



COMMUNITIES FOR HEALTHY FOOD: THE TOOLKIT

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR INTEGRATING
HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
INTO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

LISC
NYC



KEY PARTNERS



lmtilluminationfund.org



lisc.org/nyc



cunyurbanfoodpolicy.org

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association

Hunts Point/Longwood, Bronx
bkcianyc.org



**new
settlement
apartments**

New Settlement Apartments

Mt. Eden, Bronx
newsettlement.org



Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation

Cypress Hills and East New York, Brooklyn
bkcianyc.org



Northeast Brooklyn Housing Development Corporation

Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn
nebhdc.org/community-programs



West Harlem Group Assistance

West Harlem, Manhattan
whgainc.org

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PHOTOS: Reeve Jolliffe at Gas Tower Studio and Ricky Flores

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COMMUNITY
EDUCATION
VOLUNTARIA
ORGANIZACIÓN



ARTS C
STEM



March 14, 2018

Dear Partner,

I am excited to share with you the attached toolkit to help community organizations across the country use healthy food access strategies and food justice principles to enhance their community development efforts. The toolkit presents a flexible and comprehensive approach to planning, designing, and implementing a portfolio of programs to ensure low-income communities and communities of color have access to healthier food options, a voice in the food movement, and economic opportunities.

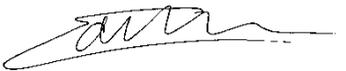
The information is based on the experience of Communities for Healthy Food (CfHF). CfHF was a place-based response by LISC NYC and our Community Development Corporation (CDC) partners to the interconnected problems of diet-related disease, poverty, and hunger afflicting low-income households. LISC NYC worked collaboratively with CDC, nonprofit, academic, and public sector partners and our funder, the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund, to design and implement the program. CfHF integrates affordable, healthy food access and social justice into community development strategies in five of New York City's economically challenged neighborhoods. The goal was to create an equitable food system that spurs economic opportunity for those that need it the most.

For almost 40 years, LISC NYC has helped struggling communities thrive by connecting local partners to resources that deliver results for their neighborhoods. These local champions have often worked to build physical infrastructure, such as affordable housing, day care centers, schools, recreational facilities, arts centers, as well as projects that are critical to community health, such as grocery stores and healthcare facilities. Working alongside our community partners we have come to understand the acute nature of the food crisis and how several million New Yorkers are not eating consistently or nutritiously due to a lack of nearby access to high-quality, healthy, and inexpensive proteins and vegetables. Food access is a widening issue in New York City, exacerbated by housing pressures that squeeze family budgets and limit families ability to eat a healthy diet.

Too often, the lack of affordable food options restricts low-income families to a diet of pre-packaged, heavily processed foods with minimal nutritional value. The end result is a vicious cycle of diabetes, heart disease, and obesity impacting prospects for work, education, and overall quality of life.

This toolkit was developed with input from our CDC partners and other key stakeholders in a variety of sectors, and shares an array of promising strategies to support a comprehensive healthy food access program. This work cannot be achieved by a single individual, organization, or institution: we do our best work together. As you review this toolkit, please consider ways your organization and network can help advance food equity - it is integrally connected to health, employment, housing and education. We should all consider how an intersectoral equity agenda can be used to organize and mobilize communities, support policy change and improve the living conditions of the neighborhoods we serve.

Sincerely,



Sam Marks
Executive Director
LISC NYC

Respect for
Beings

Food Justice is...
LOVE, HEALING,
INTEGRITY,
LIVELIHOOD, NOT BEING
TAKEN FOR GRANTED

Love :
Respect for
Land!

e

Dignity

BEING
HEALTHY

FROM THE
GROUND UP

NO
WASTE

FAIR
WAGES
LABOR PR

Local
Employment



y

ABOUT THE TOOLKIT

GOAL

The goal of this toolkit is to help community organizations across the country use healthy food initiatives and food justice principles to better their community development efforts. It provides information on connecting food programs, spurring economic development, building community knowledge, and creating social connectivity. The toolkit presents a flexible and holistic approach to planning, designing, and implementing a portfolio of programs to ensure low-income communities and communities of color have access to healthier food options, a voice in the food movement, and economic opportunities. The information is based on the experience of Communities for Healthy Food (CfHF). CfHF integrates affordable, healthy food access and social justice into community development strategies in five of New York City's economically challenged neighborhoods. The primary audience is community-based organizations, but this toolkit will also be useful to funders and non-profit intermediaries interested in supporting community-based organizations in this work.

HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit includes both proven and promising strategies to integrate access to healthy food and food justice into every aspect of community development work. It highlights a process that evolved through the CfHF work and practical interventions including: (1) resident outreach and engagement; (2) creating new or improved healthy food outlets; (3) generating food-sector jobs, (4) providing education on and creating opportunities to practice nutrition, cooking, and food justice advocacy, and (5) sharing ideas on growing food and sustainable farming practices.

With this toolkit, you can put together a comprehensive program that builds on your community's and organization's existing assets. This toolkit will help you to:

- **Navigate key issues** related to healthy food
- **Create a community needs assessment** that analyzes local health needs and demographics; identifies community assets; gathers input from residents; and develops maps of existing food and nutrition programs and services.
- **Plan and implement a portfolio of interventions** to change the landscape and the role food can play in enhancing resident lives.
- **Develop activities and programs** that build on the knowledge and abilities that residents bring to the table.
- **Form meaningful partnerships** to help build community capacity to deliver services.
- **Measure qualitative and quantitative impacts** of a comprehensive, integrated, community-driven food program.

FRAMING THE ISSUE

Decades of public and private disinvestment have left low-income neighborhoods to contend with abandoned supermarket buildings and a glut of fast food and convenience stores, cutting them off from the economic benefits that accompany grocery stores, like the creation of jobs. Communities of color are disproportionately affected. In New York City, 42% of households—2.7 million men, women and children—lack the income needed to cover necessities like food, housing, transportation, and child care. Without jobs that provide a good income and proper health care, people cannot afford to eat healthier. This has put low-income people and people of color on the fast track to obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. These disparities are a result of institutional racism and systemic oppression.

