madison, WI, [www.reapfoodgroup.org/farmtoschool](http://www.reapfoodgroup.org/farmtoschool)

*Community volunteer building a strawbale greenhouse*, Submitted by Diane Picard, **Massachusetts Avenue Project**, Buffalo, NY, [www.mass-ave.org](http://www.mass-ave.org)

*City Seeds Urban Farm near downtown St. Louis*, Photo by Julie Thomas, **Gateway Greening**, St. Louis, MO [www.gatewaygreening.org](http://www.gatewaygreening.org)

*Youth gardeners in the Growing Green program*, Submitted by Diane Picard, **Massachusetts Avenue Project**, Buffalo, NY, [www.mass-ave.org](http://www.mass-ave.org)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acronyms Used in the Report	ii
Preface	iii
Key Characteristics of Successful Community Food Projects	v
Introduction	1
Section I: The Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program	5
Section II: Community Food Security and the Community Food Projects Program	7
Section III: CFP Activities: Results from Community Food Projects in 1999-2003	13
Section IV: Successes and Challenges: Lessons from Community Food Projects	21
Section V: Recommendations	33
References	38
Appendices	39
Credits	53

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Community Food Security Elements in the Community Food Projects Program	10
Table 2: Organizational Type Represented by CFPs Studied	14
Table 3: Food Sector Activities Implemented by CFPs Studied	15
Table 4: Study CFP Activities' Links to Community Sectors	16
Table 5: How Community Food Projects Deliver Community Food Security and Limits They Face	18

## LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Research Methods	39
Appendix B: Coding Table for Community Food Projects (Glossary)	43
Appendix C: Focus Group Instrument	48
Appendix D: Focus Group Participant Description	51

# ACRONYMS USED IN THE REPORT

CFP or CFPs	A Community Food Project or Community Food Projects, also referred to in the text as “projects”
CFPCGP or CFP Program	Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program
CFS	Community Food Security
CFSC	Community Food Security Coalition
COTF	Common Output Tracking Form (an instrument to collect information from Community Food Projects in consistent ways)
CSREES	Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, an agency within the United States Department of Agriculture
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
EBT	Electronic Benefits Transfer (a system that replaced paper Food Stamps-benefits are provided through a debit-type card)
FMNP	Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
RFA	Request for Applications
SFMNP	Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
T&TA	Training and Technical Assistance
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WIC	Women, Infants and Children (Supplemental Nutrition Program)
WHY	World Hunger Year

# PREFACE

Community Food Projects implement creative and dynamic programs that strengthen their communities and build their food systems. Over the past 10 years, the impact of the more than 240 projects funded by the USDA Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program has been impressive. This report was initiated out of an interest in articulating the successes and challenges of these projects and the factors that affect them, so that future Community Food Projects can benefit from these lessons.

Initiated as part of a Community Food Projects Training and Technical Assistance grant focused on evaluation, this research is one of the first attempts at summarizing Community Food Project activities and results across programs. It complements the Common Output Tracking Form (COTF), implemented in 2005 to track outputs across CFPs, and adds breadth and depth to this numerical data.<sup>1</sup>

The research for this project was directed by Dr. Kami Pothukuchi with support from a research intern, Tammy Morales. The project was managed by Jeanette Abi-Nader, the Evaluation Program Manager for the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC). Dr. Pothukuchi also authored this paper and worked with Jeanette Abi-Nader and Kai Siedenburg of CFSC on editing. The graphic design was done by Rebecca Mann and coordinated by Aleta Dunn of CFSC.

The research conducted on five years of past Community Food Project (CFP) grant report summaries and on related literature was truly brought to life in our two focus group interviews with seven experienced Community Food Project grantees. Although the focus group was small, it included diverse projects and types of organizations. Their stories helped provide a deeper understanding of the factors contributing to Community Food Project successes and struggles.

In addition to providing extensive information regarding Community Food Projects and the intersection of CFP work and community food security principles, this report also highlights the key factors that were identified as contributing to a successful CFP. On the next page, we have highlighted eight characteristics of successful Community Food Projects, which are further explained in Section IV. These characteristics are not an exhaustive list and not every successful CFP would necessarily demonstrate all characteristics. Instead, they offer a snapshot of the characteristics we found common among the projects we studied.

We wish to congratulate the Community Food Projects Program staff for their dedication and innovation toward creating a more just and healthful food system.

*Jeanette Abi-Nader, CFSC Evaluation Program Manager*

---

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the COTF, go to [http://www.foodsecurity.org/LINK\\_E\\_Toolkit\\_COTF.pdf](http://www.foodsecurity.org/LINK_E_Toolkit_COTF.pdf)



# KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS

They show progress in meeting particular community food needs.

They are able to “hit the ground running”.

They gain community buy-in and support of activities.

They adapt effectively to changing and unforeseen conditions.

They are able to build and strengthen effective community-based networks.

They develop innovative, multi-sector approaches.

They build community food leadership.

They are able to sustain selected activities after the grant ends.

Note: Refer to Section IV: Successes and Challenges: Lessons from Community Food Projects, for more details on each of these key characteristics.



# INTRODUCTION

Across the country, people are working in their communities to increase the availability of healthy, locally grown food for their fellow residents. Some are helping small farmers successfully market their products in underserved areas, while others are engaging urban youth in growing vegetables or learning how to prepare healthy foods. Yet others are adding fresh fruits and vegetables to the food boxes that low-income families can obtain from local food pantries. Many are developing community food assessments to document their area's food resources and needs so as to help develop local policies to increase food security and strengthen the local economy.

These efforts can be found in inner city and rural communities, and they span geographic scales from a neighborhood block to an entire region. They typically involve partnerships with public, private, and nonprofit agencies, and deliver community goals in health, economic development, sustainability, and social justice. These initiatives are supported by many different sources, including governments, foundations, private businesses, and committed individuals who volunteer their time and skills.

This report focuses on a particular group of community-based food initiatives: those funded by the Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This Program has been a major funding source for community-based food and agriculture projects in the country over the last ten years. Community Food Projects (or CFPs) have developed and honed practices to strengthen local food systems by linking local producers and consumers, improving access to nutritious foods, and fostering self-reliance. In sharing these practices and other experiences at national conferences and local meetings, CFP participants also have helped grow a national movement in community food security.

This report documents some of these experiences and the lessons learned from them.

Based on an analysis of five years of CFP grantee report summaries, this research report provides basic information on Community Food Projects, their activities, and key factors that explain their successes and challenges. Although greatly diverse, Community Food Projects generally share a few core objectives. These include meeting the food needs of low-income populations; linking local producers and consumers in entrepreneurial relationships; increasing the food self-reliance of communities; and providing comprehensive solutions to food, agriculture, and nutrition-related problems. These objectives overlap with community food security goals, which seek food systems that promote health, sustainability, local self-reliance, and social justice. Hence, this report also looks at ways in which Community Food Projects are able to deliver community food security and the constraints they face.

Community food security (CFS) is a relatively new and evolving field, and there is not yet one broadly accepted definition of the term. The following is one that is widely used by practitioners:

Community food security is defined as a situation in which all community residents have access to a safe, culturally acceptable, and nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice (Hamm and Bellows 2002).

Looking at Community Food Projects through a community food security lens is useful for at least two reasons. First, the Community Food Security Coalition and the emerging CFS movement played a key role in the creation of the Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program. Because of

this, there is a great deal of overlap between the CFP Program objectives and community food security concepts and practices. Second, Community Food Projects are a key source of illustrations, models, and inspiration in community food security discussions and practice.

This report is a summary of research that sought to answer the following questions:

- Who leads, participates in, and is served by Community Food Projects (CFPs)?
- What types of food system and community change activities are typically offered by CFPs?
- In what ways do CFPs contribute to community food security and what constraints exist to their contributions to community food security?
- What factors underlie successes in CFPs and what challenges do CFPs typically face?
- What are some broad lessons derived from CFP practice?

Over the decade of the CFP Program's existence, some of these issues have been informally discussed at conference sessions and on electronic listservs by CFP grant recipients, program supporters, and community food security advocates. Reports that have profiled CFP projects also explore some of these issues (for example, World Hunger Year, no date; Community Food Projects 10th Anniversary Production Team, 2007; and Tauber and Fisher, 2002).

In 2005, a reporting system called the Common Output Tracking Form (COTF) was instituted to systematically gather data on outputs across CFPs. However, to date there has not been a comprehensive attempt to review the accomplishments of CFPs and draw lessons from those data. This report partly addresses that gap by analyzing and reporting on results from 42 CFP projects.

The research for this report was undertaken in 2006. It is based on a content analysis of project report summaries submitted by organizations funded by the CFP Program, as well as a focus group of representatives of diverse projects conducted over two sessions. (For more information on how the project report summaries and focus group discussions were obtained, see Appendix A: Research Methods.) The 42 projects span those awarded from 1999 to 2003 and completed by 2005. They constitute 17 percent of the total projects funded by fiscal 2006. The research also is informed by the author's active involvement in the CFP Program as a reviewer of multiple rounds of applications, and as a provider of technical assistance to prospective applicants in other years. The author is an active participant in the community food security movement, as a two-term board member of the Community Food Security Coalition and a volunteer with local efforts in the Detroit area and elsewhere.

This report is aimed at audiences involved in the national community food security movement: those currently or previously associated with the Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program (including grantees, administrators, and applicants), and sponsors, supporters, and students of community food security initiatives in general. We hope that this report will help community groups leading food projects to learn from the experiences of others, and to plan and act more effectively to reinforce successes and overcome challenges. We also hope that it will contribute to broader discussions about how to: enhance community food security, increase the scale of activities and impacts across food sectors and communities, and embrace communities currently underserved by the Community Food Projects program.

The report is organized in five major sections after this initial introduction. They include:

- I. **The Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program** – provides a brief overview of the CFP Program and its key objectives and requirements.
- II. **Community Food Security and the CFP Program** – elaborates on key principles of community food security as embraced by practitioners, and examines which CFS principles are integrated into the CFP Program.
- III. **CFP Activities** – describes findings from summary reports of CFP grantees funded between 1999-2003 and includes types of activities, sponsor organizations, and links to other community food system sectors.
- IV. **Successes and Challenges** – highlights successes and challenges faced by Community Food Projects, and factors that may explain them.
- V. **Recommendations** – identifies broad lessons for community food security practice and presents recommendations that emerge from this analysis.

These are followed by four appendices that contain details about the research methods and their strengths and limitations.



# Section I:

## The Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program



The Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program was established in the 1996 Farm Bill. In the past 10 years, it has provided 243 grants to non-profit organizations in 45 states, the District of Columbia, and one U.S. territory. These grants, ranging in size from \$10,400 to \$300,000, have made healthy food more available in low-income communities; enabled youth and adults alike to gain skills in food production and marketing; supported the development of local jobs and food-related businesses; and developed a host of innovative approaches to problems linking food, agriculture, and nutrition. The CFP Program is rightly seen as a flagship resource for the growing community food security movement.

The CFP Program was initially funded at \$2.5 million per year, with the first year receiving only \$1 million. The initial funding was doubled to \$5 million in the 2002 Farm Bill. The designation of the program's funding as mandatory in both Farm Bills has made it a consistent and steady source of support for Community Food Projects since its inception.<sup>1</sup>

The program's authorizing language, objectives, and application requirements, along with examples of successful proposals, can all be found at [www.foodsecurity.org/funding](http://www.foodsecurity.org/funding).

According to the CFP Request for Applications, Community Food Projects should be designed to:

1. Meet the food needs of low-income people;
2. Increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs; and
3. Promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues; and/or

4. Meet specific state, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for
  - a. infrastructure improvement and development;
  - b. planning for long-term solutions; or
  - c. the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers.

The program gives preference to CFPs designed to:

1. Develop connections between two or more sectors of the food system, such as production and distribution;
2. Support the development of entrepreneurial projects;
3. Develop innovative connections between the for-profit and nonprofit food sectors; or
4. Encourage long-term planning activities and multi-system, interagency approaches with collaborations from multiple stakeholders that build the long-term capacity of communities to address the food and agricultural problems of the community, such as food policy councils and food planning associations.

In addition to community-based food projects, the CFP Program supports two additional categories of projects: training and technical assistance (T&TA) and planning projects. T&TA Projects have national or regional relevance, and provide assistance to potential CFP grant applicants or support current

---

<sup>1</sup> As this report goes to press, the future funding status of the CFP Program is unclear, since Farm Bill deliberations are still underway. The House version of the bill authorizes funding of \$30 million a year, but with no mandatory funding, which means the actual funding allocated for the CFP program could be considerably less. The Senate version of the Farm Bill is yet to be introduced. Advocates are working for inclusion of mandatory funding for CFP at a level higher than the \$5 million level it has received since 2002.

CFP grantees with operating their projects. Examples of T&TA services offered may include project evaluation, leadership development, or assistance on a particular type of project, such as farm-to-institution methods. The purpose of a Planning Project is to complete an assessment and to plan activities toward the improvement of community food security in a defined community.

Although only non-profit organizations are qualified to apply for CFP funds, the program strongly encourages collaborations with public and for-profit entities to foster long-term and sustainable solutions. Thus, to summarize, the program emphasizes two

inter-connected strategies to better link communities and food systems:

- a) Strategies that meet the food needs of low-income communities in ways that also benefit local producers. The CFP Program recognizes that to be sustainable, these strategies need to involve entrepreneurship and appropriate physical infrastructure.
- b) Strategies that build communities' capacity to solve problems associated with local food systems, agriculture, and nutrition. To be comprehensive and systemic, strategies need to involve public and private sector stakeholders and actively engage community residents.

## HOW THE COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM CAME TO BE

In July 1995, Texas Representative Eligio “Kika” de la Garza introduced the Community Food Security Act of 1995, the bill that would later fund the Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program. He was initially joined by 17 Congressional co-sponsors, a bipartisan group that grew to 33 as deliberations continued. This group included Bill Emerson of Missouri, then chair of the House Committee on Agriculture's subcommittee on Department Operations, Nutrition and Foreign Agriculture.

At the time of the bill's introduction, Representative de la Garza said “The concept of community food security is a comprehensive strategy for feeding hungry people, one that incorporates the participation of the community and encourages a greater role for the entire food system.” One important role for the food system, as envisioned in the proposed legislation, was to provide low-income populations with fresh and healthy food from local farms.

How did this bill come to be introduced by Representative de la Garza? In 1995, the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) had just formed. Among its founders were Mark Winne, Bob Gottlieb, Hugh Joseph, Kate Fitzgerald, and Andy Fisher. At their first meeting in Chicago in August 1994, these and other CFSC leaders laid out a plan for a new alliance of food, farming, and hunger activists, with a policy agenda for the Farm Bill as its first course of action. The upcoming Farm Bill provided an opportune moment for exploring federal policy options to advance community food security.

