



FOOD ACCESS IN SOUTH SACRAMENTO

A FIVE YEAR RETROSPECTIVE OF THE BHC INITIATIVE

ABOUT THIS CASE STUDY

This retrospective developed by LPC Consulting Associates, Inc. (LPC) and funded by The California Endowment, highlights the innovation work of the BHC South Sacramento food access grantees. For five years the food access grantees have implemented programs aimed at repairing the food system in the South Sacramento BHC area. This retrospective highlights the work of the food access grantees over the past five years.

Interviews with BHC food access grantees and the TCE South Sacramento Program Manager, and evaluation studies completed by LPC Consulting Associates, Inc. provide the basis for this retrospective. Since the outset of the BHC initiative, LPC has had the pleasure of providing evaluation services for the South Sacramento BHC initiative and individual grant funded programs.

Special thanks to the South Sacramento BHC food access grantees and Christine Tien, Program Manager with the California Endowment for their invaluable contributions to this retrospective.

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INTRODUCTION

The California Endowment (TCE) launched the 10 year, \$1 billion Building Healthy Communities (BHC) place-based initiative in 2010. The initiative is *working towards transforming 14 communities devastated by health inequities into places where all people have an opportunity to thrive*. The BHC initiative moves beyond the medical model that focuses on health care and genetics as the sole factors that shape health outcomes, and addresses the social, political, and economic environments – or the social determinants of health – that shape the conditions in which people live.

Zip codes encapsulate the conditions in which people live, and are predictors of life expectancy. Neighborhood conditions such as affordable housing, clean air, safe spaces for outdoor recreation, and access to fresh food impact health outcomes. Zip codes for low-income communities of color typically have lower life expectancy than their affluent counterparts and lack the neighborhood conditions or amenities that influence positive health outcomes. Through empowering youth and residents, supporting enhanced collaboration and policy innovation, leveraging partnerships and resources, and changing the narrative about health, BHC is building healthy communities by positively impacting the social determinants of health, creating civically engaged communities and policy changes to address the systems level disparities.

The California Endowment began the BHC initiative with a planning process in which the 14 communities were responsible for working with a host organization to establish a steering committee and workgroups; create a governance and decision making structures; develop a logic model to focus on 10 initiative-wide, predetermined outcomes; clarify priorities and strategies; and finalize an implementation plan. In the spring of 2009, The California Endowment contracted with Asian Resources, Inc. to guide the planning process for the South Sacramento BHC site.

South Sacramento completed its BHC planning process between June 2009 and March 2010. The process included the development of the Steering Committee and three workgroups: Health Access, Community Infrastructure and Assets, and Youth Development. The groups entered into a combined needs assessment and strategic planning process to surface issues and priorities for South Sacramento. The needs assessment component included the analysis of community-level data derived through previous studies, and data collected through community focus groups and surveys to inform the BHC planning process. The Steering Committee and workgroup reviewed the data that culminated in the development of a logic model that outlined the change strategies to reach the five priority outcomes -selected by the workgroups from the list of 10 initiative-wide outcomes provided by TCE - as the focus of the South Sacramento BHC initiative. Once the South Sacramento BHC completed the planning process and submitted the logic model with five priority outcomes to TCE, the transition from planning to implementation began.

INTRODUCTION (CONTINUED)

THE RISE OF FOOD ACCESS

When Sacramento stakeholders came together to develop a proposal for submission to TCE to become one of the 14 sites in the BHC initiative, there was a strong contingent of nonprofit organizations advocating for food access as an area of focus. The nonprofit organizations—*NeighborWorks*, *Soil Born Farms*, *Valley Vision*, *Alchemist*, *Ubuntu Green*, and *Pesticide Watch*—had worked on food access issues in the Sacramento region in advance of the BHC place-based initiative and understood the need to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables, educational resources, and fresh food production to positively impact resident and community health. Once TCE awarded the planning grant to South Sacramento, the food access organizations joined the Community Infrastructure and Assets workgroup and continued to promote the inclusion of food access in the BHC logic model and implementation plan.

The Community Infrastructure and Assets workgroup organized community forums and administered surveys to obtain resident input about neighborhood issues and areas of interest. Out of these forums and from survey findings, the workgroup focused on improving food access, healthy land use, and economic development opportunities, and identified the following targets for change:

- Collaboration amongst BHC partner to develop a sustainable food system;
- Local growers selling produce from a local distribution center;
- Develop and support an edible city;
- Improved standards for development;
- Increased usable green space; and
- A unified economic development strategy with training and jobs for youth and adults.