New York City, like other fast-growing U.S. cities, is grappling with rising rents and displacement pressures. It's a challenge to ensure that economic growth and new investments in housing and infrastructure spur an equitable food system that is inclusive rather than one that displaces low-income residents.

The city's pattern of economic growth means that commercial rents have increased significantly, especially in neighborhoods that have experienced an influx of higher-income residents. As a result, traditional supermarket and smaller food market leases expire, and operators face rent increases that in some cases would render the business unprofitable. At the same time, high-cost restaurants and food businesses move in to meet market demand, while national fast food chains are able to pay higher rents. The result is a lack of affordable healthy food options.

When LISC NYC and Community Development Corporations (CDCs) embarked on integrating food access programming, they knew they were tackling a complex and interrelated set of problems, all of which intersect with food. It was important that each community had the autonomy to define neighborhood-specific goals and strategies for their CfHF programs. Each CDC partner brought its own lens to CfHF's approach.

Although there are many excellent programs across the city, they are often piecemeal and uncoordinated or are led by organizations that are not rooted in neighborhoods. Rather than focusing on one-off initiatives to put food on the table, like an garden, it plugs into plans to revitalize the economic infrastructure of marginalized communities and makes healthy, affordable food one of the central tenets.

CDCs take a holistic look at a neighborhood and provide strategic interventions to address a range of issues. Since food spans many areas of concern—health, economic development, youth development, civic engagement, leadership development, anti-racist work—CfHF has been an opportunity for communities to tackle interconnected issues through the lens of good food (food that is healthy, sustainable, fair, and affordable). Quite simply, CfHF is integrating food into long-range community development efforts.

What does this mean in practice? For example, a new youth market offering healthy, affordable, and culturally relevant food that enlivens a previously empty corner. This market also hires and trains young people to run the urban food stand. The market hosts nutrition education and cooking classes for children, families, and seniors led by trained community chefs living in the neighborhood. Residents provide outreach to nearby bodegas to help expand their food options. All of the food-related efforts link to ongoing work in the neighborhood and at the CDC around affordable housing, economic development, education, health, community safety, and jobs. Each of these efforts reinforces the others. The goal isn't only to improve affordable food options; it's about changing the long-term outlook for low-income communities: by creating an equitable food system that strengthens the economy through bolstering incomes, spurring business development, and contributing to equitable economic development in long-distressed neighborhoods.



FACTORS CONSIDERED

EQUITY

people want and deserve the same rights and services as all people.

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

solutions and strategies are rooted in the social, cultural, economic, and physical capital of the community.

INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION

residents participate in decisions that affect their production or consumption of food.

CULTURE AND TRADITION

community members' diverse cultures and food traditions are embraced.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

equitable access to economic, political, and social rights and opportunities.

COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES

neighborhood residents' knowledge and abilities are celebrated and integrated into project and curriculum design.

ABOUT COMMUNITIES FOR HEALTHY FOOD



growing
food

BACKGROUND

In 2014, LISC NYC, a community development intermediary, partnered with Community Development Corporations (CDCs) to launch the Communities for Healthy Food (CfHF) program.

One of the first steps for CfHF was creating a partnership with the initial seed funder, the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund. This partnership started when the Illumination Fund approached LISC NYC to learn more about how their community development work connected to health. The Illumination Fund wanted to advance its new Healthy Food & Community Change Initiative, which supports healthy food and nutrition access and education programs in New York City. Before developing the program, LISC NYC and the Illumination Fund convened a roundtable with CDCs to assess interest in a neighborhood-based healthy food access work. The group reached a broad consensus on the need and opportunity to embed food as a core CDC strategy because access to food that is healthy, sustainable, fair, and affordable is a root factor for the negative outcomes that the CDCs' communities face. Roundtable participants saw food contributing towards a community's sense of place and wellbeing, and economic prosperity.

Through this partnership, LISC NYC and its CDC partners designed and implemented a place-based approach in five of New York City's economically challenged communities.

WHAT IS COMMUNITIES FOR HEALTHY FOOD?

The LISC NYC, CfHF initiative seeded by the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund (LMTIF), is a pioneering approach to combat diet-related disease, poverty, hunger, and high unemployment rates. It combines two existing resources to create synergistic solutions centered around healthy food access and community empowerment.

The initiative integrates **access to healthy and affordable food and food justice principles** into every aspect of community development work through:

1. Outreach, nutrition education, and cooking classes;
2. Creating new or improved healthy food outlets;
3. Generating food-sector jobs;
4. Building leadership skills on food systems; and
5. Sharing ideas on growing food and sustainable practices.

First, CfHF taps LISC NYC's value as a community development intermediary, specifically:

- Strong relationships with neighborhood organizations
- Ability to leverage capital and programmatic funds
- Track record as a convener and technical assistance provider

Second, it leverages a network of CDC partners:

- Own and manage affordable housing and other commercial and community spaces
- Deliver an array of social and economic development programs
- Maintain close ties to the residents they serve
- Serve neighborhoods with high levels of need

FOOD JUSTICE is communities exercising their right to grow, sell, and eat healthy food.

HEALTHY FOOD is fresh, nutritious, affordable, culturally-appropriate, and grown locally with care for the well-being of the land, workers, and animals.

Key Partners

LISC NYC launched Communities for Healthy Food in 2014 in four high-need neighborhoods across the city with CDC partners.



Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation (CHLDC) in Cypress Hills/ East New York, Brooklyn



West Harlem Group Assistance (WHGA) in West Harlem, Manhattan



Northeast Brooklyn Housing Development Corporation (NEBHDCo) in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn

In 2016, the program expanded into one new neighborhood:



Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association (Banana Kelly) in the Hunts Points/Longwood sections of the Bronx



New Settlement Apartments (NSA) in Mt. Eden, Bronx

CfHF builds on the existing work of LISC NYC and its partners to revitalize struggling communities and improve overall quality of life. By leveraging resources from partners on the ground, CfHF works on four primary fronts. First, it facilitates physical access to affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate produce and proteins through the creation or expansion of farmers markets, gardens, food pantries, farm shares and retail stores. Second, it seeks to expand families' skills to become more informed shoppers and smarter cooks. Third, it supports residents in effectively advocating for equity and inclusion in the local food system. Last, it connects families to public services that impact health and hunger, like free health screenings and enrollment into SNAP.





