

Growing Together WI



A Partnership of FoodWise and Master Gardener Program

Project Book

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Program Overview

Grow



With funds allocated to FoodWise cooperative extension county programs, FoodWise Nutrition Educators and Master Gardener Volunteers support founding, maintenance, growth, and development of school, community, and public garden spaces.

Educate



Productive garden spaces are phenomenal learning environments. Educational opportunities can focus on nutrition education or cultivating and harvesting best practices. Education initiatives should directly benefit low-income participants.

Connect



Nutrition Educators and Master Gardener Volunteers donate produce to community partners like schools, food pantries or food banks, low-income housing, and summer meal programs. Sharing produce expands impact to vulnerable populations.

SNAP-ED HIGHLIGHTS

Iowa State University

Purdue University

University of Nebraska

University of Wisconsin

497

Master Gardener
volunteers contributed time
to the project

542

community partners
and agencies cooperated
on the project

63,595

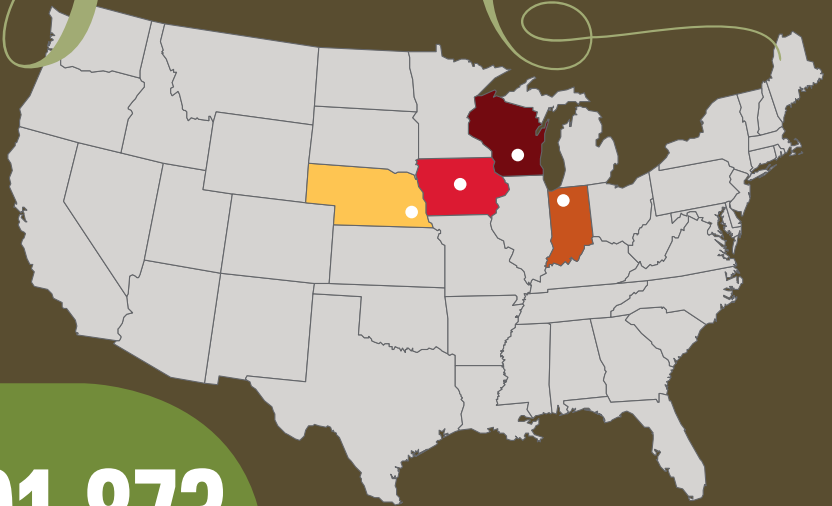
people with low income
were served
by the project

Growing Together

Projects leveraged

\$56,940

in non-SNAP-Ed funds
to support their work



131

food pantries
received produce as a
result of the project

101,873

pounds of fruits
and vegetables supplied
to food pantries

Growing Together is a multi-state SNAP-Ed project to increase access to fruits and vegetables in food pantries. SNAP-Ed, the Master Gardener Program and food pantries are working together to build and maintain donation gardens in their communities.

This program is funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, known in Iowa as Food Assistance, provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more visit: www.yesfood.iowa.gov.

Growing Together WI

PROJECT SCHEME

for FoodWise Staff & Master Gardener Volunteers

1



TALK

about the value of community garden with community stakeholders

2



ADVOCATE

for garden space accessibility to individuals with limited incomes

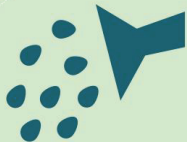
3



PROMOTE

land use and safety for equitable garden access

4



ESTABLISH INSTALL & MAINTAIN

(weed, water, harvest) gardens at sites where individuals with limited incomes eat, live, learn, work, and play.



5



DONATE

garden and farm produce to sites where SNAP-Ed participants eat, live, learn, work, play and shop