CFSC leaders were the primary authors of the Community Food Security Act, with the support of Julie Paradis, minority staff to the House Agriculture Committee. They recommended creating a funding program to support grassroots initiatives that would help small producers provide fresh food in low-income communities. These ideas were championed by their Congressional co-sponsors and supported by their colleagues, and the Community Food Security Act became law in 1996 as part of the Farm Bill. It provided \$2.5 million in annual mandatory spending, which was expanded to \$5 million in 2002 when the Farm Bill was reauthorized.

The CFP Program exists today largely thanks to the leadership exercised by the Community Food Security Coalition in developing the concept and advocating for federal funding. CFP Program administrators and community food advocates have continued to work closely over the years to ensure that the Program serves communities as effectively as possible.

## Section II: Community Food Security and the Community Food Projects Program



The community food security (CFS) concept was briefly highlighted in the introduction to this report, along with a definition that embraces many of the goals its practitioners share (Hamm and Bellows, 2002). This section delves a bit deeper into the concept, and examines the ways in which the CFP Program integrates community food security elements into its objectives and priorities. This helps illustrate how specific activities linking communities and food may get emphasized or downplayed in projects funded by this program.

In the 1990s, the community food security concept was devised as a framework for integrating solutions to the problems faced by poor households (such as hunger, limited access to healthy food, and obesity), and those faced by farmers (such as low farm-gate prices, pressures toward consolidation, and competition from overseas). Additionally, food advocates were becoming increasingly concerned about the unsustainable nature of the industrial food system as indicated by growing “food-miles;” the degradation of diverse natural and cultural heritages; and a com-

### EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY ACTIVITIES

- **Healthy food availability:** Increase the availability of healthy, locally produced foods, especially in impoverished and underserved neighborhoods, through food assistance programs, backyard and community gardens, grocery stores, farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture shares, food buying clubs, and other resources.
- **Healthy diets:** Encourage the adoption of healthy diets by providing culturally- and age-appropriate training and experiences for youth and adults in food production, preparation, and nutrition.
- **Nutrition program participation:** Enroll eligible residents in government nutrition programs such as food stamps, WIC (Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program), and the Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs.
- **Local food marketing:** Increase local markets for small and family-scale farms, including through direct marketing and purchases by local institutions and businesses.
- **Sustainable agriculture:** Support agricultural practices that protect air, water, soil, and habitats; promote biodiversity; reduce energy use; promote reuse and recycling; and treat animals humanely.
- **Food-related entrepreneurship:** Support on- and off-farm value-added and processing enterprises, especially smaller operations and those owned by women and minorities.
- **Farmworker conditions:** Promote safe and fair working conditions for farmers, farmworkers, and other food workers, such as those in processing plants and wholesale and retail operations.
- **Food heritages:** Honor and celebrate diverse food cultures and traditions in the community.
- **Local food system awareness:** Develop greater awareness and appreciation among residents of the value of local foods and food heritages to encourage more locally-based eating.
- **Integration of food in community processes:** Systematically integrate food system issues into community and regional planning and other community institutions and processes to promote public health, economic vitality, social equity, and ecological sustainability.
- **Food system participatory planning:** Engage community residents and organizations in collaboratively assessing food needs, and devising and implementing actions to meet needs.
- **Food democracy:** Increase residents' awareness of and voice in food-related decisions at different levels of government.

modity subsidy structure that floods markets with cheap, highly processed food while providing little support for the production of healthier foods.

The CFS definition therefore describes not only the qualities of the food that all community members should have, but also the characteristics of the systems and methods by which this food is made available. In other words, the CFS definition holds that:

- a) all community members should have regular access to safe, nutritious, affordable, and culturally appropriate diets, and that
- b) these diets should be products of food systems that promote local self-reliance, and are sustainable and socially just.

The accompanying sidebar on the previous page presents a concrete set of CFS activities that offer intermediate outcomes, such as increasing the adoption of healthy diets by youth, connecting local farmers with institutions that serve food, and obtaining widespread resident engagement in community food assessments. Most projects with a CFS orientation include multiple activities from this list, and have multiple positive impacts on their food systems and communities. Taken together and along with others, these types of activities can bring local places closer to attaining community food security.

However, translating CFS ideals into more systematic change actions can be challenging (Anderson and Cook, 1999). For one, we don't know all the steps that need to be taken to achieve CFS, nor do we have a clear picture of what a neighborhood or a region looks like that has fully realized CFS goals. Practically speaking, not every individual community food action can deliver *all* the desired elements of CFS. Indeed, some types of actions can be in tension with broader goals of CFS if they are not supplemented with other actions.

For example, in an effort to provide low-income residents with more fresh fruit and vegetables, commu-

nity garden groups may donate a portion of their harvest to local food pantries for distribution. This action allows needy households to consume more fresh produce and thereby eat more healthfully—an important goal of community food security. By itself, however, it may continue to foster dependence on food pantries. Such dependence works against household self-reliance in food, as well as systemic solutions to food insecurity—other important goals of CFS. Combining such a strategy with ones that enroll qualified households into nutrition programs (such as food stamps, Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs, WIC, etc.); training low-income youth to produce food for their families' consumption or for income-generation; and working with local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms to develop “sweat-equity” shares might help reduce the tension between short-term and more sustainable food security.

The community food security movement has shown that there are as many starting points to creating change as there are actors; that no single approach or set of activities will get us there; and that lasting change has to engage eaters in meaningful ways. Over the decade of its existence, the CFP Program has offered the resources with which to develop a set of activities to increase access to healthy foods in low-income communities, create benefits for small food producers, build related organizational and physical infrastructure, and engage community members and stakeholders in longer-term food planning. As described in the previous sidebar, these activities also are important to community food security outcomes. It is important, therefore, to ask to what extent and how the CFP Program reflects community food security goals and ideas. This comparison is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 compares the objectives of the CFP Program as summarized in its Request for Applications and related program guidelines. As the third column shows, many elements of the Community Food

Security concept are explicitly supported in the RFA language. Some, such as “reducing food-miles” are *implicitly* supported because they are closely related to other principles that are explicitly supported, such as activities that link community-based producers and consumers, which can reduce food-miles. Additional elements are implicitly supported when grants are awarded to projects that contain these elements. For example, as project applications from organizations serving First Nation or immigrant groups to support their community food systems are funded, the CFS element of “preserving diverse food cultures” is advanced.

Some important sustainability elements related to community food security, such as reducing energy consumption in food systems; reducing concentration and corporate control of food systems; reducing negative impacts of agricultural activities on water, soils, air, and habitat; and increasing biodiversity are absent in the RFA. They also tend to be less common in projects that end up being funded. This is also the case with some social justice elements of CFS, such as increasing wages of workers, improving the working conditions of farm and food workers, reducing and correcting other imbalances in the overall food system to benefit small-scale producers and low-income consumers. These activities understandably require more systemic approaches that target policy and market conditions rather than programmatic ones led by community nonprofits.

Thus Table 1 demonstrates that the CFP Program supports some CFS principles more rigorously than others. This is by no means a criticism of the program. Any program has to be defined based on the goals that drive it, existing resources that may support other desired goals, and practical constraints of time, geographic scale, and budgets. The CFP Program's goals are defined and circumscribed by the legislation that created it. The CFP Program has benefited numerous communities by supporting a

remarkably broad range of CFS principles, especially considering the small size of the program.

It is possible that as projects are implemented on the ground, they may deliver more CFS elements in practice. For example, a community garden project may result in more neighboring residents composting their food scraps and yard wastes. This activity would increase its contribution to environmental sustainability. It also is possible that some core CFP Program objectives (such as engaging residents in project planning and implementation, developing collaborative stakeholder processes, creating long-term solutions to food system problems, etc.) may be difficult to implement effectively within project funding and time limits. In such cases, Table 1 may overstate the presence of CFS elements in the CFP Program as implemented by specific projects.

Finally, the CFP Program is truly miniscule when compared to the Farm Bill's annual budget or those of major Farm Bill Programs such as Food Stamps. The CFP Program funds about twenty Community Food Projects annually, at around a couple of hundred thousand dollars each. As this report shows, CFPs make important contributions toward advancing CFS concepts and practice. For these contributions to reach many more communities, the CFP program may need to be orders of magnitude bigger than it is. As this report also shows, CFPs face systemic challenges in implementing elements of community food security. These challenges largely stem from the nature of the industrial food system and the policy structures that support it. These challenges also need to be addressed proactively to achieve greater community food security.

**TABLE 1:**  
**COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY ELEMENTS IN THE COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS PROGRAM**

Principles of CFS (derived from Hamm and Bellows, 2002) <sup>1</sup>	CFP Program Objectives (Language from CFP RFA)	Discussion of CFS Principles Supported in CFP Program
<p><b>Meet the Food Needs of All Households</b>            Elements may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase access to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate foods especially for low-income people</li> <li>• Increase knowledge and adoption of healthy diets among youth and adults</li> </ul>	<p>“Meet the food needs of low-income people”            “Promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues”</p>	<p>This principle of the CFS definition is strongly emphasized in the CFP Program. Access issues are more strongly emphasized than adoption of healthy diets.</p>
<p><b>Community focus</b>            A community focus provides an alternative to conventional approaches of the marketplace or government nutrition programs. It emphasizes values of mutual aid among neighbors, self-reliance in meeting needs, food as a lifeline rather than a commodity, and an ethic of care for the interconnectedness between social and natural systems. A community may be defined in terms of place and/or shared identity, interests, and goals. However, a defined place with geographic and political boundaries—a neighborhood, city or town or a region—is crucial for identifying and employing solutions.</p>	<p>Title: Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program. Program supports:            (1) the development of Community Food Projects. .            (2) ...Training and Technical Assistance on a nationwide or regional basis to entities interested in developing new Community Food Projects...;            (3) Planning Projects to assess the food security needs and plan long-term solutions to help ensure food security in communities.            “Promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues”            “Increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs”            “Participation by low-income residents in the proposed project design”</p>	<p>The thrust of the CFP Program is on local areas with successful proposals addressing issues at the neighborhood, citywide, and regional scales. Project objectives are defined in terms of “comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues;” local also is implied in the nature of applicants sought—community-based non-profits.            CFP Program has increasingly emphasized the importance of involving community members in project planning and implementation.</p>
<p><b>Build sustainable food systems</b>            Sustainability is a framework for acting in ways in which present generations are able to meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability usually combines social, economic and environmental goals. Sustainable food systems may include elements such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen local food systems through increased linkages between production, processing, distribution, consumption, and recycling of wastes, including related infrastructure</li> <li>• Reduce concentration, corporate control in food</li> </ul>	<p>“Meet specific state, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for:            –infrastructure improvement and development            –planning for long-term solutions            –creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers”            “Develop connections between two or more sectors of the food system, such as production and distribution”            “Develop innovative connections between the for-profit and nonprofit food sectors”            “Encourage long-term planning activities and multi-system, interagency approaches with collaborations from</p>	<p>CFS “sustainability” elements that receive <b>explicit</b> emphasis in CFP Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen local food systems...</li> <li>• Develop food entrepreneurship; improve farmer livelihoods</li> <li>• Increase collaboration among food system and community stakeholders...</li> <li>• Engage residents in local food system planning over the long term...</li> </ul> <p>Types of elements that receive <b>implicit</b> support in CFP Program:<sup>2</sup></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>systems, marketing of unhealthy foods to children</li> <li>• Reduce “food miles” and energy use in all aspects of food systems</li> <li>• Develop agriculture practices (and diets) that reduce negative impacts on water, soil, air, and habitats, and that conserve biodiversity</li> <li>• Preserve diverse food cultures</li> <li>• Increase collaboration among food system and community stakeholders, including public and private sectors</li> <li>• Engage residents in local food system planning over the long term and in related decisions at other levels</li> </ul>	<p>multiple stakeholders that build the long-term capacity of communities to address the food and agricultural problems of the community, such as food policy councils and food planning associations”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce “food miles”</li> <li>• Increase food worker wages and improve working conditions</li> <li>• Preserve diverse food cultures</li> </ul> <p>Types of elements that tend to receive minimal support in Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce concentration, corporate control in food systems, marketing of processed foods to children</li> <li>• Reduce energy use</li> <li>• Develop agriculture practices (and diets) that reduce negative impacts on water, soil, air, and habitats and conserve biodiversity</li> <li>• Preserve biodiversity</li> <li>• Reduce ecological impacts of diets...</li> </ul>
<p><b>Increase self-reliance of individuals, households, neighborhoods, communities and regions in food systems</b> This may include elements such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance capacity to consume healthy foods by individuals and households</li> <li>• Strengthen local (neighborhood, community, regional) food systems</li> <li>• Increase public awareness, appreciation, and consumption of local foods</li> <li>• Increase collaboration among food system and community stakeholders, including public and private sectors</li> <li>• Engage residents in local food system planning/policy development over the long term</li> <li>• Advocate for federal and state policies to support local food systems</li> <li>• Pressure market structures to internalize health, environmental and social costs in the cost of foods; end marketing of unhealthy foods to children</li> </ul>	<p>“Increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs” “Meet specific state, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for: –infrastructure improvement and development –planning for long-term solutions –the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers” “Promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues” “Develop connections between two or more sectors of the food system, such as production and distribution” “Develop innovative connections between the for-profit and nonprofit food sectors” “Encourage long-term planning activities and multi-system, interagency approaches with collaborations from multiple stakeholders that build the long-term capacity of communities to address the food and agricultural problems of the community, such as food policy councils and food planning associations”</p>	<p>CFS elements that receive <b>explicit</b> emphasis in CFP Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen local (neighborhood, community, regional) food systems</li> <li>• Increase collaboration among food system and community stakeholders...</li> <li>• Engage residents in local food system planning/policy development...<sup>3</sup></li> </ul> <p>Types of CFS elements that receive <b>implicit</b> support in CFP Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance capacity to consume healthy foods by individuals and households<sup>4</sup></li> <li>• Increase public awareness, appreciation, consumption of local foods</li> <li>• Advocate for federal and state policies to local food systems<sup>5</sup></li> </ul> <p>Types of CFS elements that tend to receive minimal support in the Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pressure corporations and market structures to internalize health, environmental and social costs in the cost of foods; end marketing of unhealthy foods to children</li> </ul>

TABLE 1:  
COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY ELEMENTS IN THE COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS PROGRAM CONTINUED

Principles of CFS (derived from Hamm and Bellows, 2002) <sup>1</sup>	CFP Program Objectives (Language from CFP RFA)	Discussion of CFS Principles Supported in CFP Program
<p><b>Increase social justice in food systems</b> This may include elements such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase access to healthy foods for all, regardless of ability to pay, in ways that promote dignity and self-reliance</li> <li>• Develop food entrepreneurship and businesses, especially among women and minorities; improve farmer livelihoods</li> <li>• Increase food worker wages and improve working conditions</li> <li>• Reduce discrimination by gender, race/ethnicity, and immigrant status in food systems</li> <li>• Respect diverse food cultures</li> <li>• Conserve ecosystems that allow diverse food cultures to thrive</li> <li>• Strengthen local (neighborhood, community, regional) food systems</li> <li>• Build sustainable food systems</li> <li>• Engage residents in local food system planning over the long term</li> <li>• Advocate for federal and state policies to support local food systems</li> <li>• Pressure market structures to internalize health, environmental and social costs in the cost of foods; end marketing of unhealthy foods to children</li> </ul>	<p>“Increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs” “Meet specific state, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for: –infrastructure improvement and development –planning for long-term solutions –the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers” “Support the development of entrepreneurial projects” “Encourage long-term planning activities and multi-system, interagency approaches with collaborations from multiple stakeholders that build the long-term capacity of communities to address the food and agricultural problems of the community, such as food policy councils and food planning associations” “Develop innovative connections between the for-profit and nonprofit food sectors” “Participation by low-income residents in the proposed project design”</p>	<p>CFS elements that receive <b>explicit</b> emphasis in CFP Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase access to healthy foods for all...</li> <li>• Develop food entrepreneurship...</li> <li>• Strengthen local (neighborhood, community, regional) food systems</li> <li>• Engage residents in local food system planning...<sup>3</sup></li> </ul> <p>Types of CFS elements that receive <b>implicit</b> support in CFP Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect diverse food cultures</li> <li>• Conserve ecosystems that allow diverse food cultures to thrive</li> <li>• Build sustainable food systems</li> </ul> <p>Types of CFS elements that tend to receive minimal support in the Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase food worker wages...</li> <li>• Reduce discrimination by gender, race/ethnicity, and immigrant status in food systems</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Community food security is defined as a situation in which all community residents have access to a safe, culturally acceptable, and nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice (Hamm and Bellows, 2002). Under each principle, several elements are described as a way to help identify activities supported by the principle. This listing is meant to be illustrative rather than exhaustive. Therefore, the third column needs to be read as the kinds of activities that are explicitly or implicitly supported by the CFP Program.