Harvest Market

SUMMARY OF IMPACT

CfHF improved the food infrastructure in target neighborhoods by ensuring low-income communities and communities of color have access to healthier and more affordable food options, a voice in the food movement, and economic opportunities.

Over **173,000** households have been provided services. Overall the initiative accomplished higher than expected programmatic impacts that increased significantly - in some cases doubled - from the first to the second year of implementation, 2014 and 2015 respectively.

NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2014-2017

**1,478,000
POUNDS**

of food distributed through food pantries, gardens, and farmers markets

**4,300
FAMILIES**

pre-screened, referred or enrolled in SNAP

**46,500
RESIDENTS**

engaged through one-on-one neighborhood outreach

**58
NEW OR
IMPROVED**

farmers markets, farm shares, gardens and healthy bodegas



THE TOOLKIT
EMBEDDING HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS
AND SOCIAL JUSTICE INTO
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT





PROJECT READINESS

Not every community organization is ready to take on Communities for Healthy Food. CfHF is a multi-pronged approach to integrate healthy food access and social justice into community development.

It requires community-based organizations to plan and implement a portfolio of interventions to change the landscape and the role food can play in enhancing resident lives.

Participating CDCs developed this list of readiness criteria to share both what made them well-positioned for CfHF and what they wished had been in place at the project start.

READINESS CRITERIA

Dedicated project lead, with support from outreach and key senior staff

Organizational bandwidth to develop new programs

Clear vision of how CfHF will integrate with existing programs and services to ensure complementary services that address a range of issues

Executive buy-in and strong interest from staff in integrating healthy food efforts into programs and spaces

Available staff resources to support additional work (e.g., development staff to support fundraising, administrative staff to handle growth of new program)

Commitment to spending time to develop, test, and modify various approaches to food work

Potential community-based, city, and national partners

Proven competency and track record to successfully complete projects

Seen as a trusted and valued community partner

NOTE: It is unlikely any organization will meet all of these criteria. However, these criteria will help you think about a community partner to lead this work.



ADDRESSING A RANGE OF FOOD ISSUES

Northeast Brooklyn Housing Development Corporation (NEBHDCo). In Bedford-Stuyvesant Brooklyn, NEBHDCo wanted to incorporate a demonstration kitchen and other community programming into its supermarket-style client choice pantry. NEBHDCo built the pantry between its affordable housing buildings. With the overlay of CfHF, NEBHDCo has turned its two-story pantry into a hub of activities where community members teach each other about food rather than bringing in outside entities. The hub houses a backyard garden that provides fresh local produce to pantry clients; a range of culinary and nutrition education/knowledge sharing programs; and trainings for residents to become community chefs. It brings together youth to prepare and share healthy food and engage in social issues that effect their lives. The hub also offers assistance with SNAP enrollment and free tax preparation.

ROLE OF THE INTERMEDIARY

When embarking on a multi-neighborhood initiative, one organization plays the role of the program coordinator, convener, and technical assistance provider.

CfHF involved multiple CDCs and thus required an intermediary, but note that others may take a different approach: like a single-site implementation.

For a multi-neighborhood model the intermediary can provide direct technical assistance and program management support; convene partners for group discussions; build neighborhood capacity; develop cross-sector partnerships; create a cohesive planning process; leverage government and private support; start a comprehensive program evaluation; and document the program model through neighborhood stories and media outlets. Here are ways that LISC NYC played this program coordinator role.

TRAINING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, AND INFORMATION SHARING

CROSS-SITE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

LISC NYC hosted workshops focused on a range of topics: program and partnership development; important federal, state, and local food policies; effective neighborhood communication and outreach tactics; leadership, and facilitation training; and available local grants and resources for projects. In addition, monthly sessions were organized for CDC partners to facilitate sharing of best practices and discuss challenges related to the initiative.

PARTNERING WITH EXPERTS

LISC NYC also partnered with expert consultants to create effective interventions. For instance, LISC NYC hired a client choice food pantry expert to guide and support West Harlem Group Assistance (WHGA) through the planning and start-up phases of its new pantry. Another expert created trainings for each CDC's program and housing staff. The interactive workshops illustrated how the CfHF program fit into the organization's overall mission and covered the connections between food, nutrition, and health.

BUILDING NEIGHBORHOOD STAFF CAPACITY

All CDC partner organizations communicated a need for additional staff to implement programming. Thus, the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund and LISC NYC provided funding for each CDC to hire a full-time Community Food Advocate. The advocates have close ties in the community and where possible are from the community. They implement a range of strategies to increase access to healthy food and promote healthy eating among residents. A LISC NYC AmeriCorps member was also assigned for each site to build and manage CfHF and begin the planning phase of the project.

FORUM FOR DEVELOPING MEANINGFUL CROSS-SITE PARTNERSHIPS

Many organizations and agencies have been doing food access and food justice work for a long time in New York City. LISC NYC and its partners were not looking to duplicate their efforts. Cross-sector partnerships were formed that created linkages between community-based and City organizations. For example, the Food Bank for NYC is a hunger-relief organization that was instrumental in starting and expanding a client choice pantry in West Harlem to include enrollment in public benefits and assistance in tax preparation.

Another example is **New Settlement's healthy retail work with City Harvest**, a city-wide organization that works with local food retailers to increase their ability to stock and sell healthy food. Through this partnership, the Fredarlet Deli was remodeled to significantly increase the amount and variety of fruits.