6



DELIVER

on-site garden-based nutrition education

8



EVALUATE & REPORT

7



PROVIDE

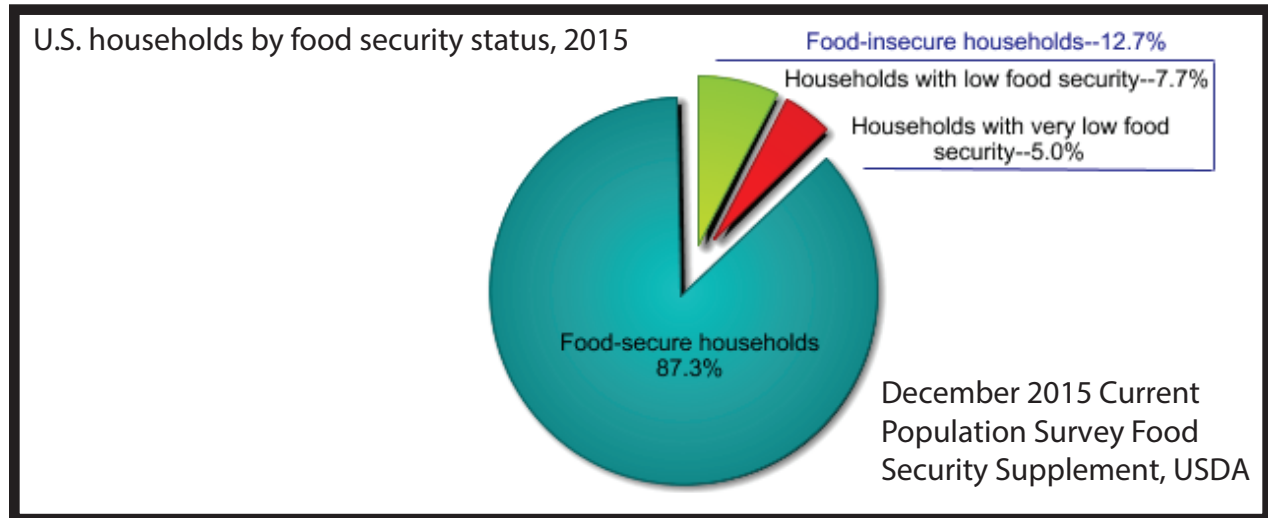
education to SNAP-Ed participants on food growing/gardening techniques



Demonstrating Need

Complete a needs assessment and demonstrate capacity of the project.

County Health Rankings and Roadmaps manages a database of evidence-based strategies for improving health outcomes and factors: [What Works for Health](#).



Build support in your county and establish relationships with community partners, FoodWise educators and Master Gardener Volunteers:

1. Complete a community health needs assessment.

County Health Rankings and Roadmaps statistics and ratings include a lot of information at the county level on:

- access to physical activity opportunities
- quality of the food environment
- current obesity, physical activity, and mental health levels

2. Take inventory of ongoing interventions to promote healthy living in your county.
3. Strategize about the potential of this program to address barriers to health identified in your community.
4. Communicate your findings and mission statements to community partners, project stakeholders, and state program directors.

How to Respond

What should you *DO*?

Growing Together WI programs are developed in response to the needs of a specific community. Each program will be unique depending on:

- Resources available
- Commitment of FoodWise educators and Master Gardener Volunteers
- Interest of community partners
- Established need from the target population

Design your Intervention

1. Find a garden space.
2. Establish a volunteer base.
3. Construct a plan for engaging participants and volunteers in the garden. Will this program:
 - *Create and support a community garden in an area?*
 - *Include garden-based nutrition education?*
 - *Incorporate garden education (like cultivation and harvesting)?*
4. Create position descriptions of FoodWise educators and Master Gardener Volunteers.
5. Design a strategic planting method.
Plant culturally appropriate and easy to use crops.
6. Establish methods to glean excess produce for donation to food banks and pantries. *How will you ensure donated food is safe for consumption? Who is responsible for transportation of produce?*
7. Define outcome collection methods.
8. Plan intended formats for sharing program outcomes.

Resources:

In Project Design

Use the evidence-based strategies in [What Works for Health](#) to support projects aiming to:

1. [Impact health through community gardens](#)
2. [Impact health through school gardens](#)
3. [Glean produce for food banks and pantries](#)
4. [Establish precedence for healthier food banks and pantries](#)
5. [Expand health-promoting access to green spaces](#)

For Nutrition Educators

Nutrition education in the garden may use one of three curricula to teach garden-based nutrition: Eating from the Garden, Nutrition to Grow On, and Garden Detective. It is important that nutrition education in this project is related to the overall strategies of increasing availability of fresh produce to low-income populations. Nutrition educators may reach participants in this program through preparation of health foods using the garden harvest. [SNAP-Ed Connection](#) and [Spend Smart, Eat Smart](#) are tools for information about seasonality of produce, recipes, and nutrition information of produce.

For Master Gardener Volunteers (MGV)

Engagement of MGVs is the foundation of a successful Growing Together WI program. MGVs may be responsible for coordinating and planning garden work activities, setting ground rules for participants and volunteers in the garden, and facilitating learning. For all of these roles and more, MGVs may utilize this [Tool Box](#) to ensure a successful program.

What is Your Role?

Master Gardener Volunteers

Master Gardener Volunteers (MGV) play an important role in design and implementation of Growing Together WI programs. MGVs are skilled in maintaining gardens, engaging community members, facilitating learning, and course-correcting when unexpected challenges arise. Because of the commitment to service and extensive experience, MGVs may bring several of the following characteristics to a Growing Together WI program:

- Gardening skills and enthusiasm
- Network connections
- Planning, cultivating and maintenance education
- Troubleshooting



For more detailed information about MGVs roles and responsibilities within Growing Together WI, visit this link:

[Master Gardener Volunteer Role.](#)

What is Your Role?

FoodWise Nutrition Educators

FoodWise is a UW-Extension nutrition education program that helps limited resource families and individuals choose healthful diets, purchase and prepare healthy food and handle it safely, and become more food secure by spending their dollars wisely. Through partnerships with community organizations, FoodWise is able to leverage federal funds to build healthier communities. Based on experience and knowledge, FoodWise educators, while in compliance with federal funding and guidelines, may contribute:

- Planning educational sessions
- Facilitating nutrition education
- Safe produce handling
- Nutritious recipes
- Relationships with food banks and pantries



For more detailed explanation of the history of FoodWise, role of Nutrition Educators in community health, and expectations of Nutrition Educators for Growing Together WI, visit this link:

[FoodWise program information.](#)

Outcome Measures

It is important to collect outcomes of your program to share success and evaluate program impact across a number of factors. Program outcomes can be collected through a mixed methods approach including photo-journaling, tracking pounds of produce grown and donated, and participant responses.

Photo Storytelling

Take pictures of everything related to this project. Photo evidence demonstrates impact of health programs. Photos with garden volunteers, nutrition education participants, and food bank and pantry recipients need to have a signed photo release. Access that form here: [photo release](#).

Data Tracking & Garden Journaling

Keep track of program counts to demonstrate magnitude of impact like number of volunteers, produce grown, produce donated to food banks and food pantries, and more. Counts should be measured on a regular basis, such as number of volunteers in the garden at each session.

Additionally, keeping a journal about daily garden activities and notable details may help you identify a trend over time by recalling small changes. Record meaningful statements from garden volunteers, nutrition education participants, and food pantry or food bank participants to better recall impactful quotes at the end of the program.

You may choose to work from the tracking and journaling templates at the end of this workbook or this [garden journal example](#).

Sharing Your Story

Why share program outcomes?

Program outcomes will be used to garner funding in future years, increase support from community partners, draw more participants to the program, and expand reach. After all the hard work is done, sharing outcomes is a great way to brag about personal and organizational success!

How to share:

The format you choose to share program outcomes depends on the audience with whom you are sharing. A photo story board is a great way to display success of the program and express gratitude to community partners. Investors and donors may require outcomes in a visually appealing impact report like the one on page 2 of this project book. There are many online tools that will guide you through the process of creating a great final product, regardless of the format chosen.

Planning for sharing outcomes:

Before you begin your program, consider with whom you want to share the outcomes of this project, and what measures of success they require. Program funders may require reporting of total pounds of produce donated and the organization hosting the garden often wants to know how you have engaged the community they serve. If you are not sure what format or measures your partners require, ask ahead of time. Then, plan your methods to collect this information from the beginning, and begin thinking about how you will summarize the data at the end of this program.

Tracking Tools

Use these tools to track outcomes of the Growing Together WI project.

Site of garden: _____

Size of garden: _____ (square feet)

Varieties Planted	Date	Varieties Planted	Date

Date						
Volunteer Names						
Activities						
Observations/Notes						
Harvest (lbs)						

Date	Volunteer Names	Activities	Observations/Notes	Harvest (lbs)

Date	Volunteer Names	Activities	Observations/Notes	Harvest (lbs)

Date	Volunteer Names	Activities	Observations/Notes	Harvest (lbs)

Date	Lesson	Participant Name	<i>What did I learn?</i>

Date	Lesson	Participant Name	<i>What did I learn?</i>

Date	Produce Donated	Destination	Transportation

Date	Produce Donated	Destination	Transportation

Garden Journal

Use this space to record any additional notes, comments, or reflections about Growing Together WI process.

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Use this space to record any additional notes, comments, or reflections about Growing Together WI process.

What is Growing Together WI?

Growing Together WI is a project of the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension through a partnership of FoodWise Nutrition Educators and Master Gardener Volunteers in several counties across the state of Wisconsin.

This project responds to issues of obesity and insufficient consumption of fruits and vegetables by gleaning excess garden produce for donation to local organizations like food banks, pantries, and meal sites.

Growing Together WI supports direct education and Safe and Healthy Food Pantry, two additional FoodWise programs.

Find Out More:

Web: <https://blogs.ces.uwex.edu/gardenwise/>



Continuing Education, Outreach & E-Learning