



MISSION

Grow a healthy community by connecting all people to nutritious foods.

To meet this mission, we will implement...

Mission-driven Solutions

Provide **equitable access** to affordable and nutritious foods to support healthy food choices ^{2,3,4,5}

Equitable Access

Provide **food education** to increase knowledge, skill, and confidence in growing, cooking, and eating healthy foods ^{1,2,5}

Food Education

Support our farming community to grow and sustain a thriving **local food system** ^{3,7,8}

Local Food System Development

Collaborate and share resources to strengthen our community's collective ability to improve health ^{2,7,8}

Collaboration & Resource Sharing

Programs & Activities

To implement these solutions, we will provide...

- Manage nutrition incentives programs at farmers markets (VFM, WIC/Senior FMNP) ^{2,4}
- Operate a mobile market ³
- Share & distribute food we grow to communities in need ^{3,4}
- Partner with community ambassadors ²
- Support other farmers markets in implementing nutrition incentives (VFM Regional Leadership) ⁴

- Provide hands-on farm, garden, and food based education through field trips, cooking classes, school garden lessons, and youth employment ^{1,5}
- Conduct food tastings on the farm, in schools, and at our markets ¹

- Facilitate farmers markets so local farmers can sell food
- Create pathways for local food procurement for other local producers ³
- Buy and sell local food (e.g., at schools, markets, restaurants)
- Connect farmers to resources and opportunities for networking, training, business development and sales ^{7,8}

- Provide consultation services on garden-based education, food access, & farming
- Conduct community outreach through tabling events & presentations ²
- Collaboration with local, regional, state, and federal partners on programs ⁸

Resources

To provide these programs and activities, we will need...

Expert Staff, Invested Board of Directors, Financial & Impact Reports/Assessments, Collaborative & Diverse Funders/Donors, Network of Community Partners, Enthusiastic Volunteers, Reputation, Values, Office space, storage, supplies, Our Farm, Accessible Land, Vehicles (mobile market & farm truck), Marketing, Website & Social Media Presence,

Our reach and efforts will be shown by efficiency in generating...

Productivity

- # of sales with nutrition incentives
- # of VFM outlets we are supporting in our region
- # lbs of food sold and donated to low access communities

- # number of educational activities and events (e.g., field trips, cooking classes, tastings, school garden lessons, summer camps)

- # number of farmers markets
- # \$ food we sold & purchased locally (e.g., markets, schools, wholesale, CSA, Farm Stand, etc.)

- # and description of organizations consultation is provided to
- # of consulting hours
- # of outreach activities/events (e.g., tabling events, speaking events)

of mobile market sites, visits, & transactions
 # of food servings distributed
 # of, and hours of service, of community ambassadors

number of people receiving food education including children, youth, adults, and seniors
 # hours of instruction delivered & received by program participants
 # number of youth employed in farm leadership program

lbs & variety of food grown (PG & WEF)
 # \$ vendor sales facilitated through our markets
 # transactions & customer counts at market
 # total number of farmers supported through our programming

Immediate Impact

Our success and value will be measured by ...

- ✓ People report consuming more fresh local food, including fruits & vegetables^{3,4,5}
- ✓ People have increased access and affordability of fresh, local food including fruits & vegetables^{3,4,5}

- ✓ Children can identify fruits and vegetables and are more willing to try them^{1,5}
- ✓ Children have more access to fresh, local fruits & vegetables^{4,5}
- ✓ children, youth, and adults know how to grow & prepare fresh fruits & vegetables^{1,5}

- ✓ Local producers have a reliable network for collaboration and resource sharing^{7,8}
- ✓ Increased availability of direct to consumer markets³
- ✓ increased demand for local food by market traffic and sales³

- ✓ Partners have resources to develop and maintain similar programs⁸
- ✓ People have access to food-related community health programs^{2,4}

Longer-term Change

In the future, research suggests the people we worked with to be able to ...

- Increase access to healthy, safe, and affordable food for individuals and families of all socioeconomic levels to support long term health^{2,3,4,5}
- Eliminate geographically based food and health disparities^{3,4}
- Lower chronic disease through healthy dietary patterns⁴
- Increase overall sense of wellbeing⁸

- Improved home food environments and healthier eating habits^{1,3,4}
- Childhood and adult obesity rates lower over time⁴
- Children develop healthy eating habits that continue into adulthood^{1,4,5}
- Increased fruit & vegetable consumption and awareness^{1,3,5}
- People are empowered to grow their own food and cook healthy meals at home⁵

- Local food is more visible and accessible in the community^{2,3}
- The local food economy is healthy, vibrant, and growing
- more farmers are able to establish and/or maintain business⁷

- Increased community resilience⁸
- Collaboration leads to more and improved food-related programming and advocacy^{2,7}
- Project GROWS is identified in our community as an essential, valuable, and inclusive resource for connecting people to the source of their food, the land, and each other

Community-level Impact

Ultimately, and collectively with other efforts, this will contribute to improving...

Increased food security^{3,4} Improved community health outcomes^{1,4,5} Increased community wellbeing⁸

VISION

We envision a world with an equitable food system where everyone has the access and knowledge to choose, grow, and enjoy foods that support a healthy life.

Project GROWS' Impact Statement

The Local Need

Just over 1 in 5 people (**21.7%**) living in our region have **low food access**, which is higher than the Virginia average and higher yet in Augusta County (29.3%). While **the rate of food insecurity in our region (20.8%)** is lower than the national percentage (34.1%), this statistic is growing in our region and women, young adults, communities of color, and especially lower-income residents are more likely to report being food insecure. In fact, nearly 1 in 5 people in our region (22.7%) have **difficulty accessing affordable fresh produce** which is also higher than our state average and highest among these same groups. These disparities are contributing to negative health outcomes in our community. Youth and adult obesity rates in our community are higher than the national average with just over 1 in 5 **youth (21.9%)** and 2 in 5 **adults (40.9%) living with obesity**. Additionally, the number of adults with diabetes (14.9%) in our community is higher than the national average.⁶

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