City Harvest provided the deli with a new refrigeration system and dry storage unit, as well as a produce merchandising consultant to train store staff on how to purchase, stock, and maintain a varied stock of fresh produce. As a community-based partner, New Settlement assisted with corner store selection and regular communication with the store owner, and conducted outreach to educate residents on the new offerings: especially in the immediate area where New Settlement has affordable housing and social service buildings and runs youth programming at schools.

New Settlement enlisted youth from its Bronx Helpers program to serve as community ambassadors and lead storefront promotion. The community ambassadors chose recipes to prepare and made them at the store, where they also promoted these options to customers and shared information about the program with community members.

★ BEST PRACTICE

Intermediaries can help CDCs to identify potential partners, engage them, and make selections. Balance the tug toward working with a single or small set of well-resourced partners across groups with the need to find partners that are the best fit for an individual community. Assist CDCs in developing partnership agreements to clearly define roles and expectations.



PROGRAM PLANNING PROCESS

In 2013, LISC NYC created a program planning guide based on best practices to ensure the CfHF program was informed by an understanding of neighborhood resident perceptions and needs, existing healthy food services and programs, and evidence-based strategies. More detail is provided in the planning process on page 27.

COMPREHENSIVE MULTI-COMMUNITY EVALUATION

LISC NYC hired the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute (formerly the NYC Food Policy Center at Hunter College) to lead a comprehensive program evaluation. The evaluation sought to show how multiple interventions in one targeted area collectively leads to changes in food behaviors and food environments. Over time, this can lead to improvements in health among residents.

★ BEST PRACTICE

Intermediaries play vital roles in food access programs by coordinating amongst organizations and across agencies to achieve scale and meaningful impact. This coordination is facilitated when intermediaries create program frameworks that give each neighborhood and organization flexibility to build on its own strengths and localize activities to meet resident needs.



Sam Marks (LISC NYC), Donald Notice (WHGA), Laurie Tisch (Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund), Colleen Flynn (LISC NYC), June Andrews-Henderson (WHGA), chef Marcus Samuelsson, Dennis Derryck (Corbin Hill Farms)

FUNDRAISING BY LEVERAGING GOVERNMENT, CORPORATE, AND PHILANTHROPIC RESOURCES

To date, LISC NYC and our CDC partners have leveraged Illumination Fund's almost \$2 million in funding from 2013 thru 2017 with over \$3.4 million in private and public support for CfHF. With LISC NYC's help, the CDC partners have successfully secured \$500,000 annually starting in fiscal year 2016 from the New York City Council. In addition, with LISC NYC's support, partners have been successful at raising an additional \$1.3 million from federal, state and private funding sources.

COMPILING DATA ACROSS SITES

LISC NYC collected and analyzed data across sites. This allowed CfHF to demonstrate citywide impact. The collective data helped make the case for funding from sources like the New York City Council. CfHF was able to highlight how the initiative was meeting local needs and filling in gaps for the City.

STAFFING A CfHF INITIATIVE

The staffing for a CfHF initiative included each CDC hiring a Community Food Advocate and LISC NYC placing an AmeriCorps volunteer at each CDC as an Outreach Coordinator.

This section describes each of these roles.

IMPORTANCE OF A NEIGHBORHOOD ANCHOR ORGANIZATION

In CfHF, CDCs are at the center of reshaping the community food environment. While LISC NYC partnered with a network of CDCs to implement CfHF, this program can be led by other types of community-based organizations. As you think through what type of organization should lead this work, here are reasons LISC NYC worked with CDCs. They are community anchors who own and manage affordable housing and other commercial and community spaces; deliver an array of social and economic development programs and services; and have close ties to the residents they serve. They focus on a wide range of issues, which equips them to identify intersections in their work and to address disparities in community health in a comprehensive way.

THE CFHF ADVOCATES HIRED BY EACH CDC ORGANIZATION SERVED AS “BOOTS ON THE GROUND” IN EACH TARGET

Advocates perform a variety of functions:

- **Assess local needs and gaps** in services, programs, and physical infrastructure
- **Create a plan of action and budget** for strategic food interventions
- **Develop vision** for the neighborhood in tandem with residents and other community organizations and a set of programs to achieve it
- **Implement the projects** including monitoring budget and managing partnerships
- **Build partnerships** with key stakeholders and across sectors to bring in expertise that complements what the organization can provide
- **Lead community education efforts** for community members to learn and teach culinary skills and nutrition basics
- **Bring together residents and local organizations** to advocate for equity and inclusion in the decision-making process that shapes the local food system
- **Raise additional funding** to sustain and grow food work
- **Serve as advocate** for food work within CDC

OUTREACH COORDINATOR

The Outreach Coordinator’s role was to support the community-based planning process and engage community members in participating in and operating projects and programs. This role required outreach skills, capacity to conduct basic qualitative research (surveys, interviews, and focus groups), and ability to support project planning and implementation.

HIRE LOCAL STAFF TO RUN PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

CfHF found it vital to hire community members to lead program activities. This provided jobs to residents that were previously unemployed. In many cases locally hired part-time staff became leaders who drove projects forward and advocated for food systems change. These locally hired part-time staff helped with client choice food pantry operations, gardening projects, farmers market tours, staffing for community events, program outreach, and cooking workshops.

BEST PRACTICE

CDC teams stressed that Outreach Coordinators were critical. Since outreach and engagement is about building relationships, CfHF leads strongly recommend hiring full-time outreach coordinators with community engagement and organizing experience.

PLANNING PROCESS

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Through the guidance of LISC NYC, the CfHF Advocates and other key CDC staff conducted neighborhood needs assessments in all locations. The assessments included an inventory of existing community assets; surveys and focus groups with residents; and large-scale mapping of existing food and nutrition programs and services. Additionally, each CDC met with potential partners in to encourage communication and reduce duplicate efforts.

The assessments also identified the location of pertinent organizations: health centers, community- and school-based gardens, emergency food providers, senior and early childhood centers, WIC and SNAP enrollment centers, and fresh food stands and markets. Each CDC partner narrowed its catchment area to a target geographic area while creating a hub of activity through a proposed set of strategic interventions.

