

# **Community Shared Agriculture and Food Circles Small Farm Involvement in the CSREES, USDA Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program: *Opportunities through 2002***

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USDA-CSREES

In my talk today I wanted to inform you about two activities around community food security at USDA. The first is a grant program, which can bring funding to small farms, and the second is an initiative established by Secretary Glickman to focus the energy and resources of USDA on community food security. I want to be clear that these programs are connected, but at the same time different programs.

The Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program (CFPCGP) was a part of the 1996 Farm Bill. The funding came from Food Stamps. The funding is, therefore, mandatory money available each year, without appropriations through the year 2002 when the farm bill will be revised. The CFPCGP was delegated to CSREES to run the competitive grants process. Each year 2.4 million dollars is made available through the CFPCGP to grassroots non-profit organizations in low-income communities to:

1. Increase food access;
2. Increase self-sufficiency over food systems;
3. Address food, nutrition, and farm issues;
4. Involve entire food system assessment and long-term planning;
5. Develop linkages and collaborations throughout community;
6. Become self-sufficient over 1 - 3 years of the project.

Partnerships are encouraged between public and private sectors, profit and non-profit, universities and non-governmental agencies and farms. Since 1996 sixty-nine projects have been funded. Abstracts of these projects along with contact numbers can be found on our web site: [www.reeusda.gov/crgam/cfp/community.htm](http://www.reeusda.gov/crgam/cfp/community.htm)

Now that you know the basic principles of the legislation, which established the grant program, I would like to talk with you about some examples of small farm involvement in grants that have been funded. There are examples among our awardees of small farms that have

collaborated with consumers to create direct marketing opportunities through CSA marketing and Farmer's Markets. Some projects have actually established small farms and work from them to establish viable food systems within low-income communities.

**FIELD TO FAMILY, PRACTICAL FARMERS OF IOWA,  
BOONE, IOWA - \$135,600 FOR 3 YEARS  
CONTACT: GARY HUBER (515) 232-7162**

This project works with multiple farms to contract for particular crops. It is a different way of doing community supported agriculture, several farms providing produce to a central location. The shares provided for the CSA are paid for by members and many shares are subsidized for low-income members by donations from churches that belong to the project. The goals for this project are to make fresh, locally-grown produce more readily available to low-income households through linkages with churches and agencies helping families leave welfare; promoting proper nutrition and helping producers access local markets. They have been able to work their CSA to accept food stamps and they have standards that support farmers' livelihoods. If food is given away, the farmer is paid for it first.

**FOOD SECURITY AMONG FARM-WORKER COMMUNITIES  
IN THE SALINAS VALLEY, ASSOCIATION FOR  
COMMUNITY-BASED EDUCATION, WASHINGTON, D.C.  
AND ITS RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER, (RDC) IN  
SALINAS, CA - \$105,000 FOR 2 YEARS  
CONTACT: JOSE MONTENEGRO (414) 869-1600**

This project works to educate and give farming opportunities to farm workers so that they can learn organic farming techniques to produce, distribute and market their own products. The project also promotes education and policy changes to help farm workers become more self-sufficient over their food.

Missoula Food System-Community Agriculture Project

Missoula Nutrition Resources, Missoula, Montana

\$175,000 for 2 years

Contact: (406) 423-3663

This project is a community-wide effort including diverse sectors of the community. It reported the following outcome of their project:

1. Promote comprehensive responses to local food farm and nutrition issues.

A Program in Ecological Agriculture and Society (PEAS) was implemented for 50 University of Montana students, with 25 of them working as interns at farm sites. Other workshops were held on gardening, food preservation, cooking, and nutrition.

2. Increase the self-reliance of the community in providing for its food needs.

Six acres of undeveloped land were put into production for gardens and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) projects. CSA shares were purchased by 15 households and donated to another 30 WIC families.

A 20x70 foot greenhouse for starter plants was constructed at one of the farm sites. Neighborhood gardens aided 120 households in supplying their own food.

Over 700 volunteers from more than a dozen organizations contributed more than 6,000 hours to the project. Some 175 persons attended a single lecture on sustainable growing and other workshops were also held.

3. Meet the food needs of low-income people by growing, gleaning, preserving, and distributing locally-grown produce.

In excess of 57,000 pounds of local produce was provided to low-income families and emergency feeding organizations in the first season of the project. A similar, though unweighed, amount of produce was provided to low-income volunteers who helped themselves to whatever they could use. Produce was also sold to CSA shareholders and institutions. A cannery owned by a religious organization and staffed by volunteers preserved over 5,000 pounds of food.

**TAHOMA FOOD SYSTEM, THE TAHOMA FOOD SYSTEM,  
TACOMA, WASHINGTON -\$105,000 FOR 3 YEARS**

**CONTACT: CARRIE LITTLE (253) 531-5658**

This project involves South East Asian families, already experienced farmers,. They were provided land and organic agriculture training to develop niche markets. Another aspect to the project is the 4.5 acre Guadalupe Gardens. The garden and an adjacent orchard have been restored for use by a 48-family CSA. This garden is in the process of transition to management by the

Guadalupe House homeless center. In addition, a bee colony was installed.

**THE URBAN FARM COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECT,  
DENVER URBAN GARDENS, DENVER, CO - \$163,000**

**FOR 2 YEARS**

**CONTACT: DAVID RISEK (303) 292-9900**

Project Summary: The Urban Farm at Delaney aims to initiate a community supported agriculture (CSA) program, establish a Community Food Council, develop a livestock center, start an entrepreneurial program for youth and the homeless, and expand gardening throughout the Denver metropolitan area.

USDA policy themes and initiatives that have the potential to strengthen the impact and success of some community food projects. These include food recovery and gleaning efforts; connecting the low-income urban consumer with the rural food producer; aiding citizens in leaving public assistance and achieving self-sufficiency; and utilizing micro enterprise and/or development projects related to community food needs. Relevant ongoing USDA and other Federal initiatives include farmers' markets; USDA's Office of Sustainable Development and Small Farms; USDA and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development designated Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities; and the Ameri-Corps National Service Program (a potential source of staff support for Community Food Projects).

Applicants should also recognize the role played by food and nutrition assistance programs administered by USDA and may want to discuss in their proposals the utilization of these programs by the community and the connection to the proposed Community Food Project. These programs include: the Food Stamp Program; child nutrition programs such as the School Lunch, School Breakfast, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition, Child and Adult Care Food, and Summer Food Service Programs; and commodity distribution programs.

Applicants also should be cognizant of resources available from other Federal programs with similar or related goals, such as the Community Food and Nutrition Program (CFNP) and Job Opportunities for Low-Income Individuals (JOLI) program administered by the Office of Community Services within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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