<sup>2</sup> Although this element may not be explicitly supported by program language, it is advanced in program administration. For example, many applications from Native American communities and immigrant communities that emphasize native foods have received funding. In this way, activities to preserve and celebrate diverse food cultures are supported, even if this element is not explicitly recognized in the CFP RFA.

<sup>3</sup> The RFA explicitly asks for the participation of low-income residents in project planning and proposal design. It also states that “proposals should emphasize a food system and/or food security approach and show evidence of information sharing, coalition building, and substantial outreach to and involvement of the community.” However, this study found that in practice, few projects are able to engage low-income residents who may also receive services, in systematic and meaningful ways. The same is the case with the need for projects to achieve sustainability through a one-time infusion of CFP funds.

<sup>4</sup> Although nutrition is a key goal of the CFP Program, in practice, it is achieved by supporting activities that a) meet “the food needs of low-income populations” through increased access to fresh vegetables and fruits; b) provide nutrition education in some proposals; and c) connect low-income residents to government nutrition programs in a handful of proposals. The RFA does not specify how nutrition objectives may be met in quite the same detail as improving access or linking production and consumption activities. The RFA therefore conveys the sense that nutrition is enhanced via improved access to fresh vegetables and fruits. Although improved access to fresh vegetables and fruits is indeed an important component of nutrition, many projects are able to do so only seasonally; furthermore, nutrition entails more than adding fruits and vegetables to one’s diet.

<sup>5</sup> Advocacy of local and state policies is supported by funding a few projects that have these elements. Strictly speaking, federal funds cannot be used for some advocacy functions that may be defined as lobbying.

# Section III: CFP Activities: Results from Community Food Projects in 1999-2003



The last section discussed community food security principles and the extent to which they are integrated into the CFP Program. This section provides more specific information about the projects funded by CFP, such as the types of organizations that lead projects, community food activities they collectively provide, and methods by which they sustain activities after the grant ends. It reflects data from summaries of grantee reports from 42 CFP Projects funded between 1999 and 2003. Note that these summaries may not include all the significant activities and elements of each project, so the numbers reported below may be lower than their actual frequency in projects in some cases. Appendix A discusses what the report summaries contain, how the analysis was done, and the strengths and weaknesses of the information offered by these summaries.

## COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS (1999-2003): BASIC STATISTICS

Community Food Projects funded between 1999 and 2003 represented a range of community food activities, including gardening involving urban youth, farmers' markets, new farmer training, and Native American food systems. They were from 27 states and the District of Columbia. Grant funds varied from a low of \$22,000 for three years to nearly the full amount of \$250,000 over three years. (Note: the maximum request for CFP was increased to \$300,000 in 2004). The types of organizations represented by grantees also varied widely (see Table 2 for details).

At least 15 projects served communities that were

predominantly African-American, Latino, Native American, or immigrant and refugee groups from around the world. Many others served communities with a mixed ethnic and racial make up. Although report summaries do not contain specific information on the extent to which low-income residents were served by individual CFPs, we believe that this number is high. Projects are required to provide benefits to low-income communities, and most are situated in these communities.

Each Community Food Project involved an average of 3.8 partner organizations, with one reporting as many as nine partners. Partners included public agencies, including city departments, university faculty, and county cooperative extension agencies; for-profit firms; and other nonprofit organizations.

## COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO FOOD SECTOR ACTIVITIES

Community Food Projects studied addressed a range of community food security activities, including farm and garden production for self-consumption and sales, processing, and distribution. They also implemented related training, education, and community outreach, and on occasion, policy development and planning. Some focused intensively on a select set of activities to meet local needs or fill gaps in a particular sector, while others sought to develop broader networks by creating linkages and related policy infrastructure. The vast majority of projects included small-scale food production for local sales, and related outreach, education, and training.

TABLE 2:  
ORGANIZATIONAL TYPE REPRESENTED BY CFPs STUDIED

Types of Organizations Hosting CFP Grantees	Number	Percent <sup>2</sup> of Total
<b>COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>26</b>	<b>65</b>
<i>Social service organizations</i> including community action agencies, food banks, and soup kitchens, or anti-hunger coalitions, including in Native American communities	13	33
<i>Urban agriculture</i> community-based organization	6	15
<i>Other</i> community-based organization, not easily categorized	3	7
<i>Community Development Corporations</i> , including Native American organizations	4	10
<b>OTHERS, INCLUDING REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>35</b>
<i>Regional organizations or coalitions</i> – regional farm, food, and/or rural development advocacy organizations or coalitions (including Native American organizations and regional food policy networks)	9	23
<i>National organizations or coalitions</i> – national food coalition/s & technical assistance provider/s	3	7
<i>Other</i> – foundation, environmental organization	2	5
<b>TOTAL ORGANIZATIONAL TYPES</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>1</sup> As much as possible this categorization is based on either self-identification or identification of a major activity for the organization from their report summaries; however, in some cases, this is a best guess based on the information available.

<sup>2</sup> Because of multiple grants to one applicant, numbers of organizational types do not add up to 42. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Less common activities in study CFPs included those related to food processing, culinary arts skill development, traditional foods, development of distribution logistics coordinating multiple producers and sales outlets, and brokering linkages between farms and institutions such as schools. Some of these activities are important for scaling up local food systems from limited production for direct sales, and need greater attention to resources such as warehouses and refrigeration; transportation networks and infrastructure; broader collaborations, including between private and public entities; and longer-term planning and implementation. Less common in CFPs studied were activities related to food assessments and policy development. These activities have seen more support in CFPs funded after 2003.

Forty-three percent of combined activities in projects included some form of organized knowledge building (this excludes community assessments and food policy councils, so the total including those activities

would be much higher). These include raising awareness of community members about local food issues, organizing educational events such as field trips, developing school and college curricula, training in activities such as food production or cooking, and providing technical assistance on specialized topics such as financial management for new farmers. See Table 3 for details on food sector activities implemented by Community Food Projects studied.

The distribution of activity types documents how CFP Program objectives are translated in practice. Although basic activities in food production and sales to meet food needs of low-income populations are significant CFP activities and a key CFP Program priority, those in skills training and raising public awareness also are important to building community capacity and comprehensive, long-term solutions. Hence most CFPs balance program objectives through a combination of production, direct marketing, and related educational strategies.

TABLE 3:  
FOOD SECTOR ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY CFPs STUDIED

Description of Activity Type	Number of Activity Types <sup>1</sup>	Percent of Total
<b>FOOD PRODUCTION</b>		
Food production including farm, backyard, schoolyard, etc.	42	14
Training related to food production	20	7
<b>FOOD PROCESSING</b>		
Processing of food into value-added products	15	5
Training related to food processing	12	4
<b>FOOD SALES</b>		
Sales, including through farmers' markets, CSAs, grocery stores, etc.; sales including distribution logistics (e.g., coordinating product from multiple growers and transportation)	63	21
Training related to sales	8	3
<b>OTHER KNOWLEDGE-BUILDING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Curriculum development or implementation (for all or some food system activities) for all levels	36	12
Food system related community awareness/educational events	31	10
Technical assistance on one or more food system activity	19	6
Food-related resource library or similar compilation	3	1
<b>OTHER FOOD-RELATED ACTIVITIES</b>		
Traditional foods promotion (including Native American foods)	9	3
Donation of food (including to low-income residents, food banks, meal programs, etc.)	16	5
Food system linkage brokering (e.g., building connections between producers and schools or local retail outlets, etc.)	16	5
Community Food Assessments	6	2
Community food policy development, advocacy, and planning	5	2
<b>TOTAL ACTIVITY TYPES</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Knowledge-building activities combined <sup>2</sup></b>	<b>129</b>	<b>43</b>

<sup>1</sup> Some projects have multiple activities in a single category such as production (e.g., school and community gardens) or sales (e.g., sales at farmers' markets and to restaurants), while some may have none in a particular category. Numbers relate to types of activities, not their magnitudes.

<sup>2</sup> This category includes training related to food production, food processing, and sales; curriculum development; awareness-raising activities; technical assistance; educational resource libraries. It does not include community food assessments and food policy councils, for which multiple and significant knowledge-building activities existed, but were not specified in report summaries. Indeed, the bulk of activities in community food assessments and food policy councils relate to obtaining, organizing, analyzing, and disseminating information.

# COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO OTHER COMMUNITY SECTORS

In addition to involving a variety of food system sectors, such as production, processing, and distribution, Community Food Projects also contribute to a variety of community sectors such as health, economy, and human services. This is true also of the mainstream industrial food system. It provides positive outcomes such jobs and an abundance of affordable food, as well as negative outcomes such as obesity, water pollution, and lower access to healthy food in low-income areas. The community food security approach strives to reduce these negative outcomes and to generate multiple, positive outcomes associated with community sectors such as health, economy,

land use, culture, and the environment. These are explored in this section and in Table 4.

CFPs studied contributed to community health/nutrition (via food marketing or food assistance activities) in at least 56 percent of activities-by far the most significant form of community linkage. Because entrepreneurial and market-based strategies are emphasized in the program, these are noted under the category of Market-based Activities in Table 4-they represent 50 percent of all activities. CFPs also contributed to other community sectors such as the local culture and the natural environment, although at much lower levels in the cases studied. This distribution of activities across different community sectors reflects the CFP Program's embrace of multiple approaches to meet the food needs of low-income populations. These include building community capacity; providing comprehensive

TABLE 4:  
STUDY CFP ACTIVITIES' LINKS TO COMMUNITY SECTORS

Description of Activity Type	Number of Activity Type	Percent of Total
<b>MARKET-BASED ACTIVITIES</b>		
Healthy food market-based access	31	25
Business incubation or development	14	11
Employment training and preparedness <sup>1</sup>	17	14
<b>SOCIAL SERVICES (IN NUTRITION)</b>		
Community nutrition enhancement (including consumption of garden produce, donation of healthy foods or snacks, food assistance, government program participation, nutrition education, etc.)	39	31
<b>OTHER COMMUNITY SECTORS</b>		
Youth leadership development	5	4
Cultural identity and pride	7	6
Environmental sustainability practices (includes specific activities such as recycling, composting, organic production, etc.)	7	6
Physical infrastructure development (includes greenhouse, grocery store, etc., but not garden sheds, beds, or other temporary structures)	4	3
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF ACTIVITY TYPES</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>1</sup> This activity includes working with paid trainees but not project staff.

sive and long-term solutions to local food, agriculture, and nutrition problems; and developing related physical infrastructure.

It must be noted that grantee report summaries tended not to identify benefits in categories unspecified by the CFP RFA. Therefore, it is highly likely that this study undercounts links in community sectors other than those emphasized by the CFP Program—e.g., meeting local food needs while promoting entrepreneurial food system solutions. For example, a community garden member may be able to eat more healthfully and also supplement her income through participation in the CFP. Additionally, she may also be able to broaden her knowledge about certain ethnic foods, socialize with neighbors, and get significant recreation benefits. Such additional benefits are typically not included in grantee reports, but nonetheless represent significant project impacts.

As mentioned in Section 2, the scale of individual CFP activities often is relatively small and direct

impacts are typically limited to the area in which funded projects are located. Taken together, however, the activities in Tables 3 and 4 paint a picture of closer and denser links between producers and consumers in these localities, increased awareness of local food systems, and greater integration of food systems into diverse aspects of community life.

In short, CFPs deliver community food security primarily through the impacts of specific activities to increase access to healthy and culturally appropriate food by low-income populations and to support local producers who enable this access. However, the CFP Program faces limits in terms of community food security issues addressed in projects, characteristics of applicants and grantees, and the ways in which CFPs can deliver long-term food security. These are discussed in Table 5. Many of these limits are a result of the broader economic and policy structures that shape the context of CFP work.

