Fresh, Local Food Access Toolkit – New York
About Enterprise Green Communities

Enterprise Green Communities is the first national green building program focused entirely on affordable housing. Launched by Enterprise in fall 2004, Green Communities is designed to help developers, investors, builders and policymakers make the transition to a greener future for affordable housing. To date, Enterprise has invested $1.8 billion in grants, loans, and equity to support the development and preservation of over 27,000 green affordable homes. Visit www.EnterpriseCommunity.org/green.

About Enterprise

Enterprise works with partners nationwide to build opportunity. We create and advocate for affordable homes in thriving communities linked to jobs, good schools, health care and transportation. We lend funds, finance development and manage and build affordable housing, while shaping new strategies, solutions and policy. Over more than 30 years, Enterprise has created 300,000 homes, invested nearly $14 billion and touched millions of lives. Join us at www.EnterpriseCommunity.com or www.EnterpriseCommunity.org.

Since opening our New York office in 1987, Enterprise has created or preserved more than 44,000 affordable homes for 114,000 residents, and has committed over $2.5 billion in equity, grants, and loans to community development projects. Visit www.EnterpriseCommunity.org

Created as part of the Capstone Project at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at NYU by Sarah Gastelum, Josh Langham, Katie Lyon & Dani Rosen with Faculty Advisor Kei Hayashi.

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ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT
AND THE FOOD ACCESS
IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Enterprise Green Communities Criteria
Criterion 2.12: Access to Fresh, Local Foods
Access to fresh produce offers healthy food options for residents. This measure also supports local economic development that increases the economic value and production of farmlands and community gardens.

Research shows that increasing access to locally grown food can result in greater consumption of fresh foods and vegetables which leads to lower diet-related diseases such as heart disease and diabetes in both adults and children\(^1\). Low-income communities of color are disproportionately affected by limited access to fresh foods, particularly in urban areas\(^2\). Affordable housing developers and community based organizations are in a unique position to provide greater access to fresh and local food to their residents and within their communities.

Purpose of the Toolkit
This toolkit, which is designed to provide step-by-step instructions and resources to implement a fresh food access model that meets the Enterprise Green Communities Access to Fresh, Local Food Criteria, best addresses the needs of your development, and leverages the assets of your organization and neighborhood. The toolkit will walk your organization through the decision making process, identifying the benefits and challenges of each food access model so that you can select the best fit for your organization and development. The toolkit will also provide resources to connect your organization with experts in the field depending on the food access model you choose.

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FOOD ACCESS ROADMAP

Step 1: Are you already meeting the criteria?

**Criteria**
- **Proximity**
  - Garden or Farm
    - Existing garden or farm within 0.5 miles of site
  - or
  - Farmers Market
    - Existing farmers market within 0.5 miles of site

**To find out:**
- GrowNYC

**Additional Requirements**
- Garden or Farm
  - Square footage is equal to 50 square feet per dwelling
- or
- Farmers Market
  - Vendors are located within 150 miles from market
  - or
  - Local Harvest

**To find out:**
- GrowNYC
- Local Harvest

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Step 2: Is there demand for fresh food access within your community?

**Demand**
- **RFP**
  - Development Need
    - RFP requires food access program within the development
  - or
  - Neighborhood Need
    - Stated need for increased food access in surrounding neighborhood in RFP

**Community Assessment**
- Current Food Access
  - No grocery stores selling fresh food within 1 mile of development
  - Barriers to food access (e.g. limited transportation options)
- and/or
- Health Indicators
  - High levels of obesity, diabetes, and/or cardiovascular disease within the neighborhood

**Resources**
- Community Assessment Appendix A

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Step 3: Can you incorporate a food access program into your development?

**New Program**
- **Provide On-Site Space**
  - Garden or Farm
    - Minimum 50 sf per dwelling unit on site or within 0.5 miles of site
    - Storage of tools and other supplies
    - Solar access and water
  - or
  - CSA
    - Provide space within the development for a pick-up and drop-off site

**Implement the program**
- Resource
  - See Neighborhood Garden or Farm, page 11
  - Appendix B
- Resource
  - See CSA, page 17
  - Appendix C

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6 points
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria Summary</th>
<th>Option 1a: Neighborhood Farms and Gardens Resident Management</th>
<th>Option 1b: Outsourced Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRACK 1: Dedicate permanent and viable growing space or related facilities on project site or outside the project within a 0.5-mile walk. Ensure that the spaces are owned and managed by an entity that includes residents in the decision making process.</td>
<td>TRACK 2: An existing garden within 0.5-miles from the project center can also be used to satisfy this option. The existing garden must meet all of the requirements including size and ability for residents to participate.</td>
<td>Dedicate permanent and viable growing space or related facilities on project site and establish an agreement with a local farming operation to farm the land. Ensure that at least 50% of the produce is available to purchase by residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Cost</td>
<td>HIGH Costs are relatively high, as the developer is required to provide solar access, fencing, watering systems, garden bed enhancements, secure storage space for tools, and pedestrian access for these spaces.</td>
<td>LOW There is no direct cost associated with locating near an existing community garden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Cost</td>
<td>MEDIUM Ongoing costs are contingent on upkeep of the garden including any of the amenities built into the site upon development.</td>
<td>LOW There are no ongoing costs with locating a development near an existing community garden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Time</td>
<td>HIGH Time required for set up includes building the garden and helping to establish the appropriate governing body.</td>
<td>LOW Time required for development includes time needed to connect with an existing community garden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space Needed</td>
<td>Gardens must be equal to or greater in size to 50 square feet per dwelling unit of the project.</td>
<td>There are no specific space requirements for this option.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Benefits | - Increased resident satisfaction  
- Placement of the garden on roof could increase allowable building height  
- Provides on-site fresh food | - Promotes community building  
- Provides access to fresh food | - Provides venue for other resident programming  
- Reduces responsibility for the property management  
- Placement of garden on roof could increase allowable building height |
| Challenges | - Insurance requirements for rooftop spaces are typically higher  
- Additional security could be needed for garden | - Food access impact is seasonal  
- Scale of impact dependent on gardening interest, skills, and capacity of residents | - Additional security could be needed for garden  
- Permitting and code compliance for rooftop could complicate the project |
<p>| Required Documents | Site plans for the prospective community garden | Context map of existing community garden that will be used to satisfy the criteria | Site plans for the prospective community garden |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria Summary</th>
<th>Option 2: Community-Supported Agriculture</th>
<th>Option 3: Proximity to Farmers Market</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development Cost</strong></td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>LOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing space within the project could be used, and as such any cost would be associated with either creating a public space big enough for a drop-off site or maintaining that site if continuing to manage the building.</td>
<td>There is no direct cost with locating a project near a farmers market. An increase in costs could come from choosing to locate in an area near a farmers market where land may be more expensive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operating Cost</strong></td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>LOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSAs require nominal operating costs, which are mostly associated with distribution supplies and clean up at the distribution site.</td>
<td>There are no ongoing costs with locating a development within .5-miles of an existing Farmers Market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development Time</strong></td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>LOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time required for set up includes time to find a local CSA and establish a relationship.</td>
<td>Time required for set up includes time to research and locate an existing Farmers Market or one that will be in full operation by the time the development is at 50% occupancy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Space Needed</strong></td>
<td>An ideal distribution site is large and has a nearby loading zone. Space should also limit the number of stairs from the street to the distributions site and provide secure storage space to keep equipment.</td>
<td>There are no specific space requirements for this option.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Benefits** | - Increased resident satisfaction  
- Opportunity for community building activities | -Residents have increased access to healthy and local foods  
-Opportunity for variety and choice in purchase of produce  
-Increased resident satisfaction |
| **Challenges** | -Potential security risk with non-residents in the building  
-Large upfront payment required by each member  
-Special Events permit may be required dependent on where the drop-off site is located | -Residents may not be aware of the Farmers Market  
-Food may not be affordable for residents |
| **Required Documents** | Site plans for the CSA drop-off site | Context map of existing Farmers Market that will be used to satisfy the criteria |
As food insecurity gains recognition, community gardens and urban farms are often touted as potential solutions. Urban agricultural land is now designed with a heavier focus on food production than the community gardens of the 1970s and 1980s. These urban farms, built on roofs, backyards, or entire lots in all five boroughs, are designed to produce the heaviest concentration of fruits, vegetables, and herbs. Some urban farms in New York City, such as Brooklyn Grange and East New York Farms! have cultivated such bountiful harvests that their farms are able to sell to restaurants and farmers markets.