The interventions chosen for each CDC aligned with its real estate assets, organizational strengths, community needs, and other neighborhood-based resources, services, and partners. Additionally, through partnerships with city and local organizations, key complementary services were added at each site.

AN ASSESSMENT SHOULD INCLUDE THESE ELEMENTS:

Health Needs & Demographics Review

Find existing data collected by city agencies, nonprofits, or academics rather than starting from scratch. For instance, in New York City, the Department of Health publishes Community Health Profiles. The reports look beyond traditional health measures to define a broader picture of neighborhood health including conditions such as housing quality, air pollution, and types of accessible food.

Inventory Scan

Scan the existing landscape to gain an understanding of key players and work underway or already accomplished with respect to community health and advocacy. This should include a scan of your organization's existing programs and services and spaces.

Local Physical Asset Mapping that relates to your organization's existing or proposed assets

Defined program catchment area that aligns with neighborhood assets your organization owns, manages, or has a strategic partnership with.

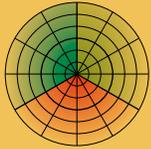
Resident Engagement and Needs Assessment

Gather community member input via resident surveys, community events, and focus groups to understand interests, perceptions, knowledge, and needs. Create a regular feedback loop with residents as you build out the program. Create space for community members to be decision makers.

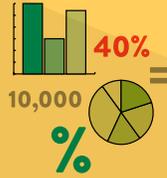
Communities for Healthy Food Process

PHASE 1

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT



Organizational Inventory



Review of Health Needs & Demographics



Asset Mapping



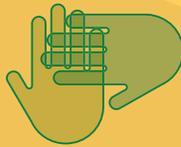
Community Engagement and Input



Analyze Opportunities, Gaps and Challenges

PHASE 2

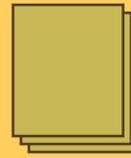
DEVELOP STRATEGIC PLAN



Create Partnerships



Community Leadership Development



Draft Plan

PHASE 3

IMPLEMENTATION



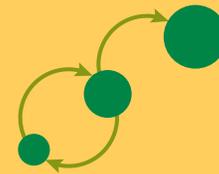
Implementation Plan



Pilot and Revise



Evaluate



Refine and Continuously Improve

Community Leadership Development

Identify community leadership, ambassador program, or committee to help shape the effort and grow community participation.

Partnership Creation

Build and further develop partnerships with key stakeholder organizations. Meet with any group working towards community change (whether related to food or not) and get to know them—then determine which groups to seek as partners. Consider partners who will provide services as well as those who will help build community capacity to deliver services.

Opportunities, Gaps, and Challenges

Identify and analyze relevant opportunities, gaps, and challenges that surfaced through the above assessment components. This will help determine your focus for type of programming and target population.

LOCAL PHYSICAL ASSET MAPPING

Asset mapping provides information about a community's strengths and resources and can help uncover solutions. Once community assets are inventoried and depicted in a map, you can more easily consider how to build on these assets to address community needs and improve the local food system. Asset mapping also promotes community involvement, ownership, and empowerment.

MAPPING STEPS:

1. Determine if there is a current assessment or map of physical and programmatic health-related resources.
2. Create or expand an asset map that relates to your organization's existing or proposed assets and the community you serve. Be sure to include fast food and convenience store locations. It is helpful to know where unhealthy food retailers are located as you think through potential site locations.
3. Identify and map the proposed catchment area that aligns with neighborhood assets your organization owns, manages, or has a strategic partnership with.
4. Identify gaps in community health services, programs, and physical infrastructure. Scan the existing landscape to understand key players and work already underway or complete.

★ BEST PRACTICE

Identify partners that will bring proven programs so you do not reinvent the wheel, but request flexibility from partners so programs can meet the needs of your community and work well with your organization's assets and staff.

Examples of when partners need to adapt to the community:

- Bilingual needs
- Specific evaluation tools that fit local population
- Increase in outreach capacity
- Desire to share outcomes and results with residents
- Provide child care services