**TABLE 5:  
HOW COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS DELIVER COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY & LIMITS THEY FACE**

Principles of CFS (derived from Hamm and Bellows, 2002)	Examples of CFS as Implemented by CFP Projects (or How Individual CFPs May Enhance CFS)	Examples of Limits faced by Particular CFPs in Delivering CFS
Meet the Food Needs of All Households	<p>CFPs include activities that may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve low-income residents in small-scale food production for consumption or sales-this is the most common form of activity supported by CFP.</li> <li>• Increase the availability of healthy, locally produced foods especially in impoverished neighborhoods, through food assistance programs, backyard and community gardens, grocery stores and farm stands, community supported agriculture, or food buying clubs.</li> <li>• Encourage the adoption of healthy diets by providing culturally- and age-appropriate training to community youth and adults in food production, preparation, and nutrition.</li> <li>• Enroll eligible residents in government nutrition programs such as food stamps, WIC (Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program), and Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs.</li> <li>• Improve access to healthy foods through transportation assistance to consumers or producers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community food production requires prior planning, experience, land, and infrastructure; newer groups tend to face special challenges implementing activities.</li> <li>• Engaging low-income residents in production can be difficult. Adults may be time-stressed or disinclined toward gardening; youth participation may be constrained by school schedules, limited transportation, desire for paid summer employment, and other issues.</li> <li>• Projects involving non-English speakers and some ethnic groups require attention to language and culture in training and technical assistance, which some CFPs may be less able to provide.</li> <li>• Inadequate or insecure access to suitable land can limit core activities in food production or their sustainability.</li> <li>• Nutrition-related behavior changes (a focus of some CFPs) may be difficult to sustain unless neighborhoods and schools consistently offer fresh, healthy foods, and limit marketing of junk foods to youth.</li> <li>• CFPs offer activities at relatively small scales and limited time frames. Hence a particular project's impact in this category (in a neighborhood or city) can be small, without additional resources.</li> </ul>
Community Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFPs define community in a variety of ways, including around place, social or ethnic identity, interests, and values. Geographic boundaries of neighborhood, city or county, and region are important in CFP design.</li> <li>• CFPs typically connect local producers and consumers through community-based channels-food donations and informal sharing, farm stands, farmers' markets, grocery stores, CSAs, buying clubs.</li> <li>• CFPs create community stakeholder networks that may include residents, nonprofits, and public sector agencies that can develop long-term and multi-sectoral solutions.</li> <li>• Although a majority of CFPs involve community-based activities, some also connect food activities with state and federal policy development and advocacy.</li> <li>• Most CFPs seek to systematically integrate food into many aspects of community life (through links to land use, economy, health, culture, and environment).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many CFPs engage community and stakeholder participation in only limited ways due to lack of planning resources, narrow project focus, or limited community influence.</li> <li>• Managing community partnerships and collaborations can be challenged by divergent interests, diverse organizational cultures, confusion about goals and activities, lack of shared knowledge about community food security principles, and conflicts about resources and accountability. Implementing the logistics of collaboration can take significant effort and resources.</li> <li>• Community contexts also create competition for scarce resources, turf struggles, narrow organizational agendas, and racial and other tensions among residents and organizations. These dynamics can and do affect CFPs.</li> </ul>

<p>Build sustainable food systems</p>	<p>CFPs include activities that may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen local food systems through increased linkages between local production and consumption.</li> <li>• Increase food self-reliance within neighborhoods, cities or towns, and regions.</li> <li>• Develop food entrepreneurship and businesses; improve farmer livelihoods.</li> <li>• Reduce “food miles” by increasing locally oriented consumption.</li> <li>• Maintain and celebrate ethnic diversity of foods (in some cases).</li> <li>• Increase collaboration among food system and community stakeholders, including public and private sectors.</li> <li>• Engage residents in long-term food policy and planning at local levels, and in related policy advocacy at other levels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most CFPs involve direct producer-consumer linkages, with fewer involved in processing, wholesaling, or larger distribution networks. Their ability to strengthen local food systems is limited due to the small scale of individual projects. The lack of suitable infrastructure also leads CFPs to bootstrap, further limiting their sustainability.</li> <li>• Most CFPs provide services in nutrition, training, and outreach and education, in addition to production. Despite their significance, these services may take effort away from honing entrepreneurial solutions.</li> <li>• Maintaining sustainability of activities is difficult without broader structural supports from the community, market, and public policy. Only a small number of CFPs engage in creating supportive local and state policies.</li> <li>• See above cell for challenges faced by CFPs in engaging community residents and stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<p>Increase self-reliance of individuals, households, neighborhoods, communities and regions in food systems</p>	<p>CFPs seek to build self-reliance at multiple levels, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals, especially low-income adults and youth, and households—through education, training, and engagement in food production, preparation, and healthy eating.</li> <li>• Neighborhoods and communities.</li> <li>• Regions and states—through food policy and network development.</li> </ul> <p>Most CFPs also implement activities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen local (neighborhood, community, regional) food systems.</li> <li>• Increase public awareness, appreciation, and consumption of local foods.</li> <li>• Increase collaboration among food system and community stakeholders, including public and private sectors.</li> <li>• Engage residents in local food system planning/policy development over the long term.</li> <li>• Advocate for federal and state policies to support local food systems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gains in knowledge and capacity related to food production, preparation, and consumption for health can lead to greater self-reliance, but household food self-reliance is limited without ongoing access to land, grocery stores, and other resources that support healthy choices.</li> <li>• See note in above cell about limits CFPs face in strengthening local food systems.</li> <li>• See note in third cell above about challenges CFPs face in engaging community residents and stakeholders.</li> <li>• Many CFPs are offered by nonprofits with a service orientation, rather than one of community food self-reliance.</li> </ul>
<p>Increase social justice in food systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFPs may increase social justice in food systems by activities that:</li> <li>• Increase access to healthy foods for low-income households, in ways that promote dignity and self-reliance.</li> <li>• Develop food entrepreneurship and businesses, especially among people of color and in underserved areas; provide access to land and capital for immigrant and new farmers.</li> <li>• Maintain and celebrate ethnic diversity of foods (in some cases).</li> <li>• Strengthen local (neighborhood, community, regional) food systems.</li> <li>• Engage residents in local food system planning over the long term</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See notes in above cell about challenges to building neighborhood, community, and regional self-reliance in food.</li> <li>• Organizations serving communities of color may have limited influence with powerful community networks of public agencies, economic development officials, and political representatives.</li> <li>• See notes in first cell above about limited scope and scale of Program and individual projects. Projects have almost no ability to correct/change social inequities in current agri-food systems.</li> </ul>

TABLE 5:  
HOW COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS DELIVER COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY & LIMITS THEY FACE CONTINUED

<p>General notes about CFP Program's limits to delivering CFS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CFP Program is miniscule compared to the scale of resources required to meet the food needs of low-income populations, support small producers, strengthen local food systems, and develop local stakeholder approaches for food, agriculture, and nutrition problems. Despite a budget of nearly \$33 billion in 2006, for example, the food stamp program served only 65 percent of eligible participants and provided only 80 percent of the benefits they could receive. The CFP Program, by contrast, had a budget of only \$5 million in 2007.</li> <li>• Community Food Project outcomes are difficult to sustain without support from broader market and policy structures. Activities to increase access to fresh and healthy foods to low-income populations while providing decent livelihoods to small local producers are challenged by a food system that provides an abundant supply of cheap, highly processed food and massive advertising to promote unhealthy foods. This system is supported by taxpayer subsidies, most of which go to large commodity farms rather than small-scale producers of vegetables and fruits. However, this system also produces extensive costs related to health, ecological impacts, and energy consumption that are not reflected in the prices consumers pay.</li> <li>• Disparate and small, time-limited projects led by community-based nonprofits are limited in their ability to create sufficient capacity and momentum to support sustainable market alternatives.</li> <li>• Limited-resource organizations in poor communities and communities of color may be doing valuable work that meets CFP Program goals, but may not have the resources to plan projects and complete CFP application requirements. To that extent, these communities may be excluded by the CFP Program.</li> <li>• CFPs offer activities prioritized in the CFP Program and may exclude other important CFS-related links that are not CFP Program priorities (see Table 1, for example).</li> <li>• Policies are generally organized sectorally (such as health or economy). CFPs provide multi-sectoral benefits to communities. However, they are mostly small-scale and can create only minor changes in any given sector. For example, the actual magnitude of health benefits, economic impact, or sustainability effect derived from individual projects tends to be miniscule. Despite their importance for the populations impacted, these effects can be swept away if activities are not sustained, or brushed off as unimportant by policymakers seeking more dramatic impacts in any one sector.</li> <li>• “Scaling-up” has been identified as a key need for creating longer-term impacts of local food systems. Scaling up involves more complex activities in organizational and physical infrastructure development, specialized knowledge and skills, and access to capital from multiple sources. Organizations of the type that lead CFPs may lack needed resources or institutional connections to scale up. However, they may bring key community linkages to scaling up initiatives.</li> </ul>
---	--

## Section IV:

# Successes and Challenges: Lessons from Community Food Projects



Other than substantive objectives related to local food production and meeting the food needs of low-income populations, the CFP Program specifies numerous process-related objectives and priorities. These include community capacity building, collaborative stakeholder processes, multi-system and interagency approaches, and resident participation in addressing local food, agriculture, and nutrition issues. Sustaining activities and outcomes beyond the life of the project is another key program priority.

In trying to understand elements of successful practice that cut across projects of different types, this section explores the following questions related to project processes:

- What are the elements of successful CFP practice and what practice-related challenges do Community Food Projects encounter?
- How do CFPs manage to sustain activities after the grant ends?
- In what ways can project-level activities create systemic change?

In organizing focus group responses and grantee report findings related to these questions, it is difficult to separate features that *describe* successful projects and their outcomes from the elements that help *explain* successes. For example, strong partnerships have been identified as outcomes of successful projects as well as tools by which to create successful projects. Other similar categories include “shared knowledge of CFS principles and goals,” “community experience and readiness for local food system development,” “community food leadership,” and so on.

There are at least two explanations for this overlap between outcomes and facilitators of successful projects. One, CFPs are essentially community-based experiments in which individuals, organizations, and networks learn through multiple iterations in which practices are honed, resources are increased, and leadership is created. Thus, outputs of one round become inputs to the next one. Two, study CFPs involve organizations and communities at varying levels of knowledge, skills, experience, and network capacity as these relate to community food security practice. What may be an outcome for a new non-profit just starting out may be an important tool for another, more experienced organization to achieve more advanced objectives.

Both sets of responses are therefore combined below into one set of “key characteristics of successful community food projects.” Because of the diversity of objectives and activities undertaken by study projects, the responses to these questions are general and have to do with overall project or organizational factors or partnership-related factors that can be found across activities that may involve, say, community gardening, farmers' markets, or culinary training. Although the study had exceptional projects that could be considered successful even if they did not have all of the following characteristics, most successful projects contained the elements discussed in this section to a lesser or greater degree.

## KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS

### **Successful projects show progress in meeting particular community food needs.**

Successful CFPs are able to articulate to local and national audiences how their project helped create change in their areas by providing tangible resources, enhancing community knowledge, and increasing collaborative capacity to meet food needs of low-income populations. This goes beyond articulating how they satisfied the formal requirements of their grant. They are able to show the difference their project made to the place or population groups served with stories, images, and statistics that help distinguish “before” and “after” situations. They also are able to place their project, and its partnerships and activities, in a broader context of community and food system resources and needs. Therefore, successful CFPs are realistic about accomplishments and understand the limits and barriers they face.

Grantee report summaries suggest that experienced and better-resourced food organizations implement multiple, related projects—including CFP activities—in ways that build on each other. Thus, they are able to show more benefits as a result of these synergies. What is difficult to know is whether an organization's success in attracting additional funding proportionately increases its effectiveness at meeting community needs as articulated by the CFP Program.

### **Successful projects are able to “hit the ground running.”**

Successful CFPs have built the requisite base to prepare them to move forward with implementing proposed activities soon after the grant award. This usually means that there are experienced staff members on board; key partners have been lined up with

tentative agreements; there is a plan for recruiting project participants; and there is sufficient community buy-in about the need for the project and the approaches adopted. This aspect of community and organizational readiness is important because it can take quite a bit of time to develop these capacities. Project representatives who had these elements in place when the project started felt that the timing of the grant award was just right.

*“For us, probably two factors made our project successful. [The first were] the resources [that were already] in place. We had plenty of fields, a kitchen, groups that could be brought in to a group setting out to start the education process. [The] second thing, not quantifiable for reporting, a passionate staff ready to do what they needed to do. That's what made our project successful...”*

— Former CFP Grantee

The short timeline that projects have to deliver complex community food security objectives means that organizations with experience in the activities and collaborations that are proposed, and with resources to “hit the ground running” are ahead in being able to effectively deliver project objectives.

Unfortunately, some organizations have neither the prior network or resources and experience needed to start implementation activities in a timely fashion, nor to adapt to challenges that emerge because of inadequate planning. In one case, a CFP in a rural community sought to provide area youth with training in farming and nutrition; however, young people's need for transportation and paid summer employment, and lack of staff skilled in nutrition led to a considerable scaling back of program objectives. The addition of planning grants in the CFP Program may help such organizations anticipate problems and plan effectively.

### **Successful projects gain community buy-in and support of activities.**

Successful CFPs come out of community processes in which the needs to be addressed by the project, its approaches and strategies, and the specific roles of partners all have been deliberated upon in broad strokes if not in great detail. When the CFP application emerges from a community food assessment whose findings are shared and discussed within the larger community, this helps build community buy-in. This buy-in helps heighten visibility of the issues addressed, assures that key partners are at the table, and enables projects to move forward more effectively. In turn, successful projects are able to reinforce community buy-in and ownership as they provide information, resources, and relationships needed in the community. When a project is proposed by an existing network of organizations, the networks can serve as a useful, though limited, proxy for broader community buy-in.

Many prospective applicants have limited ability to build community buy-in prior to the implementation of a larger Community Food Project grant. The recent addition of a planning category in CFP may help such organizations submit effective proposals in the future.

### **Successful projects adapt effectively to changing and unforeseen conditions.**

During implementation, CFPs often confront barriers that were unforeseen or inadequately addressed during the planning stages. For example, project representatives discussed difficulties with recruitment of participants in income-generating activities related to food processing, low levels of awareness among partners of community food security principles that were being advanced in their project, resistance of neighbors to a proposed community garden, securing land for a new farmer project, and engagement of community members in a youth leadership training project. In one case, a local mayor's sustainability initiative provided an unanticipated resource that led

the project in a new direction that turned out to be quite productive. Successful CFPs are able to assess these challenges and resources in the community context, develop alternative strategies, and put them into action in a timely fashion. Such flexibility and adaptability require both leadership and capacity within organizations and networks, and a can-do attitude that persists in the face of short-term setbacks.

A three-year CFP timeline also allowed grantees and their partners to learn about what worked and what didn't, shift course, and develop more sophisticated practices. Participants credited the CFP Program administration in allowing a degree of flexibility in shifting project objectives to respond to unanticipated and emerging community conditions.

### **Successful projects are able to build and strengthen effective community-based networks.**

Many successful CFPs effectively create, use, and strengthen community networks over the course of their project. These networks represent different sectors of the area's food system and also link food sector actors with those in other community sectors. For example, networks may include nonprofits involved in food assistance, sustainable agriculture, health promotion, local food marketing, and community development; local public agencies in health, economic development, planning, and recreation; and more rarely, private sector organizations representing farmer, retailer, or food service vendor interests. Besides helping create buy-in and a sense of collective ownership, strong community-based networks contribute to other important characteristics of successful projects, such as adaptability and sustainability.

Strong networks are generally characterized by broadly shared goals, mutual respect and trust, and a shared knowledge base about the community context. They also have a capacity to work together to

plan and implement projects, and the ability to develop innovative approaches through a collective assessment of problems and assets. Networks help projects in practical ways by recruiting participants and resources, identifying opportunities, and developing complementary activities, thereby strengthening contributions of individual organizations. Networks, however, also can bring with them tensions, turf and resource conflicts, and differences in culture that can challenge project implementation. These are discussed in subsequent paragraphs highlighting challenges faced by CFPs.

