



Healthy Communities through Healthy Food

A funding initiative to
 Utilize older adults as a key resource
 To increase access to and use of fresh healthy food and improve life in low income communities

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

I. Overview

Healthy Communities Through Healthy Food is part of the Community Experience Partnership (CEP), a national initiative of The Atlantic Philanthropies. The initiative seeks to build the capacity of communities across the U.S. to meaningfully engage the talents and energy of older adults for the benefit of their communities. Projects in eleven communities across the nation will add to the growing body of knowledge on how best to engage society’s older adult population as drivers for community improvement and social change. The New York City effort will focus on the need to increase access to and use of fresh healthy food in low-income communities as a first step to improving life in these communities. The intent of the project is to recognize the experience, creativity and vital resource older adults offer to their communities. In New York City, The Atlantic Philanthropies is partnering with The New York Community Trust and United Neighborhood Houses of New York (UNH).

II. Project Goals

UNH and The New York Community Trust seek proposals from community-based organizations to:

- Utilize innovative strategies that engage older individuals in leadership roles and as a key resource in building their community’s capacity to address an important community need that will improve life in the community.
- Increase access to, knowledge about and use of fresh healthy food in low-income communities

III. Funding

This initiative plans to make at least three grants of up to \$70,000 per year to three different organizations. The funding is renewable for three years, beginning in early 2010.

IV. Process

Interested applicants should submit a proposal following the guidelines outlined below. The project’s Advisory Committee will review all submissions. As part of the process, applicants may be asked to meet and discuss their proposal with the Committee and project staff. Applicants will be notified of the Advisory Committee’s decisions in late September, 2009. Anticipated project start dates will be after final approval by project funders expected no later than February, 2010. Prior to this date, successful applicants will be asked to participate in a number of activities, including meeting with project funders and initial work on program evaluation design.

V. Deadlines and Submission

RFP Information Meeting → Tuesday, June 30 Time: 9:30 – 11am Place: The Hudson Guild Theater Hudson Guild 441 West 26 th Street (near 10 th Avenue) Manhattan	Proposals are due by → 5pm on July 29, 2009 Email your proposal <u>and</u> mail or deliver a hard copy to: Healthy Communities Project Proposals United Neighborhood Houses of New York 70 West 36 th Street – 5 th floor New York, NY 10018 healthycommunities@unhny.org
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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

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PROJECT CRITERIA

Projects must be focused on a community's food system

Proposed projects must be based upon community identified needs for improving access to and use of healthy food in defined neighborhoods. These needs and project ideas should be substantially generated by members of low-income communities, who must be both participants in and direct beneficiaries of project activities and outcomes. Innovative approaches are welcomed.

Projects must engage older adults

Older adults (defined as those who are age 60 or older) must be a key (but not the only) community resource that is meaningfully engaged at all levels of project activities. Older adults can be engaged in a multitude of ways, including as volunteers, stipendiary workers, or as full- or part-time employees who help engage the larger community including other older adults. This emphasis must be a central part of project proposals.

Projects must reflect a community-wide approach with multiple impacts

While this funding initiative has two over-riding goals – to address food access needs from a community-wide perspective and to develop models for engaging older adults as a key resource in meeting these needs – experience has shown that the strategy chosen to accomplish these two goals can have other important impacts on the community (see page 5 diagram). These impacts must be recognized and identified in project proposals, and made an explicit part of the project's goals. For example, a strategy for increasing access to affordable, fresh healthy food might be the opening of a food coop, wherein older adults take on key organizing roles. The additional impact this strategy might have on a community could be the availability of new jobs to be filled locally, improving the community's economic vitality.

This funding initiative thus asks applicants to emphasize a broad community-based systems approach in their thinking and proposal, showing evidence of information sharing, coalition building and outreach to (and involvement of) multiple parts of the community. Programs addressing local food issues are likely to contain educational and advocacy components as an outgrowth of the work. Collaborations are thereby encouraged.

We Are Looking for Organizations That Have The Following Experience and Knowledge:

- Community building experience in low-income neighborhoods, including planning and implementation processes that bring together different constituencies / communities to successfully address broad community issues,
- A history (directly or through project partnerships) of successfully engaging volunteers and engaging individuals age 60 and older,
- Experience (directly or through project partnerships) working on issues of food access, food justice and/or access to and use of healthy food, and
- Experience participating in program evaluation processes, gathering and reporting data, and tracking outcome measurements.

APPLICATION DIRECTIONS

Who Can Apply

- The lead applicant must be an existing 501(c)3 organization, including but not limited to community-based service and advocacy organizations and local development corporations.
- Organizations that do not have a 501(c)3 tax status may apply in partnership with organizations that do. This may include urban farms, farmers markets, faith-based organizations, block associations, local food

education initiatives, non-501(c)3-affiliated business improvement districts, etc. [Please note → A 501(c)3 organization must be the lead applicant and have a letter of understanding between project partners specifying project goals and each entity's roles and responsibilities].

The Proposal: What we would like to know

Proposals must not exceed five (5) pages (excluding cover letter and attachments) and include the following:

- A. **Cover letter** – signed by the organization's executive director or agency head
- B. An **organizational description** (one page maximum), including mission, values, goals and objectives, program strategies used to reach your goals and objectives, and how you measure success
- C. The **experience and knowledge** your organization brings to this project as outlined above in the section entitled *The Qualities we are looking for in organizations to be funded* (one page maximum).
- D. A **description of the project** you propose for CEP funding, providing the following:
 - a) A description of the community this project will be working in, and a statement of need regarding healthy food access and use that is to be addressed through this project
 - b) The project's goals and strategies and how older adults will be a key resource in the project,
 - c) The process used to identify the need, goals and strategies for increasing access to and use of healthy food with older adults as a key project resource,
 - d) The anticipated wider impact that your food access strategy will have on your community and the basis for your assessment
 - e) A list of the community partners with whom you will be working on this project, why they were chosen and previous experience you have had with them.
 - f) The strategy for ensuring the project is community based and community driven.
 - g) The plan to incorporate this work into your ongoing activities after this funding ends.
 - h) A plan for measuring the project's success.
- E. **Attachments**
 - a) Project Budget -- Please submit:
 - An annual budget for each year of the three year grant period and an aggregated project budget (please include any cash or in-kind revenue that will support the proposed activity)
 - A short budget narrative describing PS and OTPS expenditures, including a staffing plan and the qualifications of those who will work on the project.
 - b) Most recent audited financial statement for lead organization
 - c) A copy of IRS determination letter for 501(c)3 status of lead organization.

SELECTION PROCESS and CRITERIA

All applications will be reviewed by the project's Advisory Committee consisting of individuals with expertise in access to and use of healthy food, building community in low-income neighborhoods, and meaningfully engaging older adults in community issues. In selecting projects for funding, the following will be considered:

- Clarity of program goals and the activities used to accomplish these goals
- Demonstrated understanding of and experience with the project criteria as described above.
- Demonstrated effectiveness in building and maintaining collaborations and in engaging community members – particularly older adults – to achieve community goals.
- Organizational capacity and readiness to successfully launch, and implement the project.
- Qualifications of staff overseeing the project and demonstrated commitment to the project by grantee's leadership
- A reasonable plan for ensuring that the work accomplished by this project will be supported by the community over time and made a part of the ongoing work of the partnering organizations.

REQUIREMENTS OF GRANT RECIPIENTS

As a condition of grant receipt, applicants will agree to the following:

- Participate in periodic meetings of a *Healthy Communities Through Healthy Food* projects committee to discuss program progress, share program experiences and knowledge, and determine joint actions / initiatives with others working in the field.

- Be part of an on-going process to identify project challenges that would benefit from the assistance of a team of pro-bono experts who would be available as consultants to project sites.
- Participate in evaluation and assessment activities, including – with the assistance of project staff – the preparation, identification, collection and reporting of required data.
- Provide interim and annual program and fiscal reports, approved by the organization’s highest officer, within time frames and format specified by project staff. Program reports will be used to determine subsequent year funding.
- Provide additional information to assist project staff in overall assessment of the project and for reporting to project funders.

RFP TIMELINE

<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>DATE</u>
• RFP Release date		June 19 (Friday)
• RFP Information Meeting	9:30 – 11am	June 30 (Tuesday)
• RFP Proposal Due Date	5pm	July 29 (Wednesday)
• Notification of Funding Decision		End of September, 2009
• Anticipated Project State Date		February, 2010



United Neighborhood Houses

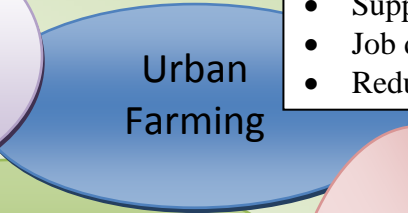
Increasing Access to and Use of Healthy Food

Strategies and Impacts

- Strengthens neighborhood bonds
- Builds community
- Fights hunger



- Provides new resources to individuals and the community
- Increases economic activity



- Promotes community development
- Strengthens neighborhood bonds
- Fights hunger
- Provides mentoring opportunities
- Supports youth programs
- Job development potential
- Reduces crime

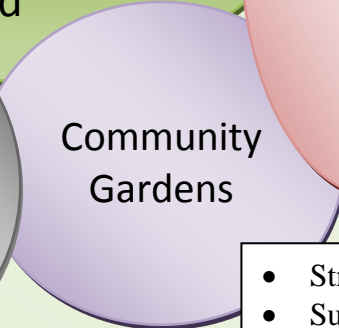
Improving
Community
Health

Strengthening
Communities and
Public Health through
Food



- Strengthens neighborhood bonds
- Increases economic activity
- Fights hunger
- Increases access to entitlements