At a retreat in February 2010, the Steering Committee and workgroup members discussed the organizational structure of the BHC initiative as it transitioned from planning to implementation. For implementation of the BHC South Sacramento initiative the Community Infrastructure and Assets workgroup split into three workgroups: Food Access, Land Use, and Economic Development. The Food Access workgroup chose to focus on TCE priority outcomes four (*residents live in communities with health-promoting land use, transportation, and community development*) and eight (*neighborhoods and school environments support improved health and healthy behaviors*) as two of the five priority outcomes for South Sacramento. The Food Access workgroup also retained a vision for developing programs and activities with a food access, education and distribution focus.

During the first year of implementation the TCE Program Manager reviewed numerous grant proposals and granted funding to support a combination of programs to promote policy change, educational opportunities, and to advance a systems and regional approaches to improving access to fresh food. The distribution of grant funding set the stage for engaging residents and youth in food access activities, addressing the food access system, and advocating for policy change to mitigate systems-level barriers.

BUILDING THE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR COLLABORATION

TCE included workgroups in the structure of the BHC initiative to “foster collaboration around focused issues.” Based on discussions that occurred during the planning year, the food access organizations started the Food Access workgroup with both a philosophy and strategy to guide their efforts. The *philosophy* includes a: (1) commitment to leveraging “collective and individual” strengths to support one another and to work collaboratively, and (2) a dedication to building community through resident engagement in food access activities. The *strategy* outlines expanding *access* to fresh food, increasing *production* of fresh fruits and vegetables, and providing *education* opportunities in the BHC area. Food access grantees are cognizant that the food system is larger than the BHC area and therefore the strategy delineates working both inside and outside the BHC area to change the structures that influence the food system. External BHC activities include advocating for state and city-level policies that increase access to fresh food and mitigate obstacles to urban agriculture, or procuring produce from farmers that grow outside the BHC area. The Food Access workgroup philosophy laid the foundation necessary to build trust amongst the grantees, prioritize a resident focus, and guide the development of food access programs and activities.

From the outset of implementation, Soil Born Farms has chaired the Food Access workgroup, now referred to as the Healthy Food for All Coalition or BHC Food Access Action Team. A number of factors made Soil Born Farms a good candidate to chair the action team. First, prior to the BHC initiative Soil Born

Farms received a capacity building grant from TCE that contributed to developing the strength of the organization and their capability to chair an action team. Second, Soil Born Farms is a food agency whose mission aligns with the BHC food access work. Third, the organization had demonstrated skills in collaboration, and a proven ability to strategize. In their role as chair, Soil Born Farms has led grantees in developing a common vision, facilitated conversations to increase collaboration amongst grantees and align their activities towards the vision, fostered the development of tools to track grantee activities and make decisions to embark on new approaches to advance the vision, and provided a venue for grantees to discuss policy change activities.

Initially the action team convened quarterly, transitioned to meeting bi-monthly and now meets monthly. The first year the action team convened, the grantees developed working relationship and the trust necessary to work collaboratively. In year two the food access grantees engaged in a graphic visioning exercise to articulate collective goals and align grantee programs to the vision. Through developing a shared vision for change the grantees developed a common understanding of the problem and an approach to mitigating food system issues through collective and agreed upon actions.

In year three the Food Access Action Team engaged in constructive conversations pertaining to cross-partner collaboration. The partners engaged in a mapping exercise to identify neighborhoods in the BHC area with a high concentration of food access grantee programs to ascertain the community characteristics that foster a high level of activity. The partners also identified neighborhoods without BHC funded food access programs or with a relatively small number of programs, to discern areas for increased focus. The mapping exercise culminated in a strategy to build collaboration through grantees providing a range of food access programs in a targeted neighborhood, referred to by the action team as “layering” services. Through this strategy residents potentially benefit from having multiple interrelated programs that increase distribution and access to fresh food and provide educational opportunities within close proximity to their home, while seeking to positively impact the food system in a targeted geographic area.



BUILDING THE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR COLLABORATION

(CONTINUED)



In year four the food access partners implemented the targeted neighborhood strategy by coalescing programs in The Avenues neighborhood as a means to achieve their vision and “change the residents’ narrative.” In year five Soil Born Farms contracted with Solh Resolutions to co-facilitate the action team and the meetings focused on developing collaboration tools and systems for layering multiple food access services in a target area.

Year five resulted in the development of a shared workplan that aligned partner programs to five different outcomes or indicators of achieving the shared vision. The workplan provides a tool to reinforce the action team vision, and provides a foundation for the development of system to track and measure success.

The action team is comprised of BHC grantees or organizations funded to work on food access and education issues in the BHC area, and organizations with an interest in the Sacramento region food movement (e.g., Edible Sac High garden program and Assemblymember Dr. Richard Pan’s Office). The number of organizations participating in the action team has increased over time, as the group evolved from BHC grantees only, to the inclusion of additional agencies and organizations funded by TCE.

The action team provides a venue for the food access grantees to engage in conversations that drive the BHC food access work forward in a collaborative way. Regularly convening food access grantees has resulted in the creation of a shared vocabulary to characterize the work, and the development of trust amongst the partner organizations to effectively engage in collaboration.