*“Partnerships in our grant were definitely important. Especially unlikely partners, those were important... and we went after those... For example, the mayor’s office had launched an effort in sustainability; it was mostly about energy, but they were very interested in a participatory process. We worked with them, and educated them on food issues, and they set up the food policy council to do the food assessment and develop the action plan. Because they came in as a partner, everyone involved is very much a food activist, because they got so many opportunities [to participate] out of this project. Farmers, school district partners...we had a real variety of partners, that was a key part of our success. The things we did, we couldn’t have done individually. So, the buy-in, the momentum, the timing was right, the synergy of all that was happening [made the project] a big success.”*

– Former CFP Grantee

### **Successful projects develop innovative, multi-sector approaches.**

Successful projects often bring together players representing food or community sectors who may not have collaborated before the project, or bring them together in altogether new roles. In this study, food marketing efforts connected individual farmers and cafeteria vendors and managers; food policy councils engaged public and private agencies in health, economic development, sustainability, and planning; gardening projects presented youth as teachers and facilitators; and new farmer initiatives brought together farmland owners and immigrant workers in new relationships. These and other projects helped create new linkages among existing community sectors and brought new perspectives to old problems of food insecurity, low farm income, and neighborhood disadvantage.

Institutional support from local public agencies was particularly helpful for project implementation, through access to resources and assistance from agency staff, according to study participants. It also was important to sustaining activities at the end of the CFP grant, by helping attract additional funding and incorporating some project activities into the agency. Public agencies (such as departments of health and education and extension agencies) also provided linkages to other sectors of government, helped with long-term planning and policy, and leveraged involvement from other local organizations. Study participants pointed to the excitement generated by the innovative approaches of their projects, which engaged partners in novel ways. They also pointed to the depth of learning created by cross-sectoral interactions, and the “aha” nature of revelations that emerged as actions were implemented.

### **Successful projects build community food leadership.**

Successful projects help cultivate individual and organizational leaders, and community leadership

capacity around community food issues and activities. Projects help develop knowledge and experience around specific activities such as urban agriculture training, local policy adoption, farmers' market development, and linking local farmers with institutional markets, as well as broader organizational skills. As individuals and organizations meet needs and produce outcomes, they also become “go-to” sources in the community on particular issues, pass along their knowledge and skills to newcomers, and help bring more attention and resources to their activities. The development of community food leadership is a tangible indicator of building capacity to address community issues.

*The most successful effort that we ever did was to start public conversations about local farmland and start a Harvest Fest to get people on farms. This led to the creation of farmland preservation projects and funding that keeps growing because we built citizen leadership and eventually elected leaders who ran on the platform of saving farmland.*

– Former CFP Grantee

To the extent that such leaders continue to advance community food security issues, they can help advance the project's goals and perhaps sustain some the activities after CFP funding ends. Successful networks are able to cultivate a cadre of leaders who can work together, legitimately represent diverse sectors and constituencies, and be accountable to each other and the community. Food is a cross-cutting issue that links with multiple sectors in the community. One project leader in this study who initially got involved with urban agriculture and farmers' market projects, for example, has moved into local health policy and has been able to create broader impacts for her skills.

### **Successful projects are able to sustain selected activities after the grant ends.**

A successful CFP is able to develop a group's resource capacity and experience and put into place mechanisms to continue selected key activities beyond the timeline of the grant where appropriate. These mechanisms may involve successful additional fundraising, income-generating activities, continuing involvement of staff and volunteers, the integration of project activities into the partners' ongoing activities, and internal cross-subsidies that allow service-oriented components to be supported by entrepreneurial components. These are discussed in greater detail in a subsequent paragraph that lists sustainability mechanisms used by CFPs.

Few CFPs are able to sustain all project activities at high levels after the grant ends. The typical Community Food Project has many elements that are labor intensive, such as those related to food production, sales, training, etc. Many activities are service-oriented and do not generate income or become self-supporting in other ways. Low-income communities also have limited ability to pick up the costs of services provided by CFPs, and CFP organizations typically also lack surplus funds to continue activities on their own. Despite these broad challenges, successful CFPs effectively put in place measures during the grant period to help sustain selected activities beyond the life of the grant.

## **KEY CHALLENGES FACED BY COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS**

Study CFPs faced many challenges in implementing their projects. In some cases, these challenges represented the flip side of successes. For example, the partnerships, community-engagement, and multi-sectoral approaches that were reported as key to project success also posed many hurdles to groups.

Although we were interested primarily in challenges faced in the implementation of the project on the ground, participants took the opportunity to air frustrations with the CFP Program requirements. Sometimes these frustrations were integrally connected to the frustrations felt on the ground. Since these are significant to their assessment of challenges faced in the project, they are mentioned in a separate category below.

The CFP Program's requirements can be onerous to grassroots initiatives.

Project representatives identified many challenges in the CFP Program's application requirements that caused frustration and consumed a great deal of time and effort. Many of these requirements are statutory or required by CSREES, and therefore cannot be modified by program administrators. Others may be more amenable to changes in the program design; indeed, as this section shows, program administrators have modified some practices in recent grant cycles to address project representatives' concerns.

### **CFP application requires much background preparation.**

The CFP application process requires considerable prior investment of time and effort in establishing the case for the project, assembling partnerships, designing project activities collaboratively, and securing matching funds. Project match may include land for production, kitchen infrastructure for culinary training programs, or related space and equipment; these resources can be hard to secure in a short period of time. Organizations without significant prior experience in community food work, or with extremely limited resources may find it especially difficult to implement these steps prior to application. Furthermore, because of the competitive nature of the program, organizations are unsure if their extensive efforts to submit an application will pay off. Some organizations therefore decide not to re-apply after an initial rejection, or find themselves inade-

quately prepared to implement the grant if funded because of limited background planning and groundwork. The complexities of the application process also may discourage some organizations that may be worthy of support from even trying to apply.

### **Electronic submission requirement may keep some groups from applying.**

The CFP Program seeks to support initiatives that meet the food needs of low-income communities and support small producers and processors. These population groups and the organizations that serve them typically work at the grassroots level, and often are limited in their access to technology, specialized skills, and discretionary staff time to apply for funding. Requirements for electronic submission can be particularly difficult for groups with older computer equipment, and for limited-resource groups located in disadvantaged urban or rural areas. These barriers may exclude some groups that are well positioned to deliver program objectives in meeting food needs or connecting small producers with consumers.

### **The CFP requirement for innovative solutions can push applicants to over-promise.**

*“I believe we have to oversell, or promise too much to be able to attract funding. So we try to connect so many pieces to try to make it look [systemic].”*

– Former CFP Grantee

According to project representatives, the program's emphasis on innovation can push organizations to suggest projects that contain untested approaches or activities that may be beyond their capacity to deliver, or that patch together unconnected community food activities in an attempt to show multi-sectoral connections. For example, one project combined food policy council and farm to school activities in ways that stretched organizational resources because of the lack of immediate and ongoing synergies

between the two components. This project adopted two approaches that were innovative at the time of the grant. However, based on this experience, this project representative felt that they might have been better served if they had waited until the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches were better understood.

**The CFP requirement for sustainability following a one-time grant can make it hard to maintain successful activities that fulfill the program objectives.**

*No funder likes to pay for maintenance of projects, only start-ups and enhancements. It is almost impossible to create a self-sustaining aspect to a project in three years, especially since USDA doesn't specifically pay for activities that are mostly fund-raising.*

— Focus Group Participant

The 'one-time infusion of funds' guideline also makes it difficult to apply for additional CFP funding to maintain or expand project activities that have built a track record of success. Some CFPs, especially newer organizations, lack the track record or capacity to raise significant additional funding after only two or three years of project experience, and are therefore less able to sustain activities after the grant period. CFPs funded over multiple rounds have effectively created new projects that build on previous successes in ways that also are innovative. Their strategies and experiences may need to be shared with newer organizations via conferences and listservs that include CFP representatives.

**Partial CFP funding has created problems for partnerships.**

When grants are made at a significantly lower level than that requested, organizations have to rescale activities and renegotiate partnership arrangements. In this process, winners and losers emerge among partners, leading to disappointment and resentment even as the project is initiated. One participant reported that these changes were so painful that given the choice, she would have opted for not being funded at all. This issue has been addressed by program administrators in recent rounds of CFP awards, so that more grants are made at requested levels. This action demonstrates the program's responsiveness to concerns emerging from the grassroots.

**Having to show one-to-one match may exclude some organizations from the program.**

The requirement of documenting a one-to-one project match in the application also poses challenges for many groups seeking CFP funds, especially limited resource organizations. This may create a vicious cycle of exclusion from the CFP umbrella in some cases. Because some organizations may not own or are unable to secure firm commitments of land, infrastructure, and resources needed to implement activities, they can only ask for relatively low sums of money to match their lower resources, or may be discouraged from applying at all. Although the match requirement is often a reasonable indicator of capacity to deliver project objectives, it may effectively keep some otherwise qualified organizations from applying to the CFP Program. Perhaps a grant level could be set so that match requirements would disappear or be greatly reduced at or below that level. Such a grant category could benefit organizations that work at a smaller scale and seek only modest increments to existing activities.

## **Few CFPs have the resources and skills to implement broad-based community participation.**

*“We also, like many other CFP projects, did not do as much diligent surveying of all impacted communities from our projects, so we met with some resistance for some of our goals.”*

– Former CFP Grantee

Many organizations that apply for CFP grants represent particular sectors such as food assistance, urban agriculture, or nutrition education. They may lack the resources or skills with which to organize and plan for broad-based community participation on an ongoing basis. Without such a process, proposals are just educated guesses despite some knowledge of the community, especially as it pertains to particular sectors. Although this aspect is now at least partially addressed by a small CFP planning grant category, the vast majority of applications are for projects that seek community input in only limited ways. This may be partly because applicants feel that the low probability of getting funded does not merit a large investment in community engagement and related planning for the proposed project.

Community and organizational contexts pose special barriers to implementing CFPs.

Beyond frustrations related to the CFP Program itself, study participants also identified specific barriers related to community contexts, partnerships, and organizational challenges in implementing projects.

## **Food projects are vulnerable to unusual weather and seasonal limitations.**

Many CFPs had to deal with natural challenges such as drought, hurricane damage, and especially hot summers that made food production or outside work difficult. They also had to respond to more mun-

dane situations, some of which could have been anticipated earlier—such as the reality that youth desire for summer employment made them reluctant volunteers in projects, good quality agricultural land could be hard to secure for a new farmer project, or that some new markets may receive less traffic than anticipated. Because CFP activities tend to be seasonal and the growing season is critical for production and marketing activities, such obstacles cause some activities simply to fold until the following year, creating significant delays in the delivery of project objectives. In addition, because novel approaches are not sufficiently studied for their lessons, projects often get delayed due to missteps and course corrections that are needed as a result.

## **CFPs confront varying levels of knowledge of community food security principles.**

*“Some [people in my region] have no clue of what we’re talking about when we talk about food security... so we see this system of food banks and ... as long as you can go get [food from them], why do we need to worry about [market-based] access to food? When I look at the attendance list for this conference, I noticed only three people from [my state]. ... I’ve found that to be a challenge for us to try and move things here; sometimes we’re the only ones playing the drum. ... The next step is educating states, governors, legislators, etc., they’re just not there, how do you turn that around? [Furthermore],... there are very few state resources available for matching funds...”*

– Former CFP Grantee

CFPs often find that their efforts to raise awareness of their project or to implement particular activities are hindered by a low level of awareness of key community food security principles that underlie the

CFP Program. One CFP representative complained that major food organizations in his area were squarely in the food assistance mode and could not think beyond charity-based assistance. Other participants mentioned the puzzlement they experienced in the community when talking about urban agriculture projects or developing small-scale value-added enterprises involving low-income individuals. These and similar reactions may create the need to slow down and take the time to help participants understand the project and its purposes-and/or for the organizers to understand participants' interests and concerns and why they aren't communicating effectively. This creates valuable opportunities for mutual learning, but it also may cut into implementation of the planned project.

### **Partnerships can be taxing to projects.**

Problems with partnerships often make project activities difficult to design, coordinate, and implement collaboratively. Getting partners to a common understanding of "what the project is about" and the translation of project objectives into specific activities can take time in the best of circumstances.

Partnerships surface legitimate differences in interests, expectations, cultures, and professional approaches among participants that need to be aired and resolved. Sometimes public employees or other partners who are important to CFP projects cannot attend due to changes in or lack of support from their organizations.

Partnerships also can pose more pernicious problems. Several participants complained that some organizations were more interested in furthering narrow organizational interests than in developing community capacity and sustainable solutions. In other cases, partnerships created conflicts related to the allocation of project funding, accountability for delivering specific activities, turf issues, and management conflicts. Difficult personalities are another common source of problems within partnerships.

Participants expressed frustration with the additional time, communications, and resources that need to be

dedicated in order to implement collaborative aspects of the project. Considerable planning and time was required for communication through conference calls, meetings, electronic lists, etc. One participant emphasized the need to view relationship and capacity development in partnerships as programmatic objectives in themselves rather than simply as tools for delivering content. In this view, the payoffs from investing time and effort in partnership building are significant. Indeed, strong partnerships that last beyond the project lifetime were identified as an indicator of success by many study participants.

Thus, partnerships can be a double-edged sword for community-based initiatives. They can create value far in excess of an individual member's contributions, or they can drain time and energy and hamper project objectives. Most projects, according to focus group participants, tend to fall somewhere in between, with the perceived benefits outweighing the challenges.

### **CFPs find inadequate critical information on successes and failures of CFS approaches.**

Since CFPs are being asked to develop and implement novel approaches to food, agriculture, and nutrition problems, they also are looking for information about the successes and failures of new approaches that have been tried elsewhere. One study participant was especially troubled by the rush to replicate specific approaches used in CFP Projects—such as food policy councils, small processing ventures, etc.—without adequate and critical information on what worked and what did not. Organizations that initiate novel approaches feel pressured to present narratives of success, so that others who attempt to replicate their approaches do so with incomplete and sometimes biased information. Competitive pressures for funding and visibility also lead organizations to exaggerate benefits and downplay challenges or failures they experience.

## Sustainability of CFP activities

The CFP grant program is a one-time funding opportunity for a particular set of eligible activities. Applicants are required to demonstrate how they will sustain project activities and outcomes after the grant ends. Many community food activities, however, are labor-intensive and exist in low-income communities with limited capacity to pay for services. These communities also often lack important infrastructure such as distribution networks, warehouses, or retail facilities, which leads projects to 'bootstrap' their efforts in ways that are difficult to maintain over the long term. For these reasons, CFPs often rely on additional grants from foundations, government sources, or other channels. Specific activities and resources that were used to sustain activities include:

- *Donations of cash and in-kind support* from community members, organizations and businesses. In kind support included volunteer time, equipment, land, and office and warehouse space.
- *Grant proposals to foundations and government sources* (including some that were successfully funded by the time of CFP completion). A couple of partner organizations, who had previously been part of a broader umbrella organization, successfully filed for their own 501(c)(3) status to be able to generate funding independently.
- *Revenue* from sale of food and non-food products, land and equipment rentals, training and consulting services, conference registrations, and memberships.
- *Installation of infrastructure and assets*, such as trees, gardens, greenhouses, land, EBT machines, etc., that will continue to produce project outputs (and sometimes revenue) with minimal additional inputs.
- *Development of toolkits* including replication manuals, training materials, and models for gardens, farmers' markets, and other activities taken up by particular CFPs.
- *Development of key intermediate outputs* such as a

business plan to raise capital, a strategic plan to be presented to the city council for approval, or application for culinary training program accreditation.