**Option 1a. Resident Management of Neighborhood Farms & Gardens**

**Track 1: Build Garden within Project Boundaries.**

**Green Communities Criteria**
- ☑ Dedicated and viable growing space within the project
- ☑ Equal or greater in size to 50 square feet per dwelling unit
- ☑ Provide access to sun, fencing, watering systems, garden bed enhancements, secure storage, and pedestrian access to growing spaces
- ☑ Ensure growing spaces are managed by an entity that includes residents

**Benefits**
- Increased resident satisfaction
- Promotes neighborhood beautification
- Provides venue for other resident programming
- Zoning allows additional 3.5 vertical feet for rooftop recreation spaces and excludes greenhouses from FAR in all residential areas

**Challenges**
- May require significant time from property manager to maintain and manage
- Garden maintenance depends on gardening interest and capacity of residents
- Ground level garden may require additional security measures
- Permits and code compliance required for roof gardens may complicate project
- Insurance costs for structures with roof gardens are typically higher than buildings without these amenities
Step 1: Space Requirements

TIP: Providing on-site garden space may help a project earn additional points under the Green Communities Criteria, Section 2.7 Preservation of and Access to Open Space.

Developers may choose to locate the growing area on the ground level, rooftop, or a combination of both provided each option is accessible to all building residents.

A. Ground Level

- Examine sun and shade with respect to proposed growing area.
- Test the soil health. Cornell University’s Nutrient Analysis Laboratory provides low cost soil health tests. Learn more about the soil health test and how to prepare and submit a soil sample on their website at http://soilhealth.cals.cornell.edu/extension/test.htm
- A lockable fence that encloses the garden is necessary to ensure security.

B. Rooftop

- Work with a Professional Engineer or Registered Architect to explore weight bearing capacity of roof; drainage, irrigation, and utility access; impact of climactic conditions; and safety measures.
- Compliance with requirements of NYC Electrical, Fire, and Zoning Codes and NYS Energy Conservation Construction Code should be considered.
- Special NYC Department of Buildings filing is necessary for roof gardens.


Step 2: Design

To learn about best practices with respect to the lay out of the growing area see Appendix B. The Horticultural Society, GrowNYC, GreenThumb, and other garden technical assistance providers can provide guidance. If you are implementing a rooftop garden, design should be completed by a Professional Engineer or Registered Architect.

Step 3: Partnerships and Resources

United Way provides capital funding to launch urban farms in New York City. Learn more here: http://www.foodsystemsnyc.org/announcements/farming-grant-announcement. Other sources of funding can be found in the Appendix E.

For More Information:

To learn more about best practices in garden maintenance and governance, see Appendix B.
To learn more about potential partners for garden management, see Appendix E.
Track 2: Project Located near Established Garden.

Green Communities Criteria

- Dedicated and viable growing space within 0.5 miles of project site
- Equal or greater in size to 50 square feet per dwelling unit
- Provide access to sun, fencing, watering systems, garden bed enhancements, secure storage, and pedestrian access to growing spaces
- Garden spaces managed by an entity that includes residents

Benefits

- Promotes community building

Challenges

- Food access impact is seasonal
- Scale of impact dependent on the gardening interest and capacity of residents

Step 1: Space

To determine whether your project is within 0.5 miles of an existing garden, scan existing community gardens using the below resources. It may require a review of multiple sources to conclusively determine whether or not a garden exists.

- Oasis Database: http://www.oasisnyc.net/map.aspx
- Local Harvest Database: http://acga.localharvest.org/
- GreenThumb Gardens: http://www.greenthumbnyc.org/gardensearch.html

Step 2: Partnerships and Resources

A. Check Automated City Register Information System (ACRIS) for dimensions of garden to confirm total size meets requirements.

B. Visit garden or call garden management to confirm garden is equipped with:
   - Watering systems
   - Garden bed enhancements
   - Secure storage
   - Pedestrian pathways

C. Call garden management to determine whether your project residents can join management body.

For More Information:

To learn more about best practices in garden management, see Appendix B.
To learn more about potential partners for garden management, see Appendix E.
Option 1b: Outsourced Management of Neighborhood Farms and Gardens

Requirements
- Dedicated and viable growing space on project site
- Equal or greater in size to 50 square feet per dwelling unit
- Agreement with a local farming operation to farm the land
- At least 50% of produce made available for purchase by project residents
- Provide solar access, fencing, watering systems, garden bed enhancements, and secure storage

TIP: Providing this space may help a project earn additional points under the Green Communities Criteria, Section 2.7 Preservation of and Access to Open Space.

Benefits
- Promotes neighborhood beautification
- Outsourced farm management reduces property manager responsibility and likely increases the production of food
- Zoning allows additional 3.5 vertical feet for rooftop recreation spaces and excludes greenhouses from FAR in all residential areas.

Challenges
- Food access impact is seasonal
- Ground level garden may require additional security measures
- Permit and code compliance required for roof garden may complicate project

Step 1: Space

Developers may choose to locate the growing area on the ground level, roof, or a combination of both provided each option is accessible to all building residents.

A. Ground Level
- An examination of sun and shade is necessary.
- Test soil health. Cornell University’s Nutrient Analysis Laboratory provides low cost soil health tests. Learn more about the soil health test and how to prepare and submit a soil sample on their website at http://soilhealth.cals.cornell.edu/extension/test.htm
- A lockable fence that encloses the garden is necessary to ensure security.