For many grantees meeting attendance was “key to establishing the right types of partnerships.”

Almost every organization at the table can provide an example of how they are partnering with another organization on the provision of BHC funded program. The partnerships have enhanced their programs, expanded their reach, and allowed for the development of new programs to positively impact the food system. Collaboration was the philosophical foundation guiding the action team and that philosophy has manifested into measurable outcomes. In addition, partnering provided a means for grantees to leverage grant funding. Foundations are increasingly granting funds to organizations that partner or demonstrate leveraging multiple funding sources to implement programs.

TCE has awarded \$3,785,330 over the past five years to BHC food access grantees and those grantees have leveraged an additional \$2,567,379 to further food access activities and programs. The initiative has generated considerable enthusiasm and demonstrated a lasting commitment to improving access to healthy food in the South Sacramento BHC target area through policy, community, and school-based activities.

Food Access Grants

\$3,785,330

Funds Leveraged by
Food Access Grantees

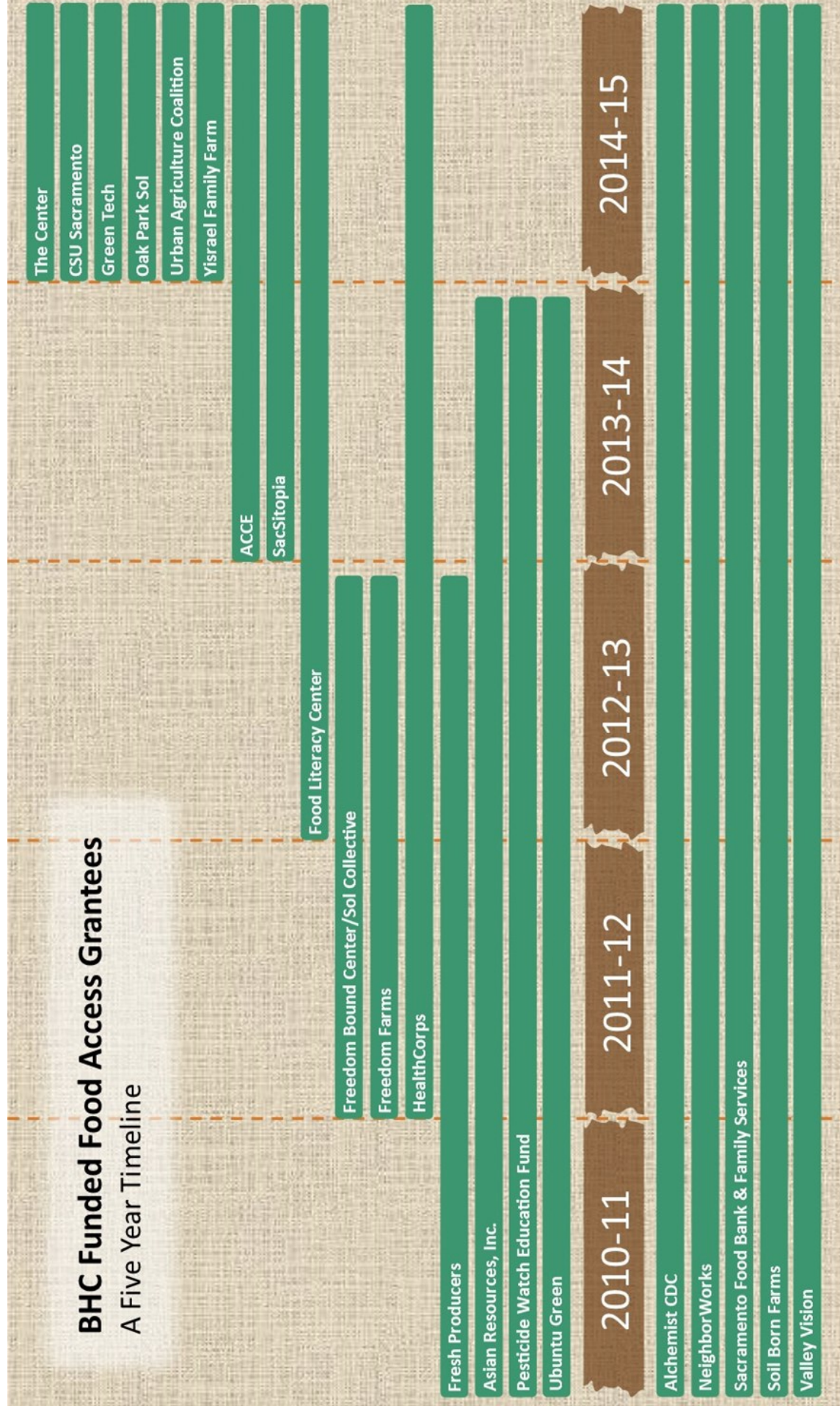
\$2,567,379

Total Funds Dedicated to
Food Access

\$6,352,709

TIMELINE OF BHC FUNDED FOOD ACCESS GRANTEES

BHC Funded Food Access Grantees A Five Year Timeline



ENGAGING IN SYSTEMS CHANGE

Realizing that the “food system is not defined by the BHC area,” the BHC grantees engaged in policy change activities to alleviate systems-level barriers to food access and urban agriculture. BHC grantees worked with non-profit organizations (Center for Land Based Learning) and a City of Sacramento elected official (Councilmember, Jay Schenirer) to encourage the introduction of State Legislation (AB 2367). The grantees submitted letters of support for state (AB 551) and city legislation, and testified in support of policy change at City of Sacramento City Council hearings (Community Garden Ordinance). Additionally, grantees provided campaign planning and implementation assistance to resident groups (Campaign to Legalize Urban Chicken Keeping) in support of changing local policies to encourage urban agriculture, and worked with City of Sacramento staff to write the draft Urban Agriculture ordinance. The efforts of BHC food access grantees have led to the passing of two assembly bills and five City of Sacramento ordinances to enhance the food system.

Policy Collaboratives

The Sacramento Region Food System Collaborative (FSC).

Valley Vision (VV) received funding in 2009 to convene the FSC, a coalition of public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders working to inform and influence the regional food system in a six-county region. The aim of the FSC was to increase access to healthy food in underserved communities, increase educational opportunities, and advocate for advancing the agricultural at all scales. The FSC focused on initiatives and planning efforts that pertained to: (1) food access and food security, (2) land use planning, (3) local food purchasing plans, and (4) rural economic development to advance their goals. During its tenure, the FSC developed the Sacramento Region Food Charter (see below), and discussed the need for a regional food hub to better connect the production and distribution components of the food system building on conversations held during the BHC planning phase. In addition, FSC members discussed the need for a regional framework to further the development of the food system. VV leveraged their work in the BHC to