

USDA Grants Support Local Efforts to Fight Hunger and Food Insecurity

Written by USDA Communications
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WASHINGTON, Feb. 15, 2012—The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced today 27 grants to local organizations to build community food systems and fight hunger and food insecurity. The awards were made by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) through its Community Food Projects program. The new projects, totaling \$4.8 million in funding, include a teen-run community kitchen incubator, faith-based community food assessments, a program to help indigenous people return to healthful eating, and a youth-led food security movement. Community Food Projects have been funded in nearly 350 communities in 48 states in the program's 15-year history.

"Hunger remains an important issue in the United States. Last year, 17.2 million households faced food insecurity—meaning they lacked consistent access to adequate food," said Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services Kevin Concannon. "The grants supported by the Community Food Projects empower local organizations to respond to food and nutrition needs in their own communities."

The primary goals of the Community Food Projects program are to (1) meet the food needs of low-income individuals; (2) increase the food self-reliance of low-income communities; (3) promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm and nutrition issues; and (4) meet specific state, local or neighborhood food and agricultural needs, including needs relating to infrastructure improvement and development, planning for long-term solutions and the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers.

Fiscal Year 2011 awards include:

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- Juneau Cooperative Christian Ministry, Juneau, Alaska, \$93,825
- International Sonoran Desert Alliance, Ajo, Ariz., \$163,807
- Developing Innovations in Navajo Education, Inc., Flagstaff, Ariz., \$116,863
- Uncommon Good, Claremont, Calif., \$300,000
- North Oxnard United Methodist Church, Oxnard, Calif., \$24,884
- Urban Tilth, Richmond, Calif., \$300,000
- North Coast Opportunities, Inc., Ukiah, Calif.; \$300,000
- Las Animas Helping Hands, Las Animas, Colo, \$25,000
- Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services, Honolulu, Hawaii, \$25,000
- Matthew 25 Ministry Hub, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, \$25,000
- Kansas City Center for Urban Agriculture, Kansas City, Kansas, \$124,587
- Good Shepherd Food-Bank, Auburn, Maine, \$25,000
- Cultivating Community, Portland, Maine, \$300,000
- United Teen Equality Center, Lowell, Mass., \$297,767
- Regional Environmental Council, Worcester, Mass., \$300,000
- Youth Farm and Market Project, Minneapolis, Minn., \$299,660
- Rio Puerco Alliance, Santa Fe, N.M., \$25,000
- Society for the Preservation of Weeksville and Bedford Stuyvesant History, Brooklyn, N.Y., \$197,500
- PathStone Community Improvement of Newburgh, Newburgh, N.Y., \$25,000
- Why Hunger, New York City, N.Y., \$250,000
- Community Food Security Coalition, Portland, Ore, \$250,000
- Friends of Zenger Farm, Portland, Ore., \$187,860
- Urban Tree Connection, Philadelphia, Pa., \$300,000
- Women's Community Revitalization Project, Philadelphia, Pa., \$269,317
- Staunton Creative Community Fund, Inc., Staunton, Va., \$25,000
- Irwin A. and Robert D. Goodman Community Center, Madison, Wis., \$298,930
- Growing Power, Milwaukee, Wis., \$250,000

USDA's [Household Food Security in the United States, 2010](#) report found that the percentage of very low food security declined from 5.7 percent of households in 2009 to 5.4 percent in 2010. The USDA study indicates that in 2010, 17.2 million households in America had difficulty providing enough food due to a lack of resources. The number of food insecure households in 2010 was relatively consistent with statistics released in 2008 and 2009.

The report also indicates that 59 percent of all food-insecure households participated in one or more of the three largest nutrition assistance programs near the time of the survey. In fiscal year 2010, these programs provided much needed food assistance to millions of individuals, children and families in need:

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In an average month of fiscal year 2011, the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP) provided benefits to 44.7 million people in the United States.

In fiscal year 2011, the [National School Lunch Program](#) (NSLP) provided meals to an average of 31.8 million children each school day.

In fiscal year 2011, [the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children](#) (WIC) served an average 9 million participants.

Food insecurity rates were substantially higher than the national average for households with incomes near or below the current federal poverty line (\$22,350 for a family of four), households with children headed by single women or single men, and black and Hispanic households. Food insecurity was more common in large cities and rural areas than in suburban areas and other outlying areas around large cities. The media briefing kit can be obtained at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Features/HouseholdFoodSecurity2010/>.

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