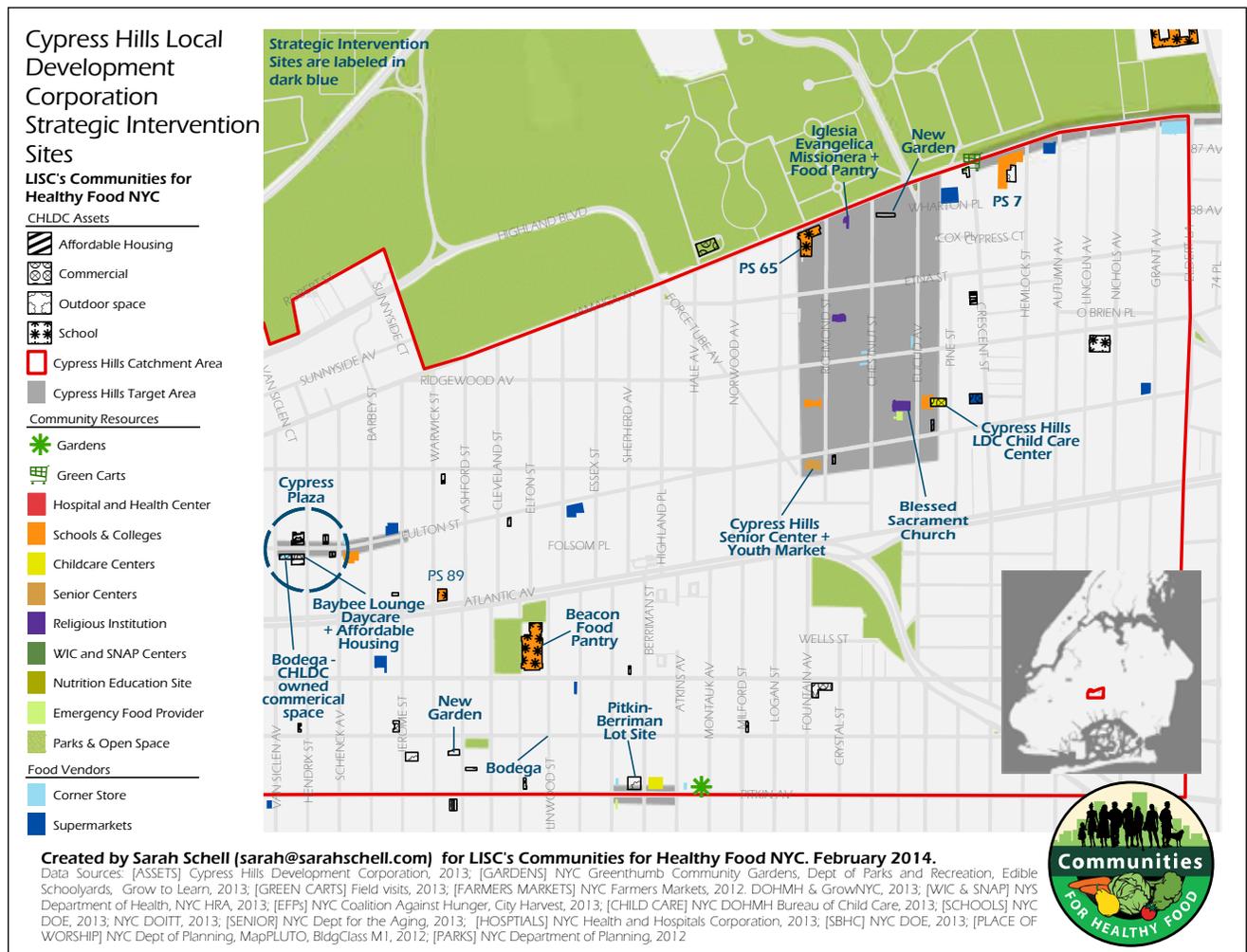
PROGRAM CATCHMENT AREA

Your catchment area is the multi-block radius where you will focus program efforts.

IDENTIFY THIS AREA BASED ON:

1. Your organization's physical assets, programs, and plans
2. Other community and health services that can be connected to this program
3. The marginalized population and your ability to create impact and expand your efforts over time
4. How long will you measure change for? For instance, are you trying to make changes in three years or 15 years?
5. How dense is the area? If the area is high density, it will be helpful to choose a smaller area.

Sample Map: CHLDC



PUTTING TOGETHER THE PLAN

Choose interventions and draft your plan based on the needs assessment and alignment with your organization's strengths and the neighborhood needs.

The types of interventions vary and your plan will be very specific to your project. This section walks you through designing your own approach.

The plan consists of:

1. Plan Outline
2. Work Plan/Timeline
3. Budget
4. Evaluation Plan

1 PLAN OUTLINE

MISSION AND VALUE

Healthy food access is multifaceted, providing many entry points for community change and empowerment. The food environment (access to food retailers and availability of healthy options), the economic environment (affordability, employment opportunities, and income), and access to health and social resources all impact the diet and health of community members. Low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately affected. These are complex issues to tackle and thus require a set of interconnected programs and activities to combat them.

Facilitate conversations about these issues across your organization and with residents to figure out your organization's entry points for change. This discussion will help define your mission and core values.

SUMMARY OF NEIGHBORHOOD PRIORITIES

Key takeaways from needs assessment. Think about how you can include and celebrate the neighborhood's historical and cultural assets.

CATCHMENT AREA AND INTEGRATION OF PROGRAMS

Think about bundling or co-locating services to enable community members to access services more easily and reduce barriers to healthy living, while also facilitating relationships between program partners.

INTERVENTIONS (PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS)

Consider the integration of interventions with each other and other CDC and partner programs. Include partners and sites.

Key considerations:

- What are main barriers or issues your project is tackling? Who will the project benefit, and how many people?
- How can assets in or near your catchment area assist in your efforts?
- What are the current food-related uses and spatial resources in the catchment area (e.g., kitchen, garden)?
- How does the potential site connect to your organization's other assets (e.g., affordable housing, community center, schools)?
- How will interventions incorporate or expand existing programs or services?
- What is the knowledge base of your staff? For food projects, resources and training are crucial. For example, teaching something like knife skills cannot be rushed.
- Are there opportunities for achieving synergies by combining multiple programs into a coherent whole or co-locating several programs at one site?
- If taking a comprehensive approach that integrates multiple organizations or sites, how will you manage the various pieces and stay in sync?

2 WORK PLAN/TIMELINE

Before implementation begins, develop a work plan and timeline to serve as a guide and checkpoint for your activities and projects.

The work plan should include the following:

- Short summary of the main activities
- Outline of how you will provide the activities and services (including work with partners)
- Proposed outcomes/deliverables
- Process for tracking deliverables and outcomes
- Description of how residents will provide ongoing feedback to ensure community-led change

The timeline should be developed in tandem with the work plan and should include key activities and milestones.

As you put together a timeline, consider the following:

- Preparation time
- Staff training needs
- Outreach to enroll participants
- Best season for planned activity
- Incremental and staggered start for multiple activities

3 BUDGET

Put together a detailed budget that includes all uses and sources. Be sure to include staff time, equipment, outreach materials, partner payment, and administration fees. Expect high upfront equipment costs. The budget can shift as your program changes based on the community's program participation and needs. Plan for 90% of the funding because unexpected expenditures are likely to arise for the other 10%.

Take note of areas where you can execute a portion of a project with a limited budget and where you could execute more if you have a larger budget. For example, NEBHDCo first hosted monthly youth dinners and then slowly scaled up to a full-year after-school program with stipends. It's also good to have a mix of programming with varying costs. If funding is reduced at certain time periods, this will help keep vital programs running as you fundraise.