- *Links with local universities* to continue training activities and involve students in projects.
- *Integration of programs into existing operations* such as regular school curricula, CFP grantee operational budgets, or public agency offerings.
- *Reduction of scale of activities* to levels that can be sustained by volunteers or existing funding.
- *Ongoing outreach, education, and marketing* to raise awareness of issues, and generate interest in and support for the CFP grantee's activities.
- *Continuation of relationships with partners* and development of new relationships to deliver key services, develop local policies, and secure additional resources.
- *Culmination of grantee involvement in activity because of success.* For example, a business or farmers' market developed by the CFP became self-sustaining; a school adopted a local food purchase plan; lasting business relationships between farmers and area stores were created; a local purchasing resolution was passed by the state legislature; or a long-term contract with the city for funding a food policy council was obtained.

## How Community Food Projects Create Systems Change

This report discussed the serious limitations CFPs faced in delivering CFS in sustained ways. Projects are inherently limited in scope, funding, and time-span. They cannot be expected to single-handedly create the substantial market and institutional infrastructure that is needed to support lasting community food security. However, CFPs can and do create lasting changes that contribute significantly to improving community food security. Systems change also is a desired objective of the Community Food Projects Program. From this study, several

mechanisms were identified that create systems change in CFP projects.

### **Alternative entrepreneurship**

When community-oriented food businesses become self-sustaining, they create mechanisms that deliver community food security objectives. They may support local producers, create jobs, keep money in the local economy, meet demand for local products, support healthy eating, and/or create other benefits.

When these businesses are owned by women, people of color, or members of other groups that are underserved by the mainstream food system, alternative entrepreneurship also helps enhance social equity.

### **Physical and organizational infrastructure**

The creation of bricks-and-mortar infrastructure in the form of warehouses, grocery stores, greenhouses, etc., and even less permanent infrastructure such as garden beds, hoop houses, and community garden land helps support CFP activities over the longer term. Farmers who have access to warehouses can pool their products and deliver larger quantities to local retailers and school cafeterias, and thereby cut their costs. Groups of community residents can continue their involvement and engage new members at a site prepared by the CFP. Distribution logistics systems that help farmers cooperatively plan for production, delivery, and payment when connecting with multiple retailers are another type of infrastructure that creates new systems.

### **Public policies, plans, and new government programs**

Several CFPs were able to develop local policies that supported community food goals, provided resources, and created related public agency programs. The most common of these related to school food and farmers' markets. In a couple of cases, state policies also were successfully developed and adopted. These policies and new government programs represent local political commitment to com-

munity food security. When public schools integrate school gardens into their regular curricula (as was the case with a couple of study CFPs), or develop purchasing agreements with local farmers to supply cafeterias, these shifts help create significant long-term and systemic impacts.

### **Shifts in organizational mission and activity**

As anti-hunger organizations connect their participants with local sources of fresh and healthy foods through local gardens or farms, such organizations also may shift their missions and programs to better reflect CFS goals. These goals include household food self-reliance, support of local producers, and food entrepreneurship. Such organizational changes help direct resources toward new initiatives that help build the capacity of individual households, farmers, and local communities.

### **Youth leadership**

Several CFPs in the study involved young people as activity leaders, peer educators, and community organizers. As youth learn about community food security issues and their community's food needs and see the changes they are able to make through their actions, they become empowered to continue taking positive leadership in their communities. Youth leadership in food is an especially powerful force for change in a larger context in which youth are bombarded with marketing messages to consume nutritionally deficient foods.

### **Changes in youth and adult behavior**

Sustained changes in behavior related to buying, eating, production, etc. that come about due to enhanced knowledge, changed attitudes, and new forms of peer support, are yet another form of systems change. As more individuals re-orient their buying and eating to include more local and healthy foods in their diets, they also change local agri-food economies as a result. As eaters come to see themselves as more connected to their local communities,

economies, and environments, they also are able to ask for public policies that enrich these connections.

### **A new community culture**

CFPs help build more community connections among food sectors and between food and community sectors. These connections help showcase successful models of farming or business development, support new initiatives, and create channels for advocacy. During events such as harvest festivals, community garden tours, and other local food celebrations that bring together food advocates and other residents, they create a shared sense that positive food system change is possible and exciting. These community connections can help change the culture of a community. Once formed, they may require only minimal ongoing work to maintain and recharge.

## Section V: Recommendations



Many recommendations emerge from this study. Some relate to the CFP Program specifically, while others may apply to community food advocates and/or other funders of community food work. Some recommendations are aimed at regional and national resource networks that provide training, technical assistance, or education to local groups. Some emerge directly and explicitly from project experiences on the ground; others are more implicitly so, and should be viewed as suggestions requiring further dialogue and exploration.

Admittedly, the timing of these recommendations may be problematic as the future of the CFP Program is uncertain at the time this report goes to press. Nonetheless, because these recommendations emerge from an analysis of the program and a number of CFP Projects, they are offered in the hope that they can help advance CFP objectives regardless of the exact future shape of the program. Of course, if the program is eliminated, then the specific CFP recommendations may be rendered moot.

### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **More Community Food Projects need to be funded.**

This study shows that Community Food Projects provide many benefits to local food systems and in a variety of community sectors. However, only a few projects can be funded each year. Only 20 percent of the applications received in 2006 were funded, a rate that is typical for the program's tenure as a whole. As a reviewer over multiple years, the author's experience (along with many other reviewers) is that a greater number of applications deserve

funding. Many needy urban and rural communities continue to remain un-served by this program. Increasing the total budget of the CFP Program would ensure that a greater number of deserving applications get funded.

USDA Programs with comparable objectives, such as the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, are funded at much higher levels than the CFP Program, receiving nearly \$20 million and \$15 million respectively for fiscal 2007. Community food advocates have requested that the CFP Program be funded at \$30 million annually in the 2007 Farm Bill, a significant enhancement over the current annual budget of \$5 million.

#### **More Community Food Projects need planning support.**

Community food security initiatives are engaged with long-term systems change, and may need longer-term support (five years or more) and therefore increased funding to build solid partnerships, deepen community involvement, and develop and implement programs that can strengthen outcomes through learning over multiple years. CFP administrators may wish to explore a two-tier funding category similar to that used by many foundations. In the first tier, planning grants could be awarded to more organizations in the earlier stages of community food work, with implementation grants to selected qualified organizations made in the second tier. Given the inherent value of community consultation processes and networks that CFP planning can help build, organizations that receive a first tier of funding but not the second may still come out ahead in building their capacity. Alternatively, promising

applications by organizations that may have fallen short of CFP Program requirements could be awarded a smaller grant to strengthen a particular aspect of their proposal for another application the following year.

### **Community Food Projects need to be supported in areas that haven't yet been funded.**

The CFP Program has funded communities in almost every state and US territory. The majority of projects involve producing food through gardens and small farms, and making these foods available to local residents, through farm and garden stands, farmers' markets, school cafeterias, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) schemes, food assistance programs, and direct distribution. These projects are important sources of fresh and healthy food in urban and rural areas, and build community awareness and capacity in food security issues.

However, some areas have been much more active in this work and have received many more CFP grants than others. These “hotbeds” of community food activities also are able to attract funding from foundations and other sources that support similar activities. Hence, we believe that the CFP Program should focus on gaining geographic spread in addition to funding deserving innovations from already-funded communities.

More communities should receive funding from this program, especially low-income ones that have not previously received support. Exactly how successful applications from these areas may be generated will need further exploration. One solution might be to sponsor “CFP Fellows” or mentors from within particular regions who can help qualified local organizations and partners assemble effective applications. Fellows may be trained by national organizations such as the Community Food Security Coalition, American Community Gardening Association, or World Hunger Year and provided a modest stipend for their mentoring activities. Another approach

may be to use regional organizations like Growing Power or the Sustainable Agriculture Working Groups to identify and support local planning and projects that may qualify for CFP funding later.

### **Community Food Projects may need greater connection to other federal programs that meet low-income needs, especially in relation to nutrition and obesity prevention.**

Many CFPs offer sources of fresh and healthy food in urban and rural areas, and build community awareness and capacity in food security issues. Combining CFP benefits with other federal programs that seek to improve access to healthy and affordable food by low-income households may foster synergies among various government programs and multiply benefits to consumers and producers. Some CFPs already bring various government programs together, by for example, developing EBT terminals at farmers' markets to enable farmers to redeem nutrition program benefits from low-income households. Alternatively, food stamp education funds may help bring a significant nutrition education component into production and direct marketing of fruits and vegetables in low-income neighborhoods. CFP program staff and advocates may need to work together to explore how CFP funds could offer synergies by combining with other USDA and non-USDA federal programs that serve low-income populations.

### **Other community services to meet the food and other needs of low-income populations should be encouraged to integrate CFS principles.**

Community Food Projects deliver many benefits in a variety of sectors, such as the economy, social services, health, recreation, etc. National and regional organizations that provide support to local groups may be able to show how local organizations that meet the food and other needs of low-income populations might benefit from integrating community

food security principles into their work. For example, a recent report documents how food banks and other anti-hunger organizations integrate CFS principles into their activities to provide multiple benefits for their constituents (Fisher, 2005). Other similar efforts may address how CFS principles might inform community-based nutrition and health services, affordable housing development projects, job creation and economic development activities, etc.

### **More CFS principles may need to be integrated into projects.**

This study shows that CFPs deliver many community food security objectives, such as meeting the food needs of low-income populations, supporting small-scale producers, contributing to local economies, and building local food systems by reducing the distance between producers and consumers. However, it also shows that elements of other CFS objectives—especially those related to social justice and ecological sustainability—receive less systematic support in the CFP Program. (See Table 2 for this analysis.) CFP project organizers and other CFS advocates may want to explore whether it is important to integrate some of these objectives more fully into their work and how to do that.

### **As a key activity of CFPs, education needs more support.**

The vast majority CFP projects include diverse forms of knowledge-building and education, including raising public awareness on community food issues, skills development, and technical assistance on specific topics related to production, sales, or processing. Projects often dedicate much time and effort to creating basic educational and training resources that may already exist in a similar form that is easily accessible through web-based sources. In many cases, educational products, such as training manuals, audio-visual materials, and conference presentations are used as revenue sources and not freely available to the public. Such educational activities could be enhanced by the CFP Program and other related

fundors, including through:

- A web-based and readily accessible library of CFP-specific educational materials on food systems topics, and how-to manuals on topics such as involving youth in community food production, preparing for markets, planning a community harvest festival, etc., so that projects can use existing compilations. This library could expand on the current offerings by the Community Food Security Coalition, WHY's Food Security Learning Center, and others.
- Greater support of peer-to-peer education through the institution of learning communities and networks to share experiences, best practices, and lessons learned on specific approaches such as farm to school or food policy councils, and more general concerns such as how to sustain project activities beyond the grant period.
- Encouraging greater involvement by Cooperative Extension in particular aspects of training and technical assistance around community food security.

### **“Scaling-up” activities need to be supported.**

Besides local food production and distribution activities supported by CFP, more attention is needed to “scaling up” activities for greater impact and sustainability, and to developing integrated approaches to local and regional food system development. These activities may require higher levels of funding, longer timelines, and specialized expertise to implement due to the more complex nature of physical and organizational infrastructure needed in coordinating distribution between larger numbers of producers and market outlets over relatively longer distances. However, given the great need for basic community food activities, we recommend that the CFP program continue to prioritize these over projects with scaling up activities, if significant increases in funding are not obtained.

### **More support for community readiness is needed.**

Community and organizational readiness are important factors in successful CFP application and implementation. Readiness has components of shared knowledge, community support and engagement, existing networks, and experience in community food work. Some limited resource organizations may find it especially difficult to implement important pre-proposal planning activities such as conducting assessments, organizing partnerships, engaging community members in planning, and securing needed infrastructure. More funding may be needed to help applicants plan projects and develop effective applications, especially for community-based organizations or coalitions and in geographic regions that have never received CFP funding. Such planning assistance may include travel scholarships to CFSC conferences or skills trainings for groups that are well placed to translate increased readiness into successful CFP applications and projects. It also may include arrangements for one-on-one consultations tailored to the group's needs and community food ideas.

### **Community processes could benefit from more training and technical assistance.**

Community participation and multi-sectoral collaborations also are crucial to successful Community Food Project implementation and the creation of long-term change. However, organizations may have limited skills in community organizing, facilitating participation, and leading processes representing multiple interests and organizational cultures. More resources may need to be directed to providing education, training, and technical assistance to groups on these processes. Similar needs in evaluation were identified in the past and the CFSC has created an effective T&TA Program to support grantees with developing program evaluations. A similar initiative may be needed for organizing communities around food and facilitating collaborative processes that engage community residents effectively. There may

exist regional and national groups that already provide such support to communities; such groups may need to be identified and supported.

### **More rigorous research is needed on innovative community food strategies.**

This study surfaced a concern that prospective CFP applicants may feel pressure to adopt untested or inadequately tested innovations related to community food linkages. Because of competition for scarce funding, community-based organizations that originate innovative strategies may feel the need to present only positive narratives of these strategies. Organizations wishing to replicate them may therefore have little accurate information about the strategies' strengths and weaknesses. More research is therefore needed that presents rigorous, accurate, and fair assessments of what works and what does not and why, especially in newer approaches to community food security. Universities and nonprofit research institutes may offer the requisite skills, resources, and distance from grassroots pressures to conduct such research.

## **CFP PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Explore if and why qualified organizations may choose not to apply or re-apply for CFP funding.**

CFP Program administrators may need to explore if and why grassroots organizations that are otherwise qualified choose not to apply for CFP funds, or to re-apply following an initial failure to secure funding. CFP grantees identified several challenges related to program application and there might be others that keep non-grantees from applying or re-applying. These include requirements related to proposal planning within multi-sectoral teams and multi-agency approaches, one-to-one project match, innovative solutions, and online submission of applications.

Already, program administrators continually educate potential applicants about the program and grant application procedures, pass along suggestions to ensure effective submissions, and fund projects to help applicants develop CFP projects and proposals. This recommendation seeks to go beyond preparing prospective applicants to meet current requirements. It seeks a discussion of how CFP Program requirements themselves may pose barriers to some community-based initiatives and how such barriers may be reduced or eliminated. Some of the requirements may be intrinsic to the operation of USDA or CSREES programs and therefore not easily changed. However, a closer examination of barriers and a discussion within the broader food security community may help identify mechanisms and solutions that could be implemented within existing systems. In generating such a discussion, it would be important to include regional or issue groups that have not historically participated in CFSC or other national food conferences.

