



HEALTH CARE DIVISION

COMMUNITY CENTERED PREVENTION

Funding Interest: Access to Healthy Foods

Since 2010, The Trust has invested millions in our broadly-defined Community Centered Prevention issue area. In order to have a greater impact, we are refining our focus to three primary funding interests: *Opportunities for Physical Activity*, *Access to Healthy Foods* and *Comprehensive Prevention in a Community Setting*.

Looking Forward: ***Access to Healthy Foods***

Access to Healthy Foods: Programs, policies and strategies to improve healthy food access in schools and in communities. Includes healthy food retail, farmers' markets, new/improved community gardens, elimination of food desserts and changes to government, school system, business, and other institutional policies to improve access to nutritious foods and beverages.

What and Why? Access to healthy food is a challenge for many North Carolinians who live in underserved and rural communities. These communities often lack reliable and affordable transportation to full-service grocery stores and supermarkets. Even when transportation is available, the stores may be long distances from their homes forcing many to rely on local convenience stores as their primary source of nutritious foods. Providing alternative methods for lower-income residents living in "food deserts" (areas lacking food stores) can increase their access to healthy foods through a variety of strategies, including healthy mobile markets, farmers' markets, community gardens and school gardens. Efforts to procure locally grown foods can also increase fresh, healthy food options for children and families while supporting the local economy.

The Research. At least two studies have demonstrated that "the Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs for elders and lower-income women in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) may lead to improvements in their intake of fruits and vegetables."¹ In addition to increasing residents' access to fresh produce, "community gardens provide residents with environmental education, green space and significant savings on their food."⁷ A growing number of states and school districts are also turning to [farm-to-school programs](#) to increase the quality and availability of fresh, healthy foods for their students. "As of March 2009,

more than 2,050 farm-to-school programs were in existence in more than 40 states.”² Equally important, policies that increase local sources of food “provide consumers with healthier choices, farmers with more marketing opportunities and communities with powerful economic development opportunities.”³

Specific Strategies to Increase Access to Healthy Foods

A number of strategies have been used to improve community residents’ access to healthy, affordable fresh produce and other healthy foods, particularly for North Carolinians in low-income communities. We will consider proposals that address any of the following strategies:

- *Healthy food retail:* Healthy corner stores, healthy mobile markets, community-supported agriculture (CSA) and new or improved farmers’ markets (including the introduction of electronic benefit transfer systems for SNAP/WIC recipients).
- *Healthy foods in schools:* nutritious school meals, healthy school snacks and beverages, farm-to-school programs, school/community gardens, expanded healthy food and nutrition education, healthy fundraisers.
- *Community gardens:* Development of new or improved community gardens and/or the establishment of food share programs for local food banks.
- *Food and beverage policy:* decreased marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages, healthy restaurant food options and menu labeling, local food procurement, healthy vending policy adoption.

We understand that specific communities and organizations may have unique situations or may wish to adapt one of the strategies listed above.

To learn more about the Trust’s funding interests, grant cycles and application deadlines, visit www.kbr.org.

References:

¹Johnson D, Beaudoin S, Smith L, et al. “Increasing fruit and vegetable intake in homebound elders: The Seattle Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Pilot Program.” *Preventing Chronic Disease*, 1(1): A03, January 2004.

²National Farm to School Network. 2014. Farm to School, Statistics. www.farmtoschool.org.

³Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. 2006. “Food without Thought: How U.S. Farm Policy Contributes to Obesity.” Minneapolis, MN. www.iatp.org/files/421_2_80627.pdf