4 EVALUATION PLAN

In the case of CfHF, LISC NYC organized a comprehensive evaluation that included program and project participation data. Evaluations should include insights into the following for qualitative measures:

- The before and after: Qualitative feedback from residents through interviews or focus groups on what has changed in their daily habits or lives. This type of information is very helpful in determining true impact.
- Measure outcomes outlined in the work plan: This part of evaluation is critical and takes a lot of hard work. Planning in advance with help from the intermediary can help you avoid expensive and messy attempts at creating end-of-year reporting later. The goal is to be able to track results as you go.
- Is each program or intervention fulfilling the project mission and vision?
- Which programs are becoming institutionalized (have roots, steady participation, and funding)?
- What do residents value in programs?
- Process feedback: What worked well and what didn't from a staff, partner, and participant perspective? How to improve key areas of work and possibly what to let go of moving forward? What types of evidence and stories are needed to sustain, expand, or replicate the program? How can the evaluation ensure that such information is available as needed?

BEST PRACTICES FOR DEVELOPING A COMMUNITIES FOR HEALTHY FOOD PLAN

INTEGRATE FROM THE START

All of the CDCs found strategic ways to integrate new CfHF program activities into existing programs, services, or underutilized spaces at their organization.

Think about ways you can coordinate interventions to simplify efforts and increase effectiveness. Where possible, link closely to other organizational services such as housing, workforce development, and youth programs.

Use existing underutilized spaces

Banana Kelly partnered with the New York Common Pantry to open a much needed client-choice food pantry inside its affordable housing building located on Hoe Avenue in 2017. In addition to providing food, the pantry also provides information and resources to residents regarding SNAP enrollment, health insurance, and other services.

Bundle or co-locate services

As part of CfHF NYC, two partners operate community health hubs—one in Harlem and another in Bedford-Stuyvesant—that offer one-stop shopping for a wide range of programs and resources including food pantry access, free cooking classes, nutrition education, food budgeting workshops, public benefits enrollment, and job training recruitment. Through these health hubs, families with extreme obstacles to buying and preparing food have access to many non-perishable vegetables and proteins. Further, the educational programming at these health hubs is very instructive on providing tips and recipes so that households receiving SNAP can stretch their food dollars.

Build off of programs within your organization

With more than 400 employees, CHLDC is a well-established community development corporation that offers after-school programs, workforce development, financial management, and housing counseling. Workshops that focus on healthy cooking and recipes for diet-related diseases were integrated into these programs and facilitated by resident community chefs trained through CfHF.

Additionally, CHLDC used the Veggiecation curriculum that introduces children to the health benefits of vegetables through kid-friendly activities in afterschool programs.

WHGA began offering its Financial Literacy Classes to clients at its food hub. This allowed participants to simultaneously gain access to locally grown produce, one-on-one financial coaching, and low-cost financial products that help build credit, savings, and assets. They also connected participants to income supports such as utilities assistance and affordable health insurance.

AIM FOR CROSS-SECTOR ACTIVITIES

It is common for communities and organizations serving them to address food issues with narrowly focused interventions and expertise. But the reality is that the issues of food access and food justice are complex and fundamentally interconnected. Solutions require a cross-sector approach to truly address the roots of inequality, an approach that includes advocacy, nutrition, agriculture, business, academia, and policy expertise.

For instance, New Settlement works closely with youth development in schools and afterschool. They are teaching core subjects like science and math using food. Through this curriculum they are reinforcing classroom learning through hands-on real world concepts.

PARTNERS PLAY A ROLE IN SUCCESS

Before starting, explore existing partnerships in the community and city. You can increase your impact by relying on the expertise that other partners bring to the table and creating a coordinated effort that does not duplicate efforts. Make sure food activities link closely and intimately to other CDC services such as housing, workforce development, and community health. For instance, WHGA partnered with Cornell's Cooperative Extension to provide residents at one of their senior affordable housing buildings with onsite cooking workshops. The workshops taught recipes and lesson plans for participants to prevent or manage diet-related diseases.

INITIAL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

With limited resources, it is critical to put the most energy into building programs that involve community members from the beginning. Spend time creating relationships and building trust within the community.

A community voice in the planning process is critical to ensuring people get the services and opportunities they need.



ART IS A POWERFUL TOOL

Art can illuminate social justice issues. Many of the most culturally rich places in New York City are also the poorest. CfHF aimed to change this by empowering the broader community to tell their stories in the form of public art.

CHLDC partnered with Groundswell (which brings together artists, youth, and community organization to use art as a tool for social change) and local high school students to create a mural entitled, Cypress Hills *Fights for Food Justice*. This mural addresses the issues of food justice in the community. The mural informs the students of the dangers of sugar in their diets. It also depicts the work community gardeners are doing to solve these problems.

WHGA partnered with Harlem youth and Creative Art Works, a public art employment program, to create a Healthy Food Action in Harlem mural. This project brought together youth to start a dialogue around issues in their local food system.

RESIDENTS BRING A LOT TO THE TABLE

Many community members have substantial food knowledge. Many elders and even younger immigrants hold important food traditions from places like Central and South America, Africa, and the Caribbean. It's vital to plan ways to empower community members to share their food knowledge and to help make it more possible to gather around food, and feel empowered about food by training by training and paying community members, and offering opportunities to learn and grow. CfHF culinary classes celebrate traditional diets as an alternative to processed food from the industrial food system.

BUILD IN FUNDING FOR KEY CONTRIBUTORS

Compensate key players who are instrumental in keeping the projects and programs moving forward. Plan for part-time staff funding for residents who take on program activities and leadership roles.

BALANCE MOMENTUM AND LONG-HAUL SUCCESS IN YOUR PROJECT PORTFOLIO

Think about how you can build the program in a manageable way, with growth that is natural yet intentional.

Seek a balance between quick wins and long-game initiatives. This way residents and staff get to celebrate success along the way without giving up the more complex projects that lead to systemic change but are slower to show results. For example, while CHLDC was developing a new supermarket in the community with city support and community and commercial partners, they started to increase access to healthy food through nearer-term solutions such as a Youthmarket (youth-run farm stand), community gardens, and healthy retail efforts with neighborhood corner stores. In addition, they used the vacant lot where the new supermarket would open as a gathering space with raised vegetable gardens and events to galvanize community involvement early in the project. One event was a carnival that highlighted the diversity of local produce and businesses. The event was attended by hundreds of residents and included cooking demos, gardening workshops, a sugar/nutrition demonstration, SNAP registration, face painting, and a magic show.