CFP Program objectives in meeting food needs of low-income populations; creating entrepreneurial approaches that link producers and consumers; and developing long-term solutions to food, agriculture, and nutrition problems suggest the need to connect with low-income communities—especially communities of color—and their organizations. However, some of these organizations also may lack the capacity or resources to perform the tasks to apply for program funding. The planning project category provides support to some of these tasks. However, it is a relatively small pot of money. While an increase in the total CFP budget would be ideal to increase planning support for all applicants, the current and continuing exclusion of particular types of organizations may go beyond the need for planning support. Therefore, this possible exclusion needs to be carefully examined.

## **Explore funding partnerships with other federal or private foundation programs.**

CFP administrators may wish to explore partnerships with other federal government programs and private funding sources that could enhance multi-sectoral linkages. The CFP Program, for example, may link operationally to other USDA programs such as those that support farmers' markets, value-added enterprise development, and nutrition assistance. It also may link substantively with non-USDA programs, such as those related to community economic development, transportation, education, and health. We recognize that this recommendation is fraught with political and bureaucratic challenges and not easy to accomplish. Private foundations that support related activities also may need to be explored. One example of a similar successful consortium is that between USDA and the Ford Foundation in supporting the development of farmers' markets around the country. This and other possible examples need to be examined closely for their implications for expanding the impact of CFP activities over a longer time horizon.

## **CONCLUSION**

This report discussed how Community Food Projects brought to life important community food security principles, and the concrete forms they took in the types of issues addressed, activities implemented, and benefits delivered to their communities. It documented some of the key lessons that CFP practitioners learned as they implemented their proposals on the ground. The study also showed both the strengths of CFPs, as well as their limitations in helping create deep and broad impacts towards community food security. We hope that the many lessons derived from this research will inform future efforts to design, fund, and sustain similar projects, and help make these projects more effective. Further, we hope that this study, the first of its kind, will help spawn many others that will help provide critical guidance to the community food movement.

# REFERENCES

Anderson, M D and J T Cook. 1999. Community food security: Practice in need of theory? *Agriculture and Human Values*, 16(2): 141-150

Community Food Projects 10th Anniversary Production Team, 2007. *Healthy Food, Healthy Communities: A Decade of Community Food Projects*. Los Angeles: Community Food Security Coalition.

Fisher, A. 2005. *Building the Bridge: Linking Food Banking and Community Food Security*. Los Angeles: Community Food Security Coalition. New York: World Hunger Year.  
<http://www.foodsecurity.org/pubs.html#foodbank> (Date accessed: September 8, 2007).

Tauber, M and A Fisher. 2002. *A Guide to Community Food Projects*  
([http://www.foodsecurity.org/cfsc\\_case\\_studies.pdf](http://www.foodsecurity.org/cfsc_case_studies.pdf)). Los Angeles: Community Food Security Coalition.  
(Date accessed: August 31, 2007).

World Hunger Year, no date. *Food Security Learning Center*.  
[http://www.worldhungeryear.org/fslc/ria\\_040.asp?section=1&click=1](http://www.worldhungeryear.org/fslc/ria_040.asp?section=1&click=1) (Date accessed: August 31, 2007).

# APPENDIX A: RESEARCH METHODS

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The analysis was designed to provide a basic understanding of how Community Food Projects further community food security through the activities implemented and successes obtained. It sought to provide lessons from practice within projects, including factors underlying successes and challenges experienced by projects. The study explored the following questions:

- Who leads, participates in, and is served by Community Food Projects?
- What types of food system and community change activities are typically offered by Community Food Projects (CFPs)?
- In what ways do CFPs contribute to community food security and what constraints exist to their contributions to community food security?
- What factors underlie successes in CFPs and what challenges do CFPs typically face?
- What are some broad lessons related to CFP and community food security?

We sought to answer these through an exclusive focus on projects funded by the USDA's Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program. To the extent that broad similarities exist across community-based projects related to food-in their community, organizational, and project characteristics-regardless of their source of funding, these findings can be generalized to the universe of food-related projects. However, because the CFP Program is funded by taxpayer dollars and carries specific guidance about types of eligible applicants, types of activities that are supported and proscribed by the grant, and other requirements and constraints, systematic differences between CFP-funded projects and other community-based food projects not funded by USDA are likely to exist.

Furthermore, challenges faced by organizations that were unsuccessful in obtaining CFP funding are not systematically documented as this project tracks successful CFP applicants only. Finally, this study does not assess benefit-cost issues of the projects or the larger program itself, or if the values and outcomes were delivered by projects in the most efficient and effective ways possible. Therefore, the study is an incomplete look at Community Food Projects, and community food practice in general.

## SOURCES OF DATA

To answer the questions above, we analyzed summaries of project reports from CFPs, conducted a focus group of grantee representatives, and examined other available literature on the CFPCGP. The author's experiences as a technical assistance provider to grassroots organizations applying for the CFPCGP and as a reviewer of proposals (in years other than this one) were an additional resource. Project summaries for 42 projects funded between 1999 and 2003 were available for analysis. The focus group included seven CFP

practitioners from grantee organizations to describe and reflect on their experiences with their projects. These members participated in two focus group sessions, conducted in October and November 2006.

It should be noted that this study represents a first step toward systematically identifying activities, benefits, and challenges faced by CFPs. Analyzing the data and writing the report have, in fact, raised other important questions related to CFPs in particular and community food practice in general. We hope that these questions will be considered for subsequent research.

## SUMMARIES OF PROJECT REPORTS

In this research, annual summaries of projects funded between 1999 and 2003 (a total of 42 projects) were considered for analysis. For 2003, projects of only one or two year duration were included, as report summaries for three-year projects were not yet available at the time of analysis. Although we (Kami Pothukuchi, the author; Tammy Morales, who helped with coding of report summaries; and Jeanette Abi-Nader, project manager) were interested in projects since the start of the program, earlier report summaries were not readily available to USDA staff with whom we interacted, who also were overwhelmed with grant administration during the months in which data were sought. We hope that a future report will be able to incorporate a more complete set of report summaries.

Project summaries are derived from project reports that are submitted by grant recipients at the culmination of their projects. While there is no formal format for grantee reports, CFP Program administrators ask grantees to report against the objectives established in their grant agreement. The narrative reports submitted by the project directors are then condensed into a standard format by program administrators. This summarized version is then returned to the project directors for their approval and finalized.

The standard format for a project summary includes a table with two columns, the first laying out objectives that were proposed in the grant application and the second containing notes on the extent to and manner in which they were achieved (or exceeded). If objectives were not met or were achieved at levels lower than proposed, the second column might contain only brief explanations. Project summaries were typically three to four pages in length, although a few were much longer. The summaries also contained notes about how the project was being sustained beyond the grant timeline, as project sustainability is an important element of the grant program.

The summary format was useful as it was consistent across cases; it contrasted objectives achieved against those proposed in the grant application; it was almost entirely descriptive rather than containing editorial commentary or flowery elaborations. The format allowed us to code for activities undertaken and for food sector and community sector contributions. The brevity of project report summaries and their uniformity allowed us to represent activities and accomplishments in standard ways across cases, which may have been difficult if the original grantee narratives were utilized.

The summary reports, however, are limited in that they do not contain in-depth explanations of project processes, descriptions of the every day life of the project, or reflections of the actors. Therefore, they contain scarce discussion of factors that contributed to successes, factors underlying challenges experienced, and the satisfaction or otherwise of participants. Summaries also are based on self-reports compiled by the grantee lead agency, not neutral assessments of the project's effectiveness in delivering objectives. Furthermore, even challenges to the achievement of objectives are brief statements and do not offer responses to “why?” questions even when the barriers might seem easy to anticipate in project planning (for example, the expectation that school schedules would need to be considered in a project involving youth during the school year).

We considered—and decided against—other sources of information about projects that may be available through websites and published news items, since they would not be neutral, uniformly available for all cases, nor necessarily provide information in categories of interest. The independent gathering of data from projects through surveys or interviews was beyond the scope of this project, especially given the time it took to secure grantee report summaries. Hopefully, future explorations of CFP projects will be able to use multiple sources of data.

Project summaries were analyzed for the type and number of food sector and community sector activities that were implemented. Food sector activities include production, processing, distribution including retail, food waste management, local food system and related policy development, and training and technical assistance in these categories. Community sector activities help achieve objectives such as nutrition and health, education, economic development, ecological sustainability, and social welfare.

Coding in these categories was done using a mix of top-down and bottom-up processes. A broad framework of expected categories was developed based on the community food security definition and typical CFP activities known to the author. These were divided into subcategories wherever activities were noted. Many projects had a finely developed set of sub-categories within broad categories. For example, one project had a variety of types of retail associated with their urban agriculture project, including temporary farm stands, sales of fresh and prepared foods to restaurants, phone-based home deliveries, sales of prepared foods through a catering operation, and a CSA operation. Because each type of food retail was associated with a different set of actors; duration, type of interaction, and frequency of operation; and logistics of product assembly, handling, and movement, each was considered a separate activity—unlike a farmers' market, in which households and restaurants can both be end consumers of products from a participating farmer who simply brings her products to the market.

It should be noted that codes represent *types* of activities or activity sets, and not their scale or magnitude. For example, one project may be organized around community gardening in four low-income neighborhood sites to help improve the nutritional status of participants. Another project may involve a community garden, a schoolyard garden with associated curriculum, a suburban farm of twenty acres, and also a small salsa-making operation. In the first case, the predominant activity type would be one *production* activity (community gardening), while the second would encompass three types of *production* (community, schoolyard, and farm), and one *processing* activity. This report seeks to present an aggregate report of CFP activities rather than provide a basis for comparison between the two cases.

Appendix B provides a coding table that was developed for this project. Aggregate statistics in descriptive categories are reported in the following section. Qualitative themes and questions were generated from a review of the content of project summaries. As an aside, an effort to develop a common framework for all CFP outcomes has recently culminated in an evaluation tool to allow systematic collection of data on project outputs and outcomes, the Common Output Tracking Form (COTF). For more information on the COTF browse [http://www.foodsecurity.org/LINK\\_E\\_Toolkit\\_COTF.pdf](http://www.foodsecurity.org/LINK_E_Toolkit_COTF.pdf).

## FOCUS GROUPS

In addition to analyzing project summaries, we conducted a focus group of project representatives, to place some of the basic findings in context and to gain textured, experiential information on project experiences. Seven out of ten invited representatives of funded projects of different types and from different regions of the country participated in the focus groups.

Questions were designed to get participants to reflect on the categories below, with probes for additional detail and clarity.

- Characteristics of successful projects
- Factors that might explain successful elements or outcomes of projects
- Project activities that contributed to systems change
- Factors that might explain challenges experienced by projects
- Strategies and experiences related to sustaining projects after funding ended

Additionally, participants were urged to share advice for prospective applicants or for the CFP administrators or community food funders in general.

Focus groups were conducted following the requisite human subjects permissions from Wayne State University's Institutional Review Board, and participants signed informed consent forms prior to the session. Focus groups were taped and transcribed according to approved protocols, and additional materials invited participants to respond to sensitive questions anonymously if they wished. A first focus group session was held at the CFSC annual conference in Vancouver (October 2006); and a second session was conducted during a conference call the following month because of time constraints in completing the focus group at the first session.

The stories and observations from the focus groups were rich and detailed and provided great depth and insight to our findings from grantee report summaries and additional questions related to factors underlying successes and challenges. Some responses offered a critical review and feedback on specific aspects of the CFP Program. Although these were digressions in some sense because the questions sought information related to project implementation on the ground, they were important to participants' experiences of successes and challenges in their projects and are therefore reported in the study.

APPENDIX B:  
CODING TABLE FOR COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS (GLOSSARY)

FOOD SECTOR ACTIVITIES - Activities that contribute to changes in the food system		
Broad Category	Code	Meaning or Elaboration of Code
Production	Production	Community garden (typically urban as found in CFP, smaller scale, less technology intensive); use if applicant has used term
		Backyard garden
		Schoolyard garden
		P-patch (neighborhood-based garden support program in Seattle)
		Farm (typically rural and multiple contiguous acres; larger scale and more tech intensive); use term as applicant has
		Wild food gathering, hunting (typically found in Native American group applications)
	Greenhouse (for plant starts, herbs, nonfood high-value plants), if this is a significant activity	
	Organic production	Counted where mentioned in grant reports as a separate item-which is important in its own right, given its connection to ecological sustainability, soil quality, and possibility of sales premiums
	Gleaning	Production for distribution to food assistance programs, regardless of who grows or harvests
	Plant and seed distribution	When growing plant starts and distributing starts and seeds is a significant part of project operation, such as in community and backyard garden programs
Food for animals, wildlife	(Has a connection to ecological sustainability)	
Retail	Sales	Farmers' markets
		Retail outlets such as grocery stores, eating places
		Catering-sales of prepared foods
		Delivery-door-to-door delivery of fresh and prepared foods to consumers
		CSA-Community Supported Agriculture
School cafeterias		
Processing	Processing	Any value-added activity that turns raw agricultural products into packaged products, typically for sale- salsa, granola, pesto, etc. It could involve processing for self-consumption. Does not include classes that train people in processing.
	Value-added product development and marketing	Identifying new products, conducting market research for new products, establishing cost structures for value-added

APPENDIX B:  
CODING TABLE FOR COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS (GLOSSARY) CONTINUED

FOOD SECTOR ACTIVITIES - Activities that contribute to changes in the food system			
Broad Category	Code	Meaning or Elaboration of Code	
Distribution	Distribution	Logistics of delivery from one or more farm/s to one or more outlets, transportation, cooperative product pooling, coordination, etc. (typically found in farm to school programs, big CSAs with a widely distributed consumer base, farmer cooperative, etc.)	
	Donation	Involves donations of food to food banks	
		Meals programs (youth, senior, homeless, etc.)	
		From gleaned operations (such as from farms, farmers' markets, grocery stores)	
Education, training, and technical assistance	Curriculum development	Development of systematic training material (that can be administered by multiple parties with some consistency) for classes designed around planting, soil, harvest concepts, etc., that are observable at the program, farm, or garden (gardening, farming curriculum-typically consists of multiple topics and multiple sessions).	
		Food system class at local community college. Nutrition curriculum.	
	Curriculum implementation	Delivering classes based on a systematic curriculum (or course that may have been previously developed). Often curriculum implementation is a significant activity even if the curriculum was developed outside of the grant. Can include concepts and skills, but the skills component is typically less intensive.	
	Skills training-production, sales, culinary, nutrition, community food assessment	<b>This involves learning to do specific things over a period of time in a process that typically involves demonstrations as well as guided, but independent, field-based implementation. Skills training differs from curriculum implementation in its focus on developing a set of capacities among participants. It can include curricular components, but the emphasis in skills training is on hands-on field experience over multiple iterations. It differs from educational events in that it is focused, intensive, related to specific capacities developed over time, and usually limited to a few people at one session.</b>	
		Production: farm/garden operations-tractor equipment, safe chemical application, plant cycles, field prep, maintenance, weed and pest control, harvesting, pricing, distribution, etc.	
		Food sales work can include training related to safe food handling, food preparation, food service, etc.	
		Culinary training can include general cooking skills, cooking traditional meals, food preservation, or food service training for preparing participants for catering/restaurant jobs.	
		Nutrition training (more than a workshop or a demonstration here and there; a complete curriculum that might include food preparation)	
		Workshops related to community food assessments	
	Educational events	These are generally impromptu, informal, and one-time events; possibly provide broad information rather than depth of knowledge or skills; and may include demonstrations to groups during field trips. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmer presentation to students in class or on the farm</li> <li>• Student field trips to farmers' market</li> <li>• Nutrition education, cooking and related demonstrations at farmers' market</li> <li>• Trainings about basic concepts related to community food security</li> </ul>	