B. Rooftop
- Work with a Professional Engineer or Registered Architect to explore the weight bearing capacity of the roof; drainage, irrigation, and utility access; impact of climactic conditions; and safety measures.
- Compliance with requirements of NYC Electrical, Fire, and Zoning Codes and NYS Energy Conservation Construction Code should be considered.
- Special Department of Buildings filing is necessary for roof gardens.
Step 2: Design

To learn about best practices with respect to the lay out of the growing area see Appendix B. The Horticultural Society, GrowNYC, GreenThumb, and other garden technical assistance providers can provide guidance. If you are implementing a rooftop garden, design should be completed by a Professional Engineer or Registered Architect.

Step 3: Partnerships and Resources

A. Develop a farm management agreement
   - Information about potential farm management organizations is available in Appendix E.
   - Farm management agreement must stipulate that at least 50% of all produce is made available for purchase by project residents. A sample farm management agreement is available here: http://www.spfarminc.com/pdf/AgriculturalManagementAgreement.pdf

B. Explore funding opportunities
   - You may be eligible for funding opportunities based on your relationship with farming partner.
   - United Way provides capital funding to launch urban farms in New York City. Learn more on their website here: http://unitedwaynyc.org/pages/urbanfarmseedgrants.
   - Other funding potential funding opportunities are listed in Appendix B

For More Information:

To learn more about best practices in garden management, see Appendix B. To learn more about potential partners for garden management, see Appendix E.
Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Usually organized around a growing season, CSA members pay for a share of a local farm’s produce up-front (a full payment ranges from $400-$600). The typical CSA needs between 25 and 35 members to be sustainable. From June through November, members pick up a weekly bundle of produce from a central location such as a local community garden, a school or a community center. A weekly share usually consists of 7-12 seasonal items, including: tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, eggplants, broccoli, lettuce, potatoes, onion, and others. For an additional cost, some CSAs offer members the option to diversify their share by adding fruit, eggs, and meat.

Green Communities Criteria
- Delivery of shares with project boundaries
- Farm(s) supplying the CSA shares must be within 150 miles of the project site.
- Shares must be delivered at least twice a month for at least four months of the year.

Benefits
- Increased resident satisfaction
- Opportunity for community building activities

Challenges
- Additional security measures may be needed at the distribution site if the CSA allows non-resident members to pick up at this location
- Large up-front payment required by each member (see Appendix C for flexible payment options)
- Liability issues, related to any injuries or harmful incidents that may occur at the distribution site
Step 1: Space Requirements

Select a Distribution Site

Selecting an appropriate, central location for a drop-off site is considered the most difficult component of starting a CSA. When choosing a weekly distribution or drop-off site, some important considerations include:

- an unloading zone for the farmer
- a minimum number of stairs from street to the distribution site
- secure storage space to keep vegetable bins, tables, etc.
- a space that can be cleaned easily

Typical distribution locations include: churches, community centers, schools, a city sidewalk, a city park and community gardens.

TIP: You may be able to use an existing civic and/or community center located near the project site. For more information, see the Green Communities Criteria, Section 2.5 Proximity to Services.

Step 2: Partnerships and Resources

Partner with a Technical Assistance Provider

A new CSA may consider working with a technical assistance provider to assist in developing payment models, conduct outreach and recruitment, coordinate food and nutrition programs, and facilitate an agreement with a farm or farms.

Secure a partnership with a farm or farms

Many CSAs work with multiple farms in order to provide a diverse array of vegetables, fruits, and sometimes dairy options. When considering working with a farm, it is important to note whether a farm currently accepts EBT or is willing to undergo the process to accept EBT. Many CSA coordinators visit the farm prior to contracting with it in order to observe the quality and variety of produce. Moreover, a CSA coordinator should communicate information about community preferences for produce to the farmer. This data could be collected through a community survey, which is explored in more detail in Appendix A. Many farms who participate in CSAs are involved in multiple CSA and these may be the easiest farms to work with as they understand the process. Find a list of farms participating in Just Food CSAs here: http://www.justfood.org/farmloc
Permits and Insurance

Since CSA members pay an individual, up-front fee and pick up raw agricultural products at a site, they are not considered a farmers market and no license is required.

If you are using a private business or organization as a distribution site, general liability insurance issues will most likely fall on the owner of the business. However, it is important to note that because CSAs are not incorporated as an organization, CSA coordinators are liable as individuals if sued by a CSA member for any harm or injuries occurred at the distribution site.

Step 3: Costs

Operating costs

CSAs require nominal operating costs, which are mostly associated with distribution supplies and clean up at the distribution site. These include:
- Vegetable bins
- Tables
- Storage space
- A hose for clean up

CSA pricing models

CSAs use a variety of pricing strategies to make shares more affordable and accessible to interested members. For more information on flexible payment options, see Appendix C.

For more information

To learn more about pricing models for CSA shares and for a sample farm agreement, see Appendix C.
To learn more about potential partners to operate a CSA, see Appendix E.
Option 3  **Farmers Markets**

At a farmers market, a group of farmers sell their products directly to consumers once or twice a week at a designated outdoor public space – from city squares to civic centers, from parks to parking lots, from sidewalks to shopping centers. The products available at farmers markets vary and generally represent an agricultural region. Farmers market produce is renowned for being fresh and locally-grown.

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**Green Communities Criteria**

- A farmers market within a 0.5-mile walking distance
- Must operate at least once a week for five months of the year
- Vendors may sell only items grown within 150 miles of the project site
- Commitments from farmers that a planned market will be in full operation at 50% occupancy of the project’s dwelling units

**Benefits**

- Opportunity for variety and choice in purchase of produce
- Increased resident satisfaction
- Serves as community gathering place

**Challenges**

- Limited consumer awareness
- Food may not be affordable for residents
- Limited hours of operation
### Step 1: Location

**Project Proximity**
To find out if your project is located within a 0.5-mile walking distance of an existing or planned farmers market, see: http://www.localharvest.org/
- Create a map with location of farmers market and geographic center of project site.
- Demonstrate the walking distance from the project. Walk distances may be demonstrated by creating a Context Map with concentric circles, indicating the distance of the above listed neighborhood features. Alternatively, project teams may satisfy the Context Map requirement by submitting a Walkscore for your site, including all neighborhood features.

For more information on proximity mapping:
See Enterprise Green Criteria-Prebuild Supplemental Documents.

### Step 2: Space Requirements

There are no specific space requirements for this option.

**Permits and Insurance**
All farmers markets should be in compliance with state and local laws, regulations, and requirements.

### Step 3: Cost

There are no development or operating costs associated with locating a project near a farmers market.

For more information
To learn more about developing a farmers market see Appendix D.
A. ORGANIZATIONAL & COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Organizational Assessment

Before launching any fresh and local food access model, an organization should have a detailed understanding of its internal resources. Your organization should assess the resources that are available for development of a food access model and identify potential challenges to implementing a new food access model.

1. Assess existing resources
Community organizations should ask the following questions to assess the resources that already exist which can be used toward a food access model.
   a. Is there an employee already on staff that can spearhead a fresh and local food access model?
   b. Are there internal resources that can be used to develop the chosen model?
   c. What programming is already underway within the organization that can be combined with a potential new food access model?
   d. Are there residents or community members that may want to spearhead the implementation and management of the chosen food access model?

2. Potential Challenges
Before beginning to engage residents in a food access model, the property management company should ensure residents are happy with their living environment. If residents feel their management company is not providing high quality property management services (working elevators, reliable hot water and heat, clean and safe common areas, etc.), they will distrust any effort of the organization to take on any new maintenance responsibilities.
Community Assessment

A community food assessment is a process of gathering information that answers questions about the food available in an area such as:

- What food is available?
- Where is it located?
- What foods might be lacking?
- Is food affordable to the target demographic?

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the United States Center for Disease Control (CDC), and the Community Food Security Coalition have created comprehensive guides to conducting community food assessments. Their tools are accessible at the below links.


Each community food assessment is unique based on the goals and method of the assessment. However, all food assessments have similar characteristics; they identify and expand upon existing community resources, and they often use community members to implement. The process of conducting your assessment can be summarized in five basic steps:

1. **Research community food assessments.**
   a. Review the community food assessment for New York City conducted by the Food Trust in 2006. The report examines the disparities in the distribution of grocery stores throughout New York City’s five boroughs and the correlations between grocery store access and diet-related diseases. It is available here: http://www.thefoodtrust.org/.
   b. Determine whether a community food assessment has been conducted in your neighborhood. Organizations that may have already conducted this type of study include NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, NYC Department of City Planning, City Harvest, Cornell Cooperative Extension, other local universities or research institutions, or local community development corporations.
2. Define goals of assessment.
Is your community assessment solely focused on determining the best food access model for your new development? Or, is your organization interested in conducting a comprehensive study upon which to base policy recommendations and advocacy work? If the organization’s goals are broader, it’s advisable to follow the thorough guides from the USDA that provide guidance around creating an assessment team and developing a budget for the assessment. When defining the goal of the assessment, it is also important to define the geographic area that will be assessed.

3. Explore existing data.
A number of publicly accessible datasets can help organizations understand the population in the community and their needs. To provide some context, it’s important to compare your neighborhood level data to the entire city or borough. Some data points that will help an organization understand who their population is include:

- Age
- Gender
- Household structure
- Income
- Race and Ethnicity
- Education level
- Percent of population receiving SNAP/WIC
- Percent of children receiving free/reduced lunch

In addition to understanding the demographics of your population, organizations should collect data about the health conditions in the neighborhood, including the rates of:

- Diabetes
- Obesity
- High blood pressure
- Other diet related diseases

The best source for most demographic data is the US Census and American Communities Survey which provides comprehensive data at the census tract level on many of these indicators. Other sources, which are typically sourced from the US Census data but provide a more digestible format, include NYC Department of City Planning Community District Profiles, which are available here: http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/lucds/cdstart.shtml

The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Community Health Profiles provide data about the rate of diet-related diseases: http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/data/data.shtml

The NY State Council on Children & Families tracks the percent of students eligible for free lunch by school here: http://www.nyskwic.org/get_data/indicator_profile.cfm?subIndicatorID=52
4. Map existing resources in the community.
Next, an organization should identify the location of existing food and nutrition resources in the neighborhood, including the following types of stores or programs that offer healthy food. The following resources should be included:
   a. Grocery stores
   b. Farmers markets
   c. Community Gardens/Urban Farms
   d. Community Supported Agriculture programs (CSAs)
   e. Emergency food pantries
   f. WIC/SNAP offices
   g. Restaurants by type

The CDC Healthier Food Retail Assessment includes a list of publicly available data to support mapping food retailers in the United States. Their data sets, which mostly focus on grocery stores, farmers markets, and other retailers, include:
   b. County Health Rankings: http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/
   d. Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS), United States Department of Agriculture: http://apps.ams.usda.gov/FarmersMarkets/
   e. United States Census Bureau’s County and ZIP Code Business Patterns data: http://www.census.gov/econ/cbp/index.html
   f. Local Harvest – to find organic food distributors: http://www.localharvest.org/
   g. Additionally, OASIS maps community gardens and farmers’ markets in New York City. http://www.oasisnyc.net/map.aspx

5. Conduct field research.
Mapping the presence of food retailers and other nutrition resources in a community does not provide a complete assessment of food access. Field research primarily through direct observation and community surveying or focus groups is necessary to determine whether these outlets sell a high-quality, locally grown, diverse selection of healthy food, whether food is affordable, and whether other unexpected sources of nutrition and food access are present in the community.

Field research should address three primary research questions:
   a. What is the quality, variety, and cost of healthy food provided through retail and other food outlets?

Typically this research involves direct observations at local grocery stores and corner stores. The most broadly accepted validated assessment tool for grocery stores and food retailers is the Thrifty Food Plan created by the USDA. The Thrifty Food Plan assessment examines the availability, condition, and price of a basket of 44 healthy food items to the national average. The assessment thoroughly explained in their Community Food Assessment Toolkit and the instrument is available here: http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/327695/efan02013appc_1_.pdf
The instrument has two weaknesses with respect to an assessment related to the Green Communities Criteria. It does not measure whether food is locally grown and it does not indicate whether stores accept SNAP and WIC. An organization may want to alter the assessment to capture whether food is locally grown. To find out where WIC and SNAP benefits are accepted in your area, see: http://www.snapretailerlocator.com/

b. Are other institutions in the community not typically considered food resources serving as food resources?

In order to answer this question, the organization should explore programs and services available through local hospitals, schools, churches, and other community-based organizations.

c. What are the interests, preferences, and skills of the residents in your neighborhood?

It is imperative that a community food assessment conducts primary research to understand community members’ perception of food access in their neighborhood. This data should be collected through a widely distributed survey or a series of focus groups or a combination of the two. The USDA provides a guide to conducting focus groups here: http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/327691/efan02013appb_1_.pdf. The USDA National Health and Nutrition Examination tool for nutrition interview is available here: http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/surveys-reports-and-research/food-and-nutrition-surveys/national-health-and-nutrition-examination

A robust variety of instruments to survey retail outlets and community members are available through the National Institutes of Health here: https://riskfactor.cancer.gov/mfe/instruments

Relevant data to collect from community members includes:
- What are their impressions of food access in their neighborhood?
- What foods do they want to find, but cannot?
- What are their cooking habits and abilities?
- What is their experience and interest in gardening or farming?
- When and where do they shop?
- How much do they spend on groceries?
- How much do they spend on produce?
- How many meals per week do they cook?
B. MANAGING PRODUCTIVE NEIGHBORHOOD FARMS & COMMUNITY GARDENS

BEST PRACTICES IN BUILDING NEIGHBORHOOD FARMS & COMMUNITY GARDENS

1. Reach out to your target community about a potential garden/farm. Typical outreach is conducted via community meetings. Initial outreach should focus on explaining the purpose of the garden or farm and gaining feedback regarding interest in participating. Effective early outreach will result in a small cohort of individuals to spearhead the garden or farm development process. Later outreach should focus on soliciting community input on the garden design, as described below, and understanding the skills and training needs of garden participants.

2. Select a site and design your garden. The Horticultural Society, GrowNYC, GreenThumb, and other garden technical assistance providers can guide an organization and its engaged residents through the garden design process.

The first step in site selection and garden design is to determine whether the soil is healthy for food production. Cornell University’s Nutrient Analysis Laboratory provides low cost soil health tests. Learn more about the soil health test and how to prepare and submit a soil sample on their website at http://soilhealth.cals.cornell.edu/extension/test.htm

As demonstrated in Figure 1, other items to consider with garden layout include:
   a. The location of the water source. Some gardens have implemented rain water harvesting systems to augment their supply of water.
   b. How growing area will be divided. Common options include dividing the growing area into demarcated beds maintained by individual households, a combination or individual plots and communal growing spaces, or an entirely
communal farm that is organized by crop. The latter structure – an entirely communal growing space – has been touted by garden experts for the capacity to produce more food and foster community building and teamwork. Most existing community gardens include a combination of individual plots and communal growing space. The decision for your garden should be connected to the overall goal of your garden or farm.

c. Whether crops will be planted in the ground or if raised beds will be constructed. Raised beds provide a solution to contaminated soil or promote participation from mobility impaired gardeners. Conversely, in ground planting allows the garden to utilize the space more efficiently.

d. Where non-growing spaces in the garden will be located, including the pathways, tool shed, seating area, and composting station

e. How gardeners will access the garden. It is encouraged that all gardens are ADA compliant. Vehicular access is also important for large plant deliveries.

f. Whether the garden will include any structures such as hoop gardens or greenhouses to extend the growing season.

g. Once the big picture layout has been determined, the garden design team should consider what crops will be planted and where each crop should be grown based on their need for sun and shade, interactions with other plants, and other factors. Successful gardens typically plant crops that respond to

Figure 1: Community Garden Diagram
3. Create governance protocols for garden or farm.
The typical community garden in New York City has 30 to 35 members. Garden or farm governance can be very challenging, particularly as the number of participating individuals expands. The organization and group of engaged garden participants should determine and document the following protocols:

a. Who will be involved in making decisions for the garden?
b. If there is a group of leaders, how will these leaders be determined?
c. How will decisions be made? Common decision making protocols are consensus, majority vote, or autocratic determination.
d. How will the garden group communicate with one another?
e. What is the goal or mission of the garden group?
f. What are the rules of the garden? What happens when members break rules?
g. When are members and non-members permitted in the garden? Who keeps keys to the garden? When is supervision required in the garden and who provides that supervision?
h. How are new members initiated into the garden? Are there membership requirements?
i. If there is a common area, who will maintain it?
j. Are there required time commitments for participants?
k. If the entire garden is communal, how will the harvest be distributed?

4. Determine what networks or partnerships the garden will join, if any.
The garden governance body should consider joining a garden network or partnering with a garden technical assistance provider. These relationships often provide community gardens with tools, seeds, supplies, educational workshops, and other support for free or low cost. GreenThumb is one of the most common networks. A guide to GreenThumb garden affiliation is available on GreenThumb's website and can be accessed here: http://www.greenthumbnyc.org/pdf/gardeners_handbook.pdf. Other partners include:

a. local schools to provide opportunities for students
b. farmers markets to sell their produce
c. soup kitchens or food pantries to donate excess produce

Find a list of prominent garden technical assistance providers that support and partner with New York City garden groups in Appendix E.
5. Create seasonal plan for garden.
Because garden maintenance differs by season, creating a year-long plan at the start of the year is critical for a bountiful harvest. GrowNYC publishes a monthly garden management calendar which outlines which plants should be planted and harvested in which months in the Garden Fact Sheets of their website located here: http://www.grownyc.org/files/osg/calendar.updated.pdf

6. Determine the end goal for the food and plants produced in the garden.
If the garden contains a large communal area, the garden group will need to determine how the harvest will be distributed. Options include:
   d. Track garden participation throughout the year and distribute the harvest to participants in direct proportion to their annual hours worked
   e. Allow all residents of the building, no matter their involvement in the garden, to receive free produce during harvest.
   f. Sell excess food at a local farmers market
   g. Partner with an existing CSA to augment the seasonal items
   h. Donate excess food to a local food pantry or soup kitchen
   i. Dry or can foods that are able to be preserved. Just Food and other technical assistance providers offer classes in these types of food processing techniques.

7. Develop garden programming.
Gardens provide a unique opportunity for outdoor common space to host events and engage the community. Evidence has shown that the most successful and sustainable gardens in New York City host frequent community gatherings. Common garden activities include community meals, arts and crafts events, horticultural therapy workshops, vocational training in the field of horticulture or carpentry, workshops on gardening, science, nutrition, and environmental education, live music, farmers markets or CSA distribution, and health fairs. Partnerships with garden technical assistance providers and local community based organizations can offer free garden programming and help engage new garden participants.

8. Determine how you will track outcomes.
Tracking outcomes should be directly related to the goals of the program. Most garden programs track participation and attendance. Other common measurement tools include pre and post testing regarding nutrition knowledge and eating habits, weighing production of healthy food, and pre and post waistline measurements or diet-related disease testing.

Programs in Action
The Bridge is a nonprofit supportive housing developer in New York City. In 2008, The Bridge received seed funding to launch a garden at its Morris Avenue residence in the Bronx. The four-tier garden was designed in collaboration with the Horticultural Society of New York. A group of committed residents coordinate planting, maintenance, and harvest. The Horticultural Society provides assistance with “waking” the garden each spring and other support, as needed. The harvest from the garden is so robust that it serves all residents of Morris Avenue residence. In fact, the Bridge has been so successful with garden management, they have created gardens at several other sites.
C. RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL CSA

Best Practices in CSA Development and Management

1. **Conduct a pre-season community assessment.**
   Prior to launching a CSA, surveys should be conducted to determine preferences, family size, eating habits, and financial resources of community members. The best time to conduct a survey is the fall prior to CSA launch. Information about financial resources will be particularly helpful in determining the best pricing structure for CSA shares.

2. **Partner with a technical assistance provider.**
   A first year CSA may consider working with a technical assistance provider to assist in developing pricing models, conducting outreach and recruitment, providing food and nutrition programs, and facilitating an agreement with a farm. More information on technical assistance can be found here: [http://www.justfood.org/csa/how-start-csa-nyc](http://www.justfood.org/csa/how-start-csa-nyc)

3. **Secure a partnership with a farm or farms.**
   Most CSAs in New York City partner or have partnered with Just Food to establish a relationship with a farmer or farmers and to offer programming at CSA distribution sites. Many CSAs work with multiple farms in order to provide a diverse array of vegetables, fruits, and sometimes dairy options. When considering working with a farm, it is important to note whether a farm currently accepts EBT or is willing to undergo the process to accept EBT. Many CSA coordinators visit the farm prior to contracting with it in order to observe the quality and variety of produce. Moreover, a CSA coordinator should communicate some of the data gathered through the community survey to potential farm partners, particularly related to the types of produce sought. Many farms who participate in CSAs are involved in multiple CSA concurrently and these may be the easiest farms to work with as they understand the process. Find a list of farms participating in Just Food CSAs on here: [http://www.justfood.org/farmloc](http://www.justfood.org/farmloc).
4. **Determine a pricing model for CSA shares.**

While paying the full-price share up-front is ideal for farmers, in low-income communities it is often difficult for members to afford to pay $500 up-front for produce received over the course of 22 weeks. Most CSAs have a variety of payment plans to enable members flexibility in paying for their shares.

   a. Sliding scale: Members pay different amounts for a share based on income. This payment strategy works best for CSAs that have members from a range of income levels. For more information on successful sliding scale models, see: http://www.justfood.org/tipsheet/csa-nyc-toolkit/flexible-payment-options/sliding-scale

   b. Food Stamps/EBT payments: The CSA should find out if the partnering farm is authorized or interested in becoming authorized to accept food stamps. Many farmers who currently are authorized to accept food stamps are authorized as farm stands rather than CSA projects. Farm stands are permitted to accept food stamps only at the time of sale. Thus, the farmer cannot use his/her “farm stand” food stamp certification for CSA payments unless CSA members pay every week as they pick up their vegetables. A CSA can partner with a community based organization that can apply to accept food stamps on behalf of the CSA. The USDA Food and Nutrition Service Program reviews food stamp certification applications for CSAs.

   c. Fundraise to subsidize shares: Fundraising can be accomplished through grants, events or galas, fundraising by the farms, and donations from CSA members.

   d. Shortened season or half-shares: Share costs, harvest schedules, pick-up and other membership options vary by farm. These options must be discussed with the farmer.

Additional information about improving affordability of CSA shares can be found below:

- Just Food provides CSA groups with strategies, examples, and information on purchasing options for low-income community members here: http://www.justfood.org/tipsheet/farming-nyc-toolkit/csa-nyc/starting-out/working-low-income-communities
- USDA Food and Nutrition Service website provides applications and information on SNAP benefits as a form of payment here: http://www.fns.usda.gov

**Programs in Action**

The Farm Fresh Initiative is a city-wide program run by the New York Coalition Against Hunger (NYCCAH) aimed to increase healthy food access to low and middle income New Yorkers in traditionally under-served communities. NYCCAH provides funding for subsidized share prices, staffing support, and an AmeriCorps volunteer who assists in coordinating the CSA. This partnership has expanded to seven CSAs and makes healthy, fresh vegetables accessible to community members by offering a variety of personalized payment options, including the ability to purchase vegetable shares using SNAP (Food Stamps) benefits.
5. Select a distribution site.
When choosing a weekly distribution or “drop-off” site, some important considerations include: an unloading zone for the farmer, a minimum number of stairs from the street to the distribution site, secure storage space to keep vegetable bins, tables, etc., a space you can easily clean. Popular distribution locations include: churches, community centers, community development organizations, parks, schools, a city sidewalk and community gardens.

If you choose a distribution site on public property, such as a city sidewalk or city park, you may have to pay a small administrative fee and submit a letter with the details of location, time, and size of your CSA drop-off site. To find out more about acquiring a special events permit, contact the permits office in your borough.

6. Establish a core group of volunteers.
During the 22-week CSA season, a core group of volunteers is needed to run the distribution site and coordinate with the farmer. The number of core group members can range from two to twenty, depending on the number of members in the CSA. This volunteer group is tasked with administrative management of the CSA, including marketing, outreach, signing up members, managing payments, setting up the distribution site each week, and other related activities.

7. Establish a membership agreement
If not operating with a technical assistance provider, a membership agreement between CSA farmers and CSA members should be prepared to protect both parties and improve communication between farmer and member. It outlines the quantity and types of produce to be provided, a designated drop-off location, a timeframe for pick-up of shares, fees and payment procedures, etc. For an example of a CSA membership agreement, see: http://www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com/joinHVF09.pdf

8. Develop food education programming.
If families are not accustomed to eating seasonally, it may take some time and assistance to transition from eating the broad variety of produce sold at grocery stores (e.g. tomatoes in January) to the seasonal produce in a CSA share. Technical assistance providers and community based organizations can provide community building activities such as cooking classes and demonstrations, as well as recipes, which can teach CSA members new cooking skills and ways to use unfamiliar produce found in their shares. More information on food education opportunities can be found here: http://www.justfood.org/community-food-education.

9. Determine how you will track outcomes.
Tracking outcomes should be directly related to the goals of the program. Most CSAs track membership and retention rates. Other common measurement tools include pre and post testing regarding nutrition knowledge and eating habits, weighing production of healthy food, and pre and post waistline measurements or diet-related disease testing.
D. STARTING YOUR OWN FARMERS MARKET

Best Practices in Farmers Market Development and Management

1. Refine your community assessment with a focus on a farmers market. It is essential to understand the needs and goals of community residents and farmers and vendors related to several key issues.

   a. A time, location and season that coordinates the needs of farmers, consumers and the local community. The needs of each component – farmer, consumer and the community in general – need to be balanced to satisfy the goals and objectives of each group including sales and profits for the farmers, access to fresh, locally grown foods for consumers at a time that fits with their schedule, and community revitalization, downtown development, and a sense of place for the community.

   b. A central, visible, and permanent location. The market should be located in a central, high traffic area. It should also provide ample space for the market to grow, as well as room for customer parking, and amenities for shoppers. It should be planned to be a permanent institution in the community or neighborhood for farmers and consumers.

   c. A diversity of products and producers. Customers are attracted to a farmers market for a diversity of fresh, high quality, locally grown products. They want the widest possible selection of products and diversity within those product lines. They also want to have freedom of choice between producers of the products available. The more choices the market offers its consumers, the more attractive and exciting the market becomes for them. Farmers should be sought out that provide the types of foods that local residents want and may not be able to find at their local stores. An understanding of the ethnic and cultural needs of the market should be established. This can be accomplished through surveying and other methods such as focus groups.
2. Develop market governance protocols.
Market policies and rules should reflect the mission of the market and provide a format for daily operations. Protocols should provide guidelines that include:

- A mission statement for the market
- Who can sell in the market
- What products may be sold in the market (including a definition of the term “local”), including whether farmers can purchase for resale, how much, and under what conditions
- An application and crop plan requirement that ensures the market has production and marketing information for each vendor
- Standards of vendor behavior
- Market operations information including season, times of operation, rents, application and space assignment procedures, etc.
- Rules enforcement procedures, including penalties for failure to comply and a grievance procedure
- Compliance with state and local laws, regulations, and requirements (e.g. WIC, FMNP – Farmers Market Nutrition Program)

3. Determine how the market will be managed.
In New York City there are several organizations that operate many farmers markets and achieve economies of scale and expertise in doing so. Organizations may consider working with GrowNYC, Harvest Home, Down to Earth Markets or other organizations who operate many of the markets throughout the city. A list of organizations that operate farmers markets in New York City is listed in Appendix E.

