



Steps to a Healthier Minneapolis,
Dept of Health and Family Support

Access to Healthy Foods via Community Grants **Farm Stands**

July, 2007

Steps to a Healthier Minneapolis is a five-year initiative funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Surveillance (CDC) as part of Steps to a Healthier US. Its aim is to reduce the burden of diabetes, asthma, and obesity by increasing physical activity, improving nutrition, and reducing tobacco exposure.

The Minnesota Department of Health receives funding from the CDC, and partners with four communities: Minneapolis, St. Paul, Rochester, and Willmar. Steps to a Healthier Minneapolis is focused in the Minneapolis communities of Near North, Northeast, and Phillips. The program includes individuals in worksites, schools, healthcare settings, and in the community.

Steps to a Healthier Minneapolis convenes a Community Consortium of residents and local organizations to help plan and guide the direction of Steps activities occurring in the community. In 2005, the Consortium requested focus groups of residents to better understand the wants and needs of the community. As a result, an RFP for physical activity, nutrition, and access to healthy foods was initiated. Eleven community-based programs were funded in 2005 and 10 were funded in 2006.

Increased access to healthy foods is an important issue for the community, as inner-city neighborhoods often have few grocery stores, leaving residents to purchase much of their food from corner stores, convenience stores, gas stations, and fast food restaurants. Steps to a Healthier Minneapolis grantees are creating sustainable approaches to improving nutrition among city residents.

Increased access to healthy foods

- Focus groups revealed that many residents thought that there was a lack of available fresh produce.
- Two-year projects began in September 2005 – August 2007.
- Two community organizations were funded to work on issue of access to healthy foods, including developing farm stands in Near North and Phillips communities in Minneapolis.
- Northside Food Project received \$22,250 in 2005 and \$20,700 in 2006. Work involved establishing farm stands as well as community gardens, nutrition information dissemination, development of community food assessment, food policy development, and hosting a Northside Food Summit.

- Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy received \$21,200 in 2005 and \$20,700 in 2006. Work involved establishing farm stands as well as food policy development and launched effort to have farmers' left-over produce donated to food shelves.

Farm Stand Successes -- 2006

Approximately **50 days of farm stands** funded by Steps to a Healthier Minneapolis were held in the Near North and Phillips communities. These farm stands **served over 1200 people**.

- North Minneapolis farm stand established
 - Fellowship Missionary Church.
- South Minneapolis farm stands established
 - Ebenezer Apartments (one on Park Avenue, and one on Portland Avenue). Will be self-managed by 2007.
 - Brian Coyle Community Center. Will be self-managed in 2007.
- Minneapolis farm stand assistance
 - Hennepin County Medical Center. Will move in 2007 and be self-managed in 2007.

Farm Stands -- 2007

Several farm stands from 2006 will be self-managed in 2007. Hopes are to add six additional farm stands sites in 2007. Number of days and number of people will be tracked.

- North Minneapolis farm stands to be established
 - Penn Avenue and Lowry Avenue
 - Plymouth Avenue and Penn Avenue
- South Minneapolis farm stands to be established
 - Sabathani Community Center, to be self-managed in 2008.
 - Horns Tower (31st St and Blaisdell Ave), to be self-managed in 2008.
 - Stevens' Square Public Housing (Franklin Ave and 2nd Ave, South Minneapolis) to self-mange after initial creation.
 - Potential market to be established at Hiawatha Public Housing (Franklin and Hiawatha Aves).

Challenges in 2006

- Costs: Obtaining licenses for the farm stands cost \$416 per stand in fees for zoning permits, health reviews, and business licenses.
- Time: Obtaining licenses for the farm stands took 3-4 weeks to get final approval, as the applications had to pass through review from City Council and the Mayor.

The following is excerpted from “Minneapolis Farmers’ Market License Requirements,” a document written by Brian Noy -- Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, April 27, 2007. The document details Brian’s experience in developing farm stands with funding from Steps to a Healthier Minneapolis.

The Farmers’ Market itself needs a food business license. Vendors at the market need their own license or permit.

Farmers’ Market License

- Requires food business license (\$111 new license fee, \$159 annual fee)
 - In order to obtain license, market must obtain a temporary use permit (\$100) and a health review (\$50)
 - Zoning codes limit markets in residential neighborhoods to institutional properties
- **ISSUE:** While this process may be suitable for large markets operating as a business, this is inappropriate for sites, such as apartment buildings, that want to host a few farmers once per week. It was designed for businesses and is expensive, complicated, and lengthy.

Vendors’ License/Permit

- Vendors selling produce they grew must complete the Farmers’ Market Exemption Form (free, acts like a permit)
 - Vendors selling produce they purchase must obtain a Market Food Distributor License (\$111 new license fee, \$159 annual fee)
 - Vendors selling self-processed foods (cakes, salsas, bread) must have a Market Food Manufacturer License (\$111 new license fee, \$159 annual fee)
- **ISSUE:** The 2006 permit for producers (growers, not distributors or manufacturers) required proof of land ownership/rental agreement and notarization. This was extremely difficult to obtain from our city’s mostly immigrant farmers who nearly all have informal rental agreements. The 2007 permit application is greatly improved.