receive a grant from the Sacramento Region Community Foundation in 2015 that funded the development of the Sacramento Region Food System Action Plan initially discussed by the FSC. The plan includes strategic priorities, actions, resources and leadership assets necessary to transform the regional food system to reduce hunger, increase consumption of locally grown food, improve health outcomes and grow the local economy. In year five of the BHC initiative, the members voted to disband the FSC and split into two groups: (1) a group focused on large-scale foods systems action planning across the six-county region, including local pilots and models that could be replicated at larger scales, led by VV; and the (2) Sacramento Food Policy Council, or a contingent of folks interested in addressing food policy issues specific to Sacramento.

Sacramento Urban Agriculture Coalition. In 2013, BHC grantees came together with community based organizations working on food access issues in the Sacramento region to form the coalition. The aim of the coalition is to create economic development opportunities, improve food security, and agriculture based solutions to blight on vacant lots through amending laws that impede urban agriculture. In 2015 Soil Born Farms received funding to convene and facilitate the coalition. The coalition was successful in their bid to work with the City of Sacramento to adopt the Urban Agricultural Ordinance and Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone (see below). The coalition is currently working with the County of Sacramento on similar ordinances.

State Policies

California Assembly Bill 2367. Approved by the Governor on September 21, 2012 allows school districts, charter schools, or county offices of education to sell produce grown in a school garden program if federal, state, and local health and safety requirements for production, processing, and distribution of produce are complied with.

California Assembly Bill 551, Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones Act. Approved by the Governor on September 28, 2013 the bill allows local governments to establish urban agriculture zones to promote sustainable urban farms in urban sectors. The act authorizes a city or county to enter into a contract with a landowner to use a vacant, unimproved, or blighted parcel no smaller than 0.10 acre or larger than 3 acres for small-scale farming or animal husbandry. The assessor values the property based on an agriculture use which is essentially a tax benefit or property tax reduction for the land owner.

ENGAGING IN SYSTEMS CHANGE (CONTINUED)

City Ordinances

City of Sacramento Vacant Lot Community Garden Ordinance.

On July 19, 2011 the City of Sacramento City Council passed an ordinance that allows the establishment of community gardens on privately owned, residentially-zoned vacant lots.

City of Sacramento Backyard Chicken Ordinance. The Sacramento City Council adopted an ordinance on August 30, 2011 that allows residents to have a maximum of three chickens per residential parcel. The ordinance requires chickens be confined to a coop located in the backyard.

City of Sacramento Urban Agriculture Ordinance. On March 24, 2015 the City of Sacramento City Council passed the Urban Agriculture Ordinance that allows residents to develop urban farms and to sell their produce onsite through urban agricultural stands regardless of the land use designation of the parcel where they establish their agricultural operation. The Sacramento Urban Agriculture Coalition collectively drafted the ordinance language and met with city staff on multiple occasions to refine the language and address staff concerns.

City of Sacramento Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone. On August 6, 2015 the City Council designated the City of Sacramento as an Urban Agricultural Incentive Zone which provides a property tax incentive for property owners of vacant, unimproved, or blighted property converted to agricultural use for five years.

City of Sacramento Farm-to-Fork Capital. In 2012, Mayor Kevin Johnson declared the City of Sacramento America's Farm-to-Fork Capital which provides a platform to highlight the regions thriving agricultural landscape and local culinary scene. The City of Sacramento Convention and Visitors Bureau organizes a Farm-to-Fork week that includes educational lectures and events to highlight the Sacramento food system, and culminates in a festival on the Capital Mall. The Farm-to-Fork declaration has ushered in a renewed focus and appreciation for regional agriculture and the local distribution of produce, which has provided BHC grantees new opportunities to educate elected officials, community-based organizations, and residents about their respective programs and activities to fix and enhance the food access system.



Regional Plans

Sacramento Food Charter. The FSC created the Sacramento Region Food Charter in 2010. The food charter outlines the values of the Sacramento Region related to a regional food system that supports access to healthy foods, economic viability of agriculture, and educational opportunities.

Key Policymakers

While the BHC grantees were drivers of food systems related policy changes, the support of elected officials was instrumental to achieving system change outcomes. The following elected officials provided tremendous support to the City of Sacramento and BHC food access movement.

Councilmember Jay Schenirer, District 5 City of Sacramento (2010 – Present). A large portion of the BHC area is in Councilmember Schenirer's District. The Councilmember has been very supportive of the BHC initiative, and has advocated for establishment of community gardens to increase access to fresh produce in his District. Councilmember Schenirer voted in support of the city level policies that remove barriers to urban agriculture, and worked with California Assemblymember Susan A. Bonilla to introduce California Assembly Bill 2367.

Mayor Kevin Johnson, City of Sacramento (2008 – Present). Mayor Kevin Johnson has advocated strongly for the growth of the agriculture industry in the Sacramento Region to support economic growth. In declaring the City of Sacramento as the Farm-to-Fork capital he set a goal to increase consumption of locally grown produce from three to 20 percent. The Farm-to-Fork declaration has increased the awareness of eating locally sourced food, engaged a larger number of industries in championing local agricultural pursuits, and invigorated local policy efforts.

TIMELINE OF FOOD ACCESS POLICY CHANGE ACTIVITIES

ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC BARRIERS TO FOOD ACCESS



POLICY COLLABORATIVE

2009 | Formation of Sacramento Regional Food Systems Collaborative

2013 | Formation of Sacramento Urban Agriculture Coalition



CITY ORDINANCE

JUL 2011 | City of Sacramento Community Garden Vacant Lot Ordinance

AUG 2011 | City of Sacramento Backyard Chicken Ordinance

OCT 2012 | Mayor Johnson declares Sacramento as America's Farm-to-Fork Capital

MAR 2015 | City of Sacramento Urban Agriculture Ordinance

AUG 2015 | City of Sacramento Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone



STATE ASSEMBLY BILL

SEP 2012 | School Garden Produce Sales - CA Assembly Bill 2367

SEP 2013 | Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones - CA Assembly Bill 551

COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS

The food access grantees provide a variety of programs in the community to reach residents in their neighborhoods where they are most likely to engage with the food system. TCE has funded many of the food access programs since the first year of implementing the BHC initiative, many of which are still going strong. The programs address food access, distribution and education, and as a whole provide a complimentary set of activities working together to mitigate the issues negatively impacting a healthy food system. TCE has provided funding to support programs that were temporarily part of the BHC initiative. In large part, most but not all of these programs ceased due to the organizational capacity of the non-profit running the program. While the programs provided value to achieving the food access vision, the organizations did not have sufficient capability for long-term program delivery. In fact, most of the nonprofit organizations that struggled with organizational capacity have closed their doors. TCE also funded pilot food access programs that the grantees determined did not have the desired impact or results, and thus either ceased the programs or developed alternative programs to meet the identified need. In the past five years the grantees have grown and refined a variety of community-based, food access programs. Despite a few organizational struggles, many new and initially funded food access programs remain successful and engage residents in a multitude of ways in the food system. A brief description of three tiers of TCE funded food access programs follows.

Active Community-Based Programs

Aquaponics. *Green Tech* worked with a group of youth to develop an aquaponics structure in Oak Park. Faculty from *California State University, Sacramento* provided aquaponics education and training.

Community Farm Stands. *Alchemist* operates a weekly farm stand for one month to raise community awareness of a healthy corner store makeover. During the first year of the BHC, *Soil Born Farms* partnered with *Alchemist* to establish long-term farm stands at two different locations. Due to low sales, project partners realized that farm stands are not viable long-term solutions for fresh food access, but serve as temporary access points to encourage residents to think about their neighborhoods as places where fresh produce is available.