IMPACTING SCHOOL FOOD ONE STEP AT A TIME

CfHF at New Settlement enabled the switch to a fresher and less processed school lunch menu for 900 students at two elementary schools that share the same campus (PS 294 and PS 311). New Settlement had a long-term relationship with the schools, both of which serve many of the neighborhood's children. New Settlement set up meetings with school administration, participated in PS 311's school wellness council, and performed cafeteria observations to build relationships rather than immediately suggesting changes. After this initial step, New Settlement and school administration brokered a partnership with Wellness in the Schools (WITS), a national organization that works with public schools to provide nutrition and fitness education, healthy scratch-cooked meals, and active recess periods. Through WITS, a trained culinary graduate helped transform the cafeteria menu, train school staff, and provide nutrition education to students and families. New Settlement

and the school administration recognized that staff and family engagement is crucial to ensuring changes are supported by the school community and ultimately sustained. To that end, New Settlement and the schools are leading a range of activities and groups that engage students, parents, and teachers. As of 2016, there is one joint School Wellness Council for both schools and four food and fitness experts helping to create a culture of health. The Councils plan events and create groups that emphasize a healthy lifestyle, implement and enforce health and wellness policies, and strategize systems to include parents and students in their efforts. For example, the schools created a "wellness ambassador" initiative to enlist student support in assisting younger students during lunchtime. This partnership between New Settlement, school campus and WITS is helping kids create healthy habits to learn and live better.

TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS

Interventions are based on the completed assessment and mapping process and alignment with an organization's strengths and neighborhood needs.

The types of interventions vary and are specific to the project. The goal is to develop multiple interventions occurring at the same asset, with the same group of residents, or to incorporate food-related interventions into existing programming/services.

Consider the root causes of food inequity and create program design where:

1. Content is not paternalistic or focused solely on “educating residents;”
2. Knowledge and abilities that residents bring to the table are integrated into curriculum; and
3. Residents are given tools and empowered to make changes in their food system.

TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS

HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

Increase the availability of high-quality, affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods, or create new or improved healthy food outlets and venues.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND SKILL-BUILDING

Increase knowledge and build skills of residents, housing staff, and community service providers in nutrition, food preparation, and gardening. The goal is for participants to share their food and cultural background, feel connected to good food (food that is healthy, sustainable, fair, and affordable), where it comes from and how it heals their bodies.

HEALTHY FOOD AS A TOOL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Enable community economic development opportunities by creating or expanding food-related jobs, improving or creating healthy food venues, and fostering and driving support for urban markets and food-related enterprises.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Provide support services to residents such as health screenings, enrollment in nutrition assistance programs, and food budgeting help. Alternatively, integrate healthy food programming where support services are already provided.

OUTREACH AND MOBILIZATION

Implement community-led neighborhood outreach and awareness strategies and programs.

ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Support and nurture youth and adult leadership on food issues and engage residents and leaders in local and municipal efforts to improve food policies.

HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

Increase the availability of high-quality, affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods, or create new or improved healthy food outlets and venues. Food access work is traditionally led by citywide organizations. Think about how your organization can contribute as a partner in the neighborhood to create meaningful, community-led programs and activities. What can you model that is different from the status quo? Why should this work be led by groups on the ground?

Grocery or Corner Store

Farmers Market

Community Garden or Urban Farm

CSA or Produce Box Program

Choice Food Pantry (fresh food options) Healthier School Food, Senior Meals, Child Care Meals

★ BEST PRACTICE

Integrate food advocacy and knowledge and skill-building activities with healthy food access projects. For example, cooking demos or nutrition workshops can both draw people to a food access site and provide information that will encourage them to try new foods and take action in their community to make change.

BANANA KELLY GARDENS

Gardens are a rich resource in Banana Kelly's catchment area, and a cornerstone of their healthy food work. The Kelly Street Garden was developed by residents in 2014 in the backyard of some of Banana Kelly's affordable housing. The residents had a vision to transform the backyard into a community asset to grow fresh produce and rebuild a sense of community on the block. Through CfHF, Banana Kelly expanded the Kelly Street Garden to include more program activities. They grew their volunteer base and set up an urban agriculture sharing program that teaches gardening skills to new neighborhood members. Additionally, they used produce grown in the garden to perform bi-weekly culinary and nutrition education workshops led by community members. Over the past several years, Banana Kelly has developed several area gardens. One of their newest gardens was installed at 331 East 146th Street with assistance from partner organizations, residents, and several other local volunteer groups. The blighted backyard was remodeled with raised vegetable beds and new benches to provide an inviting space for community events





TEAMING UP WITH LOCAL HEALTH CENTER

In Cypress Hills/East New York, Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation partnered with the New York City Health + Hospitals (H+H)/Gotham Health Center, East New York, to open the Pitkin Verde Farmers Market outside the health center. Gotham Health Center provides families with nutrition education classes and “prescriptions” to eat more fruits and vegetables. The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) provides patients with “Health Bucks” that can be used at farmers markets

throughout the city. The market offers cooking demonstrations and shoppers who participate are given extra “Health Bucks”. The market also provides revenue opportunities for neighborhood community gardeners to sell their produce via the Share table. Lastly, the market provides employment opportunities to residents including positions for a Farmers Market Manager, youth employees to operate and run the market, and community chefs.



WHGA FOOD HUB

West Harlem Group Assistance, Inc. (WHGA) redeveloped a vacant storefront on Lenox Avenue, now called the Community Food Hub, to serve as a portal to improve access to healthy food and advance educational prospects related to health and nutrition. Today the Hub offers a variety of support services. It provides connections with access to health insurance, immigrant services, and SNAP enrollment as well as recertification to healthy food resources for West Harlem residents including a “client choice”

food pantry, cooking demonstrations, nutrition education workshops, an affordable, community-supported agriculture (CