



Making it Better  
CREATING A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY TOGETHER

## Local Food Resource Hubs Support Urban Agriculture

### Did You Know?

People who garden reap health benefits. Gardening is great physical activity, and gardeners get to eat the nutritious fruits and veggies they grow!



### Overview

As part of its efforts to increase access to healthy food in community settings, the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (MDHFS), in partnership with non-profit organization Gardening Matters, launched the Local Food Resource Hubs Network (LFRHN). Based on a successful model from Detroit, the LFRHN supports Minneapolis residents in growing, preserving, cooking and composting their own fresh produce.

In 2010, with support from the Communities Putting Prevention to Work initiative, three “Hubs” were established across Minneapolis with over 600 individual and community garden memberships. Hubs were designed as networks of partnerships involving individuals, businesses, and community organizations at the neighborhood and community level. To join, residents paid a small annual fee and were asked to participate in at least one Hub event, such as a volunteer work day or seed distribution event. In return, members received seeds, seedlings and educational trainings including food preservation instruction.

### Results and Accomplishments

MDHFS worked closely with the Hubs to evaluate the practices, skills, needs and experiences of LFRHN members. Key findings included:

- Knowledge increased in five areas as a result of Hubs membership: food preservation, making meals with fresh produce, organic gardening, planning and planting a garden and maintaining and harvesting a garden.
- 45% of members surveyed cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there was not enough money for food. Hubs membership helped alleviate food insecurity.
- Participants were enthusiastic about the LFRHN, saying *“It made a difference in my health and how I feel about my neighborhood”* and *“It was a great way to get started gardening for the first time.”*

## Synergies

The development of the LFRHN was the result of a collaborative process between MDHFS, Gardening Matters, and community residents. Hubs were intentionally connected to other health department projects including the Food Preservation Network – a group of trained food preservation instructors who conduct free and low-cost canning workshops – to help residents increase their capacity for growing, consuming, and preserving healthy foods.

## Future Plans

Based on evaluation findings from 2011, key changes have been implemented including: New membership package options, sliding scale fees and scholarships, earlier distribution events, improved seed labeling; a garden mentoring program, more social opportunities and events, and targeted outreach to increase membership from under-represented cultural communities.

For additional Local Food Resource Hubs Network reports and resources, please visit: [http://www.minneapolismn.gov/health/cppw/dhfs\\_hubs](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/health/cppw/dhfs_hubs)

For more information, contact:  
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