Alternatively, many organizations choose to operate a farmers market on their own. If an organization is running the market on its own, the market manager should be a paid position, even if part-time. Many markets start out with a volunteer market manager, but fail to plan for the transfer from volunteerism to a paid manager. While volunteerism runs high with new markets, it fades over time.

Regardless of how the market is managed, a strong manager who is passionate about the market is necessary. A manager must be able to:

- Creatively promote the market
- Enforce the market rules and regulations fairly
- Represent the market to the local municipality and community groups
- Administer the day to day operations
- Arbitrate disputes that arise between vendors and/or with consumers
- Work with a board of directors or market committee
- Maintain the financial records of the market
- Understand the needs of farmers and balance them with the needs of the consumers and the community at large

4. Develop a forum for vendor input.
A market is more cooperative and inviting to both farmers and consumers when farmers have a sense of ownership in the market through regular input into management decisions. Common forums for vendor feedback include the formation of a vendor-based board of directors or a vendor-consumer advisory committee.

5. Develop a plan for market success.
The market should develop a written plan that addresses:

a. **Marketing:** A marketing plan that clearly defines a target audience with a strategy for reaching that audience. The plan should include a combination of both advertising and promotional activity, as well as entertainment and educational activity within the market.

b. **Funding:** Market fees paid by sellers should cover the expenses of the market—rent, insurance, advertising and promotion, office expense, memberships and permits, manager salary, etc. Additional funding should be sought to cover programs to enhance the market through special events to promote the market, nutritional, agriculture, and farm-to-school education programs, etc. Sponsorships, grants, and donations can be solicited to help to support these and other types of programs.

c. **Community partnerships:** The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, GrownNYC, numerous community groups, non-profit organizations, local foundations, and health agencies offer support to farmers markets. Seek out community partners that can provide the below types of support depending on the goals and needs of your market.

   • Promotional support: help to publicize the market and its benefits for the community through advertising, public service messages, community organizations, public meetings, and tenant associations. Partnering with local media and community publications can help get the word out about the market as well.

   • Financial support: community groups and other agencies and organizations can offer grants and sponsorships to support the general operations for the farmers markets.

   • Special project support: financial or in-kind assistance with programs such as food and nutrition education, special events, market facility development projects, and environmental education programs.

   • Consumer support: when a community organization supports the market, it brings their members and their members families to the market as shoppers. Partnerships and involvement with as many other local community groups should be sought out.

   • Volunteers: an enthusiastic volunteer base to help with various aspect of the market.
6. **Arrange for the market to accept SNAP, WIC, and EBT at the market.**
Community organizations should work with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to make EBT available at the farmers market as well as to distribute Health Bucks to local residents to redeem for fresh fruits and vegetables at the markets.

The Health Bucks program has been successful in increasing consumption of fruit and vegetables and is now available at 65 farmers markets. In 2011, 93 percent of the coupons that were distributed at farmers markets and 70 percent that were distributed by community organizations were redeemed. For more information on this program visit: [http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/pr2007/pr055-07.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/pr2007/pr055-07.shtml)

7. **Continuously evaluate the market.**
Market management should continuously explore opportunities to improve and grow the market so that it is more economically and socially valuable to farmers and consumers in the local community. Market assessments, focus groups of consumers, and surveys of the farmers will provide valuable information that can help steer a market toward improvement and optimal growth.

**Programs in Action**

Stellar Farmers Markets were launched in 2009 in partnership with the New York State Health Department SNAP-ED-funded education program. This program provides educational classes for SNAP eligible city residents by demonstrating cost effective ways to eat more fruits and vegetables through on-site cooking classes, distribution of cooking classes, and encouragement for those who are not taking advantage of SNAP benefits to do so. In 2011, the program reached over 37,000 people by conducting 1,300 workshops at 18 farmers’ markets.
E. POTENTIAL PARTNERS FOR FOOD ACCESS INITIATIVES IN NEW YORK CITY

Neighborhood Farms and Gardens

**Brooklyn GreenBridge**, an affiliate of the Brooklyn Botanical Garden, offers an Urban Gardener certification program and sponsors a network of grassroots gardeners that coordinate workshops on sustainable horticulture. [http://www.bbg.org/greenbridge](http://www.bbg.org/greenbridge)

**Bronx Green Up**, an affiliate of the New York Botanical Garden, provides horticultural advice, technical assistance, and training, including a horticultural certificate program to community gardeners, school groups, and other organizations interested in improving urban neighborhoods in the Bronx through greening projects. [www.nybg.org/green_up/](http://www.nybg.org/green_up/)

**Cornell Cooperative Extension** provides evidence-based information about gardening and farming on their website including suggested recommendations for garden activities, how to guides for starting garden and growing guides for a wide variety of specific fruits, vegetables, and flowers. In addition, Cornell’s Nutrient Analysis Laboratory provides low cost soil health tests. [http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/](http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/)

**Green Guerillas** uses a unique mix of education, organizing and advocacy to help people cultivate community gardens, sustain grassroots groups, grow food, engage youth, and address issues critical to the future of their gardens. [http://www.greenguerillas.org/](http://www.greenguerillas.org/)

**GreenThumb** is a division of NYC Department of Parks and Recreation that offers workshops for community gardeners and coordinates supply and equipment donations for community gardens that are affiliated with it. The organization offers a number of resources and tips for gardeners on its website. [http://www.greenthumbnyc.org/](http://www.greenthumbnyc.org/)
Open Space Greening, a department of GrowNYC, has created or rejuvenated over 60 community gardens and continues to work with schools, public housing associations, and neighborhood groups to transform vacant land into vibrant civic spaces that grow food, provide valuable open space for communities. Open Space Greening also coordinates tool lending and plant donations and maintains a rich library of how to guides for community gardeners on their website. http://www.grownyc.org/openspace

The Horticultural Society has championed horticulture for over 100 years. The New York chapter helps to create gardens and green infrastructure in inner-city neighborhoods by providing free garden design and site planning services for selected partners. The Horticultural Society also offers workshops on community greening, urban agriculture, and other topics. http://www.hsny.org/

Farm Management Organizations

BrightFarms finances, designs, builds and operates greenhouse farms. The first site is located in Pennsylvania, but the organization is working on a project in Brooklyn. http://brightfarms.com/s/

Brooklyn Grange owns and operates two rooftop farms in New York City and sells high quality vegetables and honey to restaurants, markets, and CSAs. http://www.brooklyngrangefarm.com/