- Increases economic activity
- Job development potential



- Empowers healthy food choices
- Increases access to entitlements
- Creates intergenerational opportunities

- Strengthens neighborhood bonds
- Supports youth programs
- Provides mentoring opportunities
- Builds community
- Reduces crime
- Fights hunger

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

I. The Importance of Healthy Local Food For Building Community

The lack of access to healthy food disproportionately harms low-income urban neighborhoods, where public health has suffered the most, all the more so during this economic downturn. The distance to healthy fresh food is a predictor of health – the closer the fresh food, the healthier the community. Low-income communities without ready access to affordable healthy food, and with a resulting reliance on less nutritious calorie-dense food, suffer significantly higher rates for childhood and adult obesity, type II diabetes, hypertension and heart disease, health outcomes that decrease the quality of life and add tens-of-billions of dollars to society's annual health care costs. In addition, without good access to affordable healthy food, low-income neighborhoods have been losing their knowledge about how to prepare healthy food for eating.

Key community leaders have begun to address these problems through vehicles like food cooperatives, community gardens, farmers markets, urban farms, and community supported agriculture (CSA). These approaches introduce into low-income neighborhoods locally grown food that is fresher and more varied than is currently available. Such community-based programs also create the potential for addressing the broader issues in a neighborhood's food system, including more education in the home and the school about nutrition and cooking, more food of better quality in bodegas and markets, and more help to end hunger suffered by neighbors.

Further, working to create a just and healthy food system helps to build community in other dimensions, partly because food is an issue that can link all neighbors and because working on the issue already has a demonstrated likelihood of success. Specifically, the economic and social opportunities presented by community gardens, food cooperatives, farmers markets, urban farms, community supported agriculture, nutrition education and advocacy with retail food outlets all can help build community on multiple levels by:

- fostering neighborhood leaders (as individuals see the big difference they've made for their communities);
- strengthening neighborhood bonds (as neighbors work together successfully to replicate what has been done in other communities);
- promoting self-reliance and investment in the community (as neighbors gradually obtain more local control over their food and health and aspire to apply the skills they've developed to other community problems);
- opening up more potential for job development (as food system vehicles like farms, coops, and markets build solid businesses);
- increasing capital that supports neighborhood businesses and economic development (through food spending that keeps money local, and by increasing participation in SNAP and other income support programs);
- job and leadership training for neighborhood youth (consistent with the strong intern programs in existing urban gardens, farms, and markets); and
- reducing crime (as more neighbors are out and active in their communities due to locally-based economic development activities and constructive after-school programs for youth).

Thus, increasing access to and use of fresh locally grown food is one of the strongest organizing vehicles for building communities more generally.

II. The Importance of Engaging Older Adults In Building Community

For the first time in history, older adults in the U.S. are projected to outnumber the country's children and youth. In New York City for the next two decades, the growth rate will effectively add 50,000 adults over age 60 to the city's population *every year*. The result is a looming challenge for those committed to building communities.

Fortunately the terrain is familiar, because community organizers have already seen how young people were once perceived as too needy, difficult and a societal burden, and thus left out of community building efforts. Similar to the challenges already posed but now being addressed with youth, the challenges of a burgeoning population of older adults include the question of how to develop and tap into the potential of this large group to help build neighborhoods, rather than leave such a significant group out of the process. Just as neighborhoods innovatively developed healthy and productive roles for young people in building community, they need to develop healthy and productive roles for the population of older adults that will soon to outnumber young people. This will ensure the community is being built by *all* members of the community.

Developing the capacity of society to engage – for the civic good – the millions of citizens entering the ranks of older adults can have a transformative impact on communities across the nation. At no time has there been a greater need to develop this capacity given the many challenges our nation and communities face today. In New York City, we have the opportunity to contribute to this important national goal, and at the same time, have an immediate positive impact on some of the City's neediest communities and the individuals who live there.

III. Older Adults' Demonstrated Record of Creating Healthy Communities Through Healthy Food

It is widely acknowledged that older adults in New York City have been a vital resource in creating healthy communities through healthy food, a tradition that remains vibrant today. Over a decade ago, it was older women in neighborhoods like the South Bronx and East New York who pioneered urban farming on vacant lots. That effort has evolved into today's community programs to grow food for needy families and teach local young people good work habits and other job skills. Further, older adults have been key players in the creation of farmers markets, and community supported agriculture (contracts between neighborhoods and area farmers) — strategies that are especially important in the many neighborhoods lacking supermarkets. It is older adults who often are leaders in the effort to make access to healthy food more meaningful by teaching people how to use that food, training children in schools or adults at farmers markets, food pantries, in their churches and at other venues. In addition, older adults often play a key role in the preparation and distribution of food in shelters and pantries that serve the hungry and the needy.

The roles that older adults already play in creating healthy communities through healthy food demonstrate the potential for this work going forward, creating a foundation on which to expand existing or build new projects that increase access to and use of healthy food in under resourced communities.