Community Gardens. *A.C.C.E.* assists residents in Oak Park with converting alleys and vacant lots into community gardens.

Food Education Classes. *Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services*, *SacSitopia*, and *Yisrael Family Farm* provide gardening and cooking classes for residents at food banks, community gardens, libraries, and urban farms to build on the food access activities.

Food Literacy Program. Through this program, the *Food Literacy Center* inspires residents to eat fresh fruits and vegetables through lessons on cooking on nutrition. The Food Literacy Center provides the program at community centers, community gardens, and libraries.

Harvest Sacramento. *Soil Born Farm's* Harvest Sacramento gleaning program engages adult and youth volunteers to pick

fruit from trees that for a variety of reasons would go unused, and then distributes that fruit to residents, food banks, and community based organizations. By harvesting the fruit before it spoils, the Harvest Sacramento program is increasing the volume of produce distributed in the Sacramento area and increasing resident access to fresh produce.

Harvest Centers. *Soil Born Farms* develops neighborhood-based harvest centers to increase the reach and sustainability of the Harvest Sacramento program. The program fosters a group of residents to initiate and lead harvest events independently of *Soil Born Farms* through the provision of recurrent harvest leader training and gleaning tools.



COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS (CONTINUED)

Healthy Corner Store Makeovers. *Alchemist* has assisted four neighborhood corner stores with making over space to sell fresh fruits and vegetables. *Alchemist* developed a “Healthy Corner Store” program appropriate for the BHC by conducting research on market-based solutions to improve healthy food access through healthy corner store makeovers.

Home Gardens. Previously *Ubuntu Green*, and currently *Yisrael Family Farm*, *SacSitopia* and *Soil Born Farms* build no cost home gardens for residents. The gardens have varied from the installation of one raised bed to the transformation of an entire backyard for home gardening. Through the program residents receive the no-cost home garden, seeds and plants for one year, composting assistance, free gardening classes, and garden resources.

Mobile Markets. *Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services* operates six mobile markets and provides food nutrition education to increase access to healthy food. The mobile markets provide an opportunity for families to procure fresh produce, sample fruits and vegetables, and receive nutrition and health education.

Oak Park Crop Swap. *NeighborWorks* organizes the Oak Park Crop Swap to provide a venue for residents to trade the produce grown in their yards and hear educational presentations from guest speakers.

Oak Park Farmers Market. *NeighborWorks* opened the Oak Park Farmers’ Market in 2011 to an enthusiastic welcome from a neighborhood that had been planning and preparing for this milestone. The groundwork for the expanded and enhanced market began years earlier, with leadership from neighborhood residents, the Oak Park Neighborhood Association, and *NeighborWorks*.

Project GOOD. *Yisrael Family Farm* developed Project GOOD! (Growing Our Own Destiny) to teach youth how to grow fresh food. Youth learn the skills necessary to grow food through team building exercises, hands-on projects, field trips, and one-on-one mentoring. Youth leadership and empowerment are key components of the project that aims to provide a fun atmosphere while embedding skills in youth.

Urban Farm Tours. *Yisrael Family Farm* and *Soil Born Farms* provides farm tours as a means to educate folks about growing fresh fruits and vegetables and to encourage residents to eat locally sourced produce.

Temporary Community-Based Programs

Community Advocacy. *Pesticide Watch* provided community organizing and advocacy training for resident groups in the BHC to advocate for greater access to locally grown, healthy food.

Environmental Justice Education. *Freedom Farms* trained youth and residents on environmental justice with an emphasis on urban agriculture. The youth were from SAVA, a charter school located in George Sim Community Center.

Green Corps Job Program. *Soil Born Farms* Green Corps Job Program provided an opportunity for youth to gain hands-on garden training and work experience. The Green Corps members assisted with the veggie box program, working at the American River Ranch, and staffing the Farm Stand.

G-Squad. To facilitate youth learning and environmental leadership, *Ubuntu Green* convened the Green Youth Leadership Team or G-Squad. The youth members engaged in garden maintenance activities at a community garden behind a convenience store in Oak Park, and assisted with garden bed installations through the backyard garden build program.

Seed to Table Project. *Freedom Bound Center* developed the project to increase consumption of healthy food in healthy disparity “hot spot” communities through youth leadership development, skill workshops, community actions, and communal dinners.

Reimagined Community-Based Programs

Southeast Asian Grower Outreach. Asian Resources, Inc. attempted to implement a program that would connect Southeast Asian growers with restaurants and local food retailers to increase the distribution of locally grown produce. The program floundered as interest on both sides waned over time.

Veggie Box Program. During the first year of the BHC initiative, *Soil Born Farms* implemented a subscriber based seasonal veggie box program. Challenges related to generating subscribers and a lackluster response from the community led to *Soil Born* discontinuing the program.

COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

OUTCOMES FOR COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS



REACHING CHILDREN WHERE THEY LEARN

The Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) is the largest urban school district in Sacramento County, with 81 schools and as many as 20 of which are either in the BHC or draw students from that target area. TCE has provided funding directly to the SCUSD to support the BHC initiative and to food access grantees to reach children where they learn, and to shift the narrative around food and nutrition. The BHC funded school-based programs are a combination of during school and after school programs. BHC has provided funding for programs that were ultimately temporary in nature due to a lack of administrative support at the school-level, or the organizational capacity to sustain the programs long-term. As with system change activities, there are a hand-full of policy makers who provided or continue to provide instrumental support for the BHC initiative and food access vision.

Policy Collaborative

SCUSD Healthy Foods Task Force. Former Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) School Board Member Patrick Kennedy and Former SCUSD Superintendent Jonathan Raymond established the Healthy Food Task Force in 2010 to support the Nutrition Services Department and improve the school lunch offerings. The Task Force is a collaboration between SCUSD and community partners. In 2012 the task force was successful in introducing salad bars in every elementary, middle and high school in the urban district based in large part on student input and participation. The salad bars offer up to eight different fruits and vegetables. The Task Force also assisted with launching the Breakfast First Initiative to expand the free breakfast program to 14,000 students at 32 school sites. *Valley Vision* facilitates the task force and the current initiatives include securing Measure Q bond money to build a centralized kitchen, thereby facilitating the use of fresh ingredients in school lunches, and updating the SCUSD wellness policy to encourage more farm to school focused programs.



School-Based Programs

Food Literacy Class. *The Food Literacy Center* conducts Food Literacy Classes at Pacific Elementary, St. HOPE Public School 7, and Aspire Capital Heights Academy. The program focuses on teaching low-income, elementary school-age children cooking and nutrition to inspire kids to eat vegetables.

Growing Together School Gardens. *Soil Born Farms* manages the Growing Together School Garden program. The program aims to create a comprehensive approach or model for a school district to implement a coordinated and sustained school garden program. Will C. Wood Middle School, and Camelia Basic, Nicholas, Oakridge and Pacific Elementary Schools are piloting the program that includes the development of a school garden for applied, hands-on learning and a science based curriculum. The program impacts campuses through healthy eating, science learning, connecting students to food, and increasing pride in the campus. Soil Born Farms has trained 30 teachers through the Growing Together program.

HealthCorps School Program. *HealthCorps* provides innovative in-school nutrition education at American Legion High School that inspires teens to make healthier choices for themselves and their families. The program also includes lunch time activities and an after school program to support students in making healthy choices. In the past, BHC funded the program at Sacramento and Hiram Johnson high schools.

Social Emotional School Garden Program. *The Sacramento Chinese Community Center* incorporates experiential learning from the school garden program with Social Emotional Learning to create a unique afterschool program at Earl Warren and Nicholas Elementary Schools; Will C. Wood Middle School; and American Legion, Burbank and Hiram Johnson High Schools. Two youth from the Luther Burbank garden program testified in support of Urban Agriculture Ordinance at a City of Sacramento City Council hearing meeting.

REACHING CHILDREN WHERE THEY LEARN (CONTINUED)

School Garden Symposium. *Soil Born Farms* held their first School Garden Symposium in the fifth year of the BHC initiative. The event drew over 200 participants from the Sacramento region as well as the six counties adjacent to the County of Sacramento. Attendees comprised teachers, after-school program providers, nurses, non-profit organizations and school district staff. The symposium included workshops, panel discussions, and information booths for attendees to gain resources to help youth make the connection between food, health and the environment. Due to the success of the first school garden symposium and to support the development of a garden in every school, *Soil Born Farms* is facilitating a second school garden symposium in year six of the BHC initiative.

Temporary School-Based Programs

Healthy Urban Garden Program. *Pesticide Watch* worked with a group of students from Hiram Johnson High School to advocate for the development of a school garden as part of the Healthy Urban Garden Program. *Pesticide Watch* also provided internship opportunities for two youth from the program. The interns testified at a City of Sacramento City Council meeting in opposition to the siting of a McDonald's with a double drive thru across the street from UC Davis Medical Center.

Grab and Go Breakfast. *HealthCorps* worked with a group of students at American Legion to implement the Grab and Go Breakfast. As part of this program students from the Breakfast Club disseminated ready-to-eat breakfast to students during the 10-minute passing break between first and second periods.

Produce Delivery. *Fresh Producers* worked with youth from two BHC schools to create a youth-run business that delivered fresh fruits and vegetables to students and their families.

Seed to Table Project. *Freedom Bound Center* worked with a group of youth to develop their leadership skills through community services projects to increase consumption of healthy food. One of the youth received a permaculture certificate with mentoring from the project instructor.

Instrumental Policymakers

Former Superintendent Jonathan Raymond, Sacramento City Unified School District (2209-2013). Jonathan Raymond was a champion of all BHC school-based activities and programs. He founded the SCUSD Healthy Foods Task Force that was the catalyst to District level changes.

Board of Supervisor Patrick Kennedy, District 2 Sacramento County (June 2014 – Present) and former SCUSD Board of Education (December 2011 – August 2014). As a School Board Member and in his current capacity, is a strong advocate for a centralized kitchen and supporter of updated the SCUSD wellness policy. He was also a member of the SCUSD Healthy Foods Task Force. Under Patrick's leadership, SCUSD was one of the first organizations to sign-on to the Sacramento Region Food Charter.

Board of Education, Jessie Ryan, Area 7 (December 2014 – Present). Prior to her school board appointment, Jessie served as a member of the BHC Steering Committee. In her current position, Jessie is also a member of the SCUSD Healthy Foods Task Force and a strong supporter of a SCUSD centralized kitchen and updating the school wellness policy to enhance farm-to-school programs.

2nd Vice President Board of Education Jay Hansen, Area 1 (December 2012 – Present). Strong supporter of using bond money to construct a centralized kitchen and advocate of farm-to-school initiatives.



SCHOOL OUTCOMES

OUTCOMES FOR SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS



EDUCATION

28,075

youth engaged

12

schools engaged



SCHOOL NUTRITION

81

school salad bars added



GARDEN CENTERS

5

school
garden
programs

3

school
orchards

2

school
greenhouses



BREAKFAST
EXPANSION

14,000

students reached

32

schools reached



GARDEN TRAINING

200

School Garden
Symposium
participants

30

Growing Together
Program trainees

20

Advanced Training
participants

THE ROAD AHEAD

TCE has awarded \$3,785,330 over the past five years to BHC food access grantees and those grantees have leveraged an additional \$2,567,379 to further food access activities and program. The food access grantees engaged in policy change activities that resulted in the passing of two assembly bills and five City of Sacramento ordinances to enhance the food system. There are 14 community-based and 4 school-based programs engaging residents in programs geared towards repairing the food system and improving the health of the South Sacramento community. Throughout the five-year journey, the food access grantees have encountered both success and challenges.

Successes

- In the past five years the food access grantees have expanded both their community and school-based programming. The grantees derive satisfaction from knowing that youth are learning food nutrition and gardening skills. Community residents respond favorably to the programs and are benefiting from increased access to healthy food and educational resources.
- Grantees are also leveraging their BHC grants to obtain other sources of funding to expand or enhance their programs. Most impressive is the expanded partnering occurring between the food access non-profit organizations both internal and external to the BHC initiative.
- The Sacramento region has experienced a narrative shift pertaining to food access. The Farm to Fork and Farm to Every Fork movements have energized many folks in the food industry and engaged residents around eating healthy and eating fresh, locally sourced produce.
- Food Access grantees are developing creative social media campaigns to advertise their programs and spread the word about program successes and impacts.
- Food access partners developed a new garden build model that has a robust volunteer component.

Five years ago the Food Access Action Team was comprised of non-profit organizations bound by funding, with a commitment to work collaboratively in an effort to build community, but without a foundation of trust derived from working together. Five years later the action team encompasses a multitude of food access non-profits from the Sacramento region that are working collaboratively, guided by a vision and strategies to achieve their goals. The grantees have amassed an impressive list of programs and outcomes and are poised to have an even greater impact in the next five years as they continuing to sow seeds of change.

Challenges

- Food access grantees struggle with language barriers that prevent them from engaging some cultural or ethnic communities (e.g., African American, Southeast Asian, and Latino populations). A routine discussion at BHC tables is how grantees can engage residents in the various BHC neighborhoods, especially in areas where residents speak multiple languages. TCE contracted with Asian Resources to engage the Southeast Asian community in food access activities, but the organization was not successful. Currently, Hmong Innovative Politics and Hmong Women's Heritage Association are somewhat engaged in food access activities through the Sacramento Urban Agricultural Coalition.
- The organizational capacity of some small non-profits has led to the discontinuation of programs due to staff turnover, or staff stretched thin covering all of the program needs. In some cases this has necessitated TCE or food access grantees to find other partners to pick-up the pieces of a languishing program.
- Administrative personnel changes at SCUSD and school sites have stalled policy and systems level efforts and led to a discontinuation of some school-based programs without cause. Leadership change has led grantees to start over by seeking out schools that are amenable to BHC funded programming or slowly re-establishing relationships with new administrators to gain support for their program.
- School-based programs can also have a difficult time gaining traction or expanding to other school sites due a lack of school site staff to partner with for program delivery. Remarkably the food access grantees turn the challenges into opportunities, making the successes all the more rewarding.