



KC Urban Gardens

Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition



Who is the Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition?

The Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition is a coalition of individuals, organizations, businesses, and government representatives committed to ensuring that there is a healthy, sustainable, and affordable food system for Greater Kansas City.



Vision and Mission

Vision

People of all ages, in all communities, and in all economic segments of the population in Greater Kansas City will have access to healthy, affordable food that nourishes individuals and nurtures communities, the local economy, and the environment.

Mission

To advocate for the Greater Kansas City food system and promote food policies that positively impact the nutritional, economic, social, and environmental health of Greater Kansas City.



Why Community Gardens Are Important?

- 65% of adults in the U.S. are overweight or obese. Potential health consequences include cardiovascular disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and some cancers.
- More than 33% of children and adolescents are obese or at risk for becoming obese. Obese children are at a greater risk than normal weight children for developing type 2 diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, sleep apnea and orthopedic problems.
- The direct and indirect health costs associated with obesity are estimated at \$117 billion per year nationwide, in the form of worker absenteeism, health care premiums, copayments and out-of-pocket expenses.
- Community gardens allow for increased food security and access and can encourage more active lifestyles.



Food is a Community Issue

Food is a community issue, not a household or individual level concern. Thus, communities have the responsibility to ensure that everyone living in a community has the right to eat healthy, affordable, sustainably produced food.

Food is a community priority, one which is planned for.



Community Food Policies

Community food policies need to be based on three fundamental ideas that transform food systems:

1. Knowledge: Real knowledge about how to grow, process, distribute, sell, store, cook, and eat foods.
2. Infrastructure: Reorienting today's global food production system infrastructure – the land, trucks, warehouses, stores, equipment and regulations – to support healthy, affordable, sustainable food in our places/regions.
3. Fair Trade Networks that link communities and regions are important because communities with healthy food planning are not self-sufficient, rather they are self-reliant.



Policies to Increase Knowledge

For this area, policies are simple and include the following:

1. Requiring basic skills about nutrition and cooking to be part of our public education process
2. Providing for school gardens as a way to introduce healthy food knowledge, science and cultural knowledge
3. Providing community food production classes
4. Assisting with business planning and accounting skills for those who want to engage in business in the food system



Policies to Improve Infrastructure

For this area, policies could include the following:

1. Food safety regulations should result from a more democratic process and support locally adapted food production
2. Financing initiatives could support community-based processing, healthy food stores, and more efficient local logistics
3. School policies could encourage the use of healthy, sustainable foods sourced from the region in school cafeterias
4. Transportation policies could allow better access to food
5. Zoning policies could prioritize vacant lots for community gardens or urban agriculture



Some Gardens in Kansas City

1. Schoolyard Gardens
 - Scuola Vita Charter School
2. Neighborhood Gardens
 - Rosedale Healthy Kids Garden
 - Ivanhoe Neighborhood Council
3. Social Service Agency Garden
 - Salvation Army Rehabilitation Center
4. Urban Farms
 - Juniper Gardens
 - Root Deep Urban Farm



Edible Schoolyard Garden: Scuola Vita Charter School



- Grades K-8
- 100% participation in free/reduced school meals program
- 11 different languages spoken by students
- Principal Nicole King and staff are committed to promoting healthy eating and active living at every opportunity.
- Currently a pilot school for the Kindergarten Farm Food Initiative
- Member of KCCG Schoolyard Gardens



Neighborhood Garden: Rosedale Healthy Kids Garden



- This community garden is developed through a partnership among the Rosedale Development Association, the Rosedale Ministerial Alliance, KC Healthy Kids, and the University of Kansas Medical Center.
- Working to decrease childhood obesity, currently 51% for elementary students, by increasing access to healthy foods, through a community garden
- Food goes directly to the population that needs it.
- Have 6 community gardens in Rosedale and hoping another 2-5 can be developed.



Neighborhood Garden: Ivanhoe Neighborhood Council



- Residents fight crime, gangs and drugs, litter and illegal dumping in order to create a safer, more livable community.
- The neighborhood's youth are putting in an organic garden and documenting the effort on video.
- They will also help INC determine what kinds of fruit trees to plant on the lot come October. The trees are provided by funding from Nature Hills Nursery of Omaha, Nebraska, through Bridging The Gap.
- "It's another exciting opportunity for [our youth] to understand how important it is to eat well," says Yolanda Young, INC's youth and family outreach specialist.



Social Service Agency Garden: Salvation Army Rehabilitation Center



- Mens residential treatment center currently houses 136 men.
- Garden helps diversify men's interest into other areas besides their addictions; breaks them away from their the usual habits. Chaplain Robert Hall hopes that when the men are released, they might want to put in a plot at home with their kids.
- Garden is 60 feet in circumference and is incorporated into work therapy, cooking school. Produce is used within the facility.
- Soil amendments are from Missouri Organics.
- Poor drainage due to over active sprinkler system
- Spring, summer, and fall crop rotation. Crops include tomatos, squash, watermelons, pumpkins, and collard greens.



Urban Farms: Juniper Gardens



- New Roots for Refugees is a program started by Catholic Charities in partnership with the Kansas City Center for Urban Agriculture to help refugee women put down new roots by helping them to start their own small farm businesses growing and selling vegetables.
- New Roots builds on the strengths and experience that the refugees already possess. Farming is a familiar livelihood that offers them some measure of self-determination and self-sufficiency, healthy food for their families, extra income, and a context for settling into their new communities.
- In the New Roots Program, participants start farming with significant training and support. As their farm businesses become established and they develop more skills, they will move to greater financial and managerial independence. Eventually they will be able to move onto their own piece of land and operate independently.



Urban Farms: Root Deep Urban Farm



- Sherri Harvel took four empty lots and transformed it into a garden that supplies vegetables to two markets and a small CSA.
- She's known as the "Garden Lady" in her neighborhood, and is a source for gardening knowledge and good organic produce.
- You'll find all kinds of vegetables growing there, including purple hull peas and lots of good potatoes and tomatoes.
- Sherri Harvel started Root Deep farm in the neighborhood where she grew up, and where her grandmother lives. She went to the city to research and test the vacant lots. She chose a corner with four empty lots. It was a big space but littered with scrap tires and construction waste including foundation stones.



Common Obstacles to Urban Gardens and Farms

- Water supply: when garden is associated with a school or social service provider, water is less of an issue. In community gardens, though, it's always an issue.
 - **Sherri Harvel of Root Deep Farm had a pump installed**
 - **Gardeners at 33rd and Myrtle collect rain water.**
- Security (vandalism, theft)
- Placing garden for optimal participation (close to home or church is best)
- Foundations are left in vacant lots making it difficult to till



How Can Local Governments Help?

- Include community gardens in your general/comprehensive plans
 - Berkeley, California’s general plan states that the city will “encourage and support community gardens as important open space resources that build communities and provide a local food source” in the open space element.
- Allow zoning for community gardens
 - Boston established a specific community garden category that can be zoned as a sub-district within an open space zoning district.
- Create a community garden committee
 - San Francisco has a community gardens policy committee that works to implement the community garden objectives established in the city’s general plan.
- Provide an easily accessible inventory of all vacant public/private lots and open space
 - Open Accessible Space Information System Cooperative (OASIS NYC) is a collaborative of federal, state, city, nonprofit and private organizations that provide online maps of all open space in New York City to help enhance the stewardship of open space.
- Participate on the Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition



Questions?