Gotham Greens is a New York City based company dedicated to growing the highest quality vegetables and culinary herbs for local restaurants and retailers. Since 2011, the organization has harvested produce at their rooftop farm in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. http://gothamgreens.com

Eagle Street Rooftop Farm runs a rooftop farm and CSA in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. http://rooftopfarms.org/

CSAs

Local Harvest is a major organic and local food website. Their search engine helps people find products from family farms, local sources of sustainably grown food, and encourages them to establish direct contact with small farms in their local area. Visit their website for more information on how CSAs function. http://www.localharvest.org/csa

Just Food is the chief technical assistance provider for CSAs in New York City. The organization helps match nascent CSAs with farmers. In addition, Just Food provides an array of tools and resources for organizations working in food access, including
a two year Farm School program that results in certification in urban agriculture. In addition to classes on urban farming and food justice, Just Food trains community chefs and connects them to community gardens and farmers markets to provide free cooking demonstrations. Just Food also maintains close relationships with local farmers and can help organizations interested in building a relationship with a farm. http://www.justfood.org/

**Peacework Organic Farm** grows organic vegetables and crops in Wayne County, NY. Over 95% of Peacework’s produce is sold to CSA members. Their website provides a list of resources for CSA growers and members. http://www.gvocsa.org/About-Peacwork.aspx

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**Farmers Markets**

**The Greenmarket** program under GrowNYC operates 54 farmers markets. The Greenmarket has become the largest outdoor urban farmers’ network in the country and has forged partnerships throughout the city to provide education, youth programs, and community for both farmers and community residents. http://www.grownyc.org/greenmarket

**Harvest Home Farmers Market** (HHFM) is New York State’s largest operator of farmers markets in high-need, low income communities. The organization operates 18 markets throughout the city, reaching over 180,000 shoppers. Harvest Home is dedicated to increasing access to local, farm-fresh produce, education the public about nutrition, supporting regional agriculture and providing job opportunities during the market season. http://www.harvesthomefm.org/

**Down to Earth Markets** operate 20 farmers markets in Hudson Valley as well as in the Bronx, Queens, Manhattan, and Brooklyn. http://downtoearthmarkets.com/

Other partnerships opportunities:

- **City Harvest** strategically focuses resources on low-income communities where affordable, healthy food is not readily accessible and residents often suffer from high rates of diet-related diseases. City Harvest’s Healthy Neighborhoods program envisions communities where fresh produce is available, affordable and in high demand. (www.cityharvest.org)
- **Health Insurance Companies** and other public health organizations are beginning to sponsor and invest in the creation of farmers’ markets.
- **Farmers Web** connects local consumers and sellers of produce to increase market access and efficiency. https://www.farmersweb.com/
F. ADDITIONAL FOOD ACCESS MODELS

Food Retail

Healthy Bodegas/Shop Healthy

Many communities already have a variety of grocery stores and bodegas where residents shop on a day to day basis. Partnering with existing stores and distributors to ensure that they carry affordable fresh and local food options presents an opportunity to improve access to healthy food options. Shop Healthy NYC is a set of initiatives established by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOH), to provide the resources for community groups and community leaders to work with their neighborhood stores to expand the fresh and local food options available for sale. DOH developed a step by step process for working with local retailers on this initiative including specific tips for working with bodegas and small grocery stores. Learn more about the program here: http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycfood/html/shop/shop.shtml

Green Carts

In the spring of 2008, the New York City Council and Mayor Bloomberg authorized 1,000 new street vending permits with the goal of creating new opportunities for entrepreneurs to sell fresh fruits and vegetables. Green Cart permits were made available exclusively in low-income neighborhoods where access to fresh produce is limited and diet-related diseases (diabetes and heart disease) are prevalent. Instructional workshops related to business development are provided for Green Cart operators by Karp Resources and DOH. Organizations can supplement this support by helping to market Green Carts to neighborhood residents, providing support in securing a Green Cart permit, or providing storage for Green Carts during off hours. This model may be ideal for an organization that offers workforce development or entrepreneurship programming.
The Green Cart Initiative is administered by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. All information about applying for a permit can be found in the Green Carts section of the Department website. http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/diseases/green-carts.shtml

The Green Carts Initiative has also partnered with ACCION USA, a local small business micro-lender, to provide low-interest loans to Green Cart vendors. Loans can be used to purchase carts and for business start-up expenses. http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/cdp/green_carts_flyer.pdf

**Grocery Stores**

Supermarkets and grocery stores that contain abundant fresh and healthy foods can have tremendous impact on health indicators and economic conditions within neighborhoods. Several initiatives throughout the country and in New York City such as F.R.E.S.H., have been implemented to encourage building new supermarkets. These programs provide financial assistance and other incentives for developers, offer technical assistance to shop owners, and help communities influence the food environments within their neighborhoods. Learn more about the F.R.E.S.H. program here: http://www.nyc.gov/html/misc/html/2009/fresh.shtml

Other Financial incentives available to organizations that develop grocery store retail spaces include:

- **New Markets Tax Credit**
  The New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Program attracts investment capital to low-income communities by permitting investors to receive a tax credit in the amount of 39 percent of the original investment in exchange for making equity investments Community Development Entities (CDEs). For more information about this financial tool, click here: http://cdfifund.gov/what_we_do/programs_id.asp?programID=5

- **Empire State Development-Healthy Foods Healthy Communities Fund**
  The New York Healthy Food & Healthy Communities Fund is a $30 million statewide program created to provide grants and loans for food markets in underserved communities. By providing financing to supermarket and grocery operators, the program will increase the availability of nutritious food choices for the 1.7 million New Yorkers who lack access to stores with healthy food options. http://esd.ny.gov/BusinessPrograms/HealthyFoodHealthyCommunities.html

- **LIIF-Low Income Investment Fund**
  LIIF’s healthy food program provides financing to develop and expand fresh food outlets in underserved communities. http://www.liifund.org/programs/healthy-food/

- **Food Trust**
  The Food Trust has partnered with many organizations and published various toolkits and other resources for communities and organizations to use to develop supermarkets in high need areas. Learn more about their projects here: http://thefoodtrust.org/what-we-do
Food Cooperative (Co-op)

Similar to grocery stores, food cooperatives (co-ops) sell groceries to individuals. Co-ops typically have members who own and operate the stores, and most stock locally-grown and organic produce. These stores often sell bulk foods and offer discounts to members, some even require members to work mandatory shifts. Most consumer food co-ops fall into one of two categories:

1. Conventional Consumer Co-op: The store is open to member and non-member shoppers, but members are required to make an equity investment to join the co-op and in return receive benefits such as price reductions on purchases.
2. Direct Charge Food Co-op: The store is open only to members. Those interested in joining the co-op will be required to make an equity investment and pay a weekly fee (the “direct charge”) to cover the co-op’s fixed costs (overhead, administration, supplies, facilities, etc.).

More information about food cooperatives, including a guide on how to start a food co-op created by Cooperative Grocers’ Information Network is available here: http://www.cgin.coop/files/manual.pdf