	Technical assistance	Typically one-time assistance on complex matters requiring a high level of specialized expertise. Legal assistance with crafting of land leases; one-on-one TA related to growing/selling, etc. Also includes assistance or consultancies to develop business plans, set up food businesses etc. <b>Technical assistance differs from skills training or educational events in that it is focused, targeted to one or a small number of individuals, and is on a specific, technical and expert aspect of operations related to production, business development, or marketing and related legal, regulatory, financial, or other aspects.</b>
Local/regional food systems development	Local food promotion/guides	Promotion, including guides that provide systematic info on local producers and processors for residents and organizations
	Local food system linkage brokering	Linking farmers and consumers to organize CSAs; linking schools and local farmers for farm to school programs; encouraging and educating local organizations to supply local food at events; providing a brokering role rather than an active food provisioning or distribution role. This category is most linked with activities related to <b>distribution logistics</b> above, and <b>nonprofit collaboration</b> and <b>public-private partnership</b> below.
	Traditional foods promotion	Production, processing of traditional foods Documentation of oral histories, stories, and recipes of traditional foods and food cultures
Community food planning	Community food assessment	Assessment of needs and resources related to the food system (market assessment, nutrition assessment, etc) Surveys of community interest in buying local, food product preferences, price/quality tradeoffs
	Community/local food policy development, planning	Organizing stakeholder, community processes to identify local food system policy priorities, develop action recommendations; support the development of activities to illustrate or demonstrate policy (food assessment, food guide, developing farm to school guidelines, etc.
Food policy advocacy	Food policy advocacy	Exploring policy mechanisms with local and state policy makers; building support for local, state, and/or federal food policies and plans; urge particular policies at state or federal levels.
Food system waste management	Composting	Food, garden, and farm wastes are composted and recycled to build soil quality.
	Recycling	

APPENDIX B:  
CODING TABLE FOR COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS (GLOSSARY) CONTINUED

COMMUNITY SECTOR ACTIVITIES - Activities that link to broader community sectors and outcomes		
Broad Category	Broad Category	Meaning or elaboration of code
Physical infrastructure development	Physical plant development	Construction or major renovations of permanent buildings or other structures, such as for a grocery store or a farmers' market. Does not include garden beds, garden sheds, or temporary farm stands.
Economic development	Job training	Related to catering
		Related to food marketing
		Related to culinary skill development (chef's training, value-added, etc)
	Employment	Not just one or two jobs created by CFP funds (such as garden coordinator, or nutrition educator)-instead, generating employment for multiple participants is a focus of the project, such as by playing brokering roles with employment agencies, placing youth trained in gardening skills in related jobs, etc. This may include the use of CFP funds for creating multiple paid traineeships, apprenticeships, etc. for youth or immigrants.
	Food marketing	Promotion of locally produced foods. Can also include sales of non-local foods in underserved areas, as in the development of supermarkets, food coops, etc.
	Nonfood marketing	A significant part of revenues come from non-food value-added using garden products, or related marketing (salves, lip balms, etc)
	Business development, incubation	When projects involve helping organizations write a business plan, learn about business accounting, food handling/licensing, etc. Can include activities to start a community food cooperative (such as by raising capital, recruiting coop members, etc)
Community nutrition and health	Nutrition enhancement	Nutrition enhancement through healthy food access, self-procurement of food (such as gardening to supplement diets), information, healthy preparation, nutrition classes
Ecological sustainability	Sustainability practices	(Sub-categories: organic; composting; recycling)
	Wildlife habitat preservation	
Human and social services	Social services	Providing basic human and social services unrelated to food, such as in life skills, English language skills, budgeting, etc (not career-related training, but basic preparedness); health screenings
		Enrollment of qualified participants in nutrition programs such as WIC, food stamps, etc; education of poor people about federal safety net programs; etc. (can go along with advocacy efforts). Does not include T&TA to help people write proposals for CFP. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting up EBT stand in farmers' market</li> <li>• Increasing access to EBT capabilities in low-income neighborhoods</li> <li>• Gaining EBT certification for farmers</li> </ul>

Community Organizing	Community organizing	Organizing a local community around food (local food system organizing); (can include community potlucks, celebrations) Inter-ethnic collaboration (involving immigrant farmers, ethnic/racial minorities, etc) Outreach to low-income neighborhoods to educate about local food systems and seek input into planning, activity development Farmer mentoring for new/immigrant farmers Developing mechanisms for the participation of marginalized groups such as African-Americans, immigrants, etc.
Community Awareness and Education	Community education	Includes new school-based activities; broad community informational and educational activities in food, agriculture, nutrition; related local conferences/workshops
Community Planning/ Capacity Development	Nonprofit collaboration	
	Nonprofit capacity development	Activities specifically geared to increasing the capacity of nonprofits (by T&TA, educational workshops, etc) in developing Community Food Projects, writing CFP proposals, implementing projects, and evaluating projects. This includes work done by Growing Power, Southern SAWG, and CFSC.
	Public/private for-profit/nonprofit partnership	Includes partnerships with public agencies, universities, extension, etc; farms, supermarkets or other private for-profit firms; and one or more nonprofit.
	Neighborhood or community planning	Helping existing neighborhood or community organization/s to incorporate food issues in their planning activities; seeking input and organizing their participation in developing citywide plans, developing citywide priorities for food-related actions; developing plans linking food, health/nutrition, economic development, etc.
	Youth leadership	
	Cultural identity and pride	Celebrating traditional heritage, ethnic festivals
Policy development, advocacy, organizing	Policy development, advocacy, organizing	Includes local, state, federal policy; developing policy, building support for it, and conducting advocacy
Infrastructure Development	Land/soil remediation	
	Irrigation system installation	
	New garden development	
	New facilities	

**Notes on the coding scheme and output:**

1. Codes are based on grantee report summaries from the CFP Program. Although patterns exist in the types of projects funded by the CFP Program, it is difficult to assure comparability between activities of different organizations, especially concerning small variations within codes.
2. Coding simply signifies the presence of a type of activity, not its scale, priority for the organization, or extent of project resource allocation to it. Low number of activities or outcomes for a particular project does not signify a less optimal project. Rather, it might mean that a project focused all of its efforts intensively on a limited number of activities that were complex and possibly internally differentiated in ways that may not have been discussed in project summaries.

**Other notes:**

- Planting of fruit trees in a community garden is not considered a separate production activity, especially if the scale is relatively small—a handful of trees, for example.
- It was hard to distinguish activities that were supported solely by the CFP Program from those supported by other concurrent funding. Clearly, given the requirement for matching funds, other funding sources were employed in specific activities, but the grantee report was unclear for which activities and what levels.

# APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP INSTRUMENT

## FOCUS GROUP IMPLEMENTATION NOTES

Focus groups included seven representatives of diverse Community Food Projects located in a variety of geographic regions. Prior to the focus group meeting, Human Subjects permissions were obtained from Wayne State University, and informational material was sent by e-mail to ten participants who had indicated an interest in participating. This material included a brief description of study objectives, sample focus group questions, analytic methods, confidentiality issues, and informed consent forms.

The focus group was scheduled for a lunch session during the Community Food Security Coalition Conference in Vancouver, Canada, in October 2006. Seven of the ten individuals initially contacted ended up participating in the focus group. The initially scheduled time (75 minutes) was insufficient to complete the focus group, and participants expressed a willingness to meet over phone conference in November 2006. Several participants indicated that the discussion was a useful complement to their own reflections on their projects and the resulting lessons. Focus group discussions were transcribed and analyzed for the study; selected quotes are provided in the body of the report.

## THE FOCUS GROUP INSTRUMENT

---

### Introductions

Please tell us your name, organization, and a couple of sentences about your project or projects if you were funded multiple times by the CFP.

As you answer the questions, please feel free to provide project details as necessary to help us put your responses in context. In order to complete this focus group in time, we also ask that you be brief in these details.

1. First, thinking about YOUR Community Food Project, what were the two or three **most important factors that help explain successes** achieved in your project (in addition to the availability of funding from CFP, that is)?

*(Probe for experience in activities proposed under the grant, experience with similar projects, pre-existing partnerships, size/reputation of organization in community, grassroots connectivity, links to public or nonprofit agencies.)*

2. Tell us about the **biggest challenges** faced in implementing your Community Food Project and **your sense of the factors** underlying these challenges. For example, let's say a key challenge faced in a three-year

market garden program was retaining gardeners over the course of the grant period, and one of the factors might be the fact that most of your new gardeners were Spanish and Lao speakers and your program did not plan for bilingual trainers in any major way. Or the city did not allow farm stands in neighborhoods with high demand, and so gardeners left because they couldn't make enough money.

*(Probe for organizational, collaborative, and community factors underlying challenges such as organizational inexperience or lack of preparedness for particular issues, resistance from community, competition and turf issues, overall policy context, etc.*

*Probe also for extent to which some of these could have been anticipated and how, during grant proposal preparation, so as to help other groups writing proposals.)*

3. We know from project reports we obtained from the USDA the kinds of steps organizations take to sustain their projects after CFP funding ends. What we don't know enough about are the challenges or barriers organizations face as they try to ensure long-term sustainability of the activities conducted under the grant. What are the **challenges or barriers to sustain your CFP project's goals and activities** over the longer term?

*(Probe for responses beyond obtaining direct funding to continue activities, to more structural issues such as: policy or regulatory context and incentives, infrastructure, partnerships, integration of work into professional bodies, cultural acceptability or resistance, food system issues, etc.*

*Probe also for ease or difficulty of sustainability of particular types of food system and community development linkages).*

4. Community Food Projects typically require collaborations in the community, among nonprofits and between private, public, and nonprofit sector organizations. We would like to hear about your **positive experiences with collaboration** of these or other kinds. Tell us about the benefits that have arisen from collaborations either during or after your project.

*(Probe for factors that underlie positive experiences or benefits from collaborations: what factors enable successful collaborations-in terms of people, organizational culture, history and context, external incentives, etc.?)*

5. And what were the greatest drawbacks or challenges of collaborations in your project?

*(Probe for organizational, structural, cultural and community factors that challenge collaborations: competition for resources, turf/status issues, reward and incentive structures, etc.)*

**End: 2:15 PM**

## Ask the following if and as time allows:

6. Governments and foundations are increasingly interested in funding community food security initiatives. They want communities to obtain maximal benefits in return for their support, in terms of delivering access in underserved communities to healthy food choices, supporting local agriculture and food distribution, developing small food businesses, and building skills and capacities among youth and adults to cook and eat more healthfully. Based on lessons from your experience, what advice might you give potential funders?

*(Probe as time allows: what types of activities they should prioritize, how should these activities be implemented on the ground, and how such funding can ensure success while also bringing new players on board.)*

7. Based on your experiences with your Community Food Project or Projects, and your knowledge of other community food security initiatives you or others have undertaken, what are key characteristics that you perceive to be common to successful Community Food Projects?

*(Probe on types of objectives projects have undertaken; characteristics/capacity of organizations; sustainability of activities and outcomes; social and physical infrastructure developed; collaborations; etc.)*

---

## Focus Group Follow-up Note

All participants were given a follow-up questionnaire to share responses to questions they may have been uncomfortable discussing in a group, or to elaborate on a particular response after the focus group ended. Respondents were given self-addressed stamped envelopes to facilitate returns of confidential material.

## APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT DESCRIPTION

Focus group participants included seven individuals who had served as project directors for at least one Community Food Project grant; three participants received more than one grant award each. Their experience in community food security issues ranged from five to 19 years, many of those years working specifically with the Community Food Projects program. Participants included four women and three men, one person of color, and six Caucasians.

Projects represented a variety of activities and localities. Activities ranged from farm to school, youth development, community building, regional food system support, food policy councils or networks, citizen advocacy, urban agriculture, nutrition, job training and skills development, CFP training and technical support, and micro-enterprise development

Most regions of the country were represented, including the Northeast, Midwest, Southwest, Northwest, Southern West Coast and Southern States. The constituencies served by each project also were diverse, and included schools and universities, small-scale and immigrant farmers, food service operations, local food system advocates, parents and consumers, urban neighborhood communities, urban or rural youth, and other Community Food Project grantees.

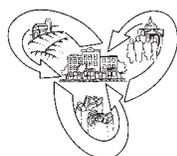


# CREDITS



*Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) advances knowledge for agriculture, the environment, human health and well-being, and communities through national program leadership and federal assistance.*

[www.csrees.usda.gov](http://www.csrees.usda.gov)



*Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) is a national alliance dedicated to building strong, sustainable, local and regional food systems that ensure access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food to all people at all times.*

[www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org)

## Contributors to *Building Community Food Security*:

Dr. Kami Pothukuchi, *Wayne State University*

Jeanette Abi-Nader, *Community Food Security Coalition*

Tammy Morales, *Research Intern*

Kai Siedenburg, *Community Food Security Coalition*

Aleta Dunn, *Community Food Security Coalition*

Larry Fisher, *Appalachian Center for Economic Networks*

Jim Dyer, *Southwest Marketing Network*

Steven M. Garrett, *University of Washington*

Dana Hudson, *Shelburne Farms*

Paula Jones, *San Francisco Food Systems*

Liz Luc Clowes, *The Food Project*

Jenifer Smith, *South Plains Food Bank*

## Reviewers of *Building Community Food Security*:

Jim Dyer, *Southwest Marketing Network*

Andy Fisher, *Community Food Security Coalition*

Paula Jones, *San Francisco Food Systems*

Hugh Joseph, *Tufts University*

Jerry Kaufman, *University of Wisconsin,*

*Department of Urban and Regional Planning*

Anna Lappé, *Small Planet Institute*

## For additional copies contact:

Andy Fisher at [andy@foodsecurity.org](mailto:andy@foodsecurity.org), or go to the Community Food Security Coalition's website at [www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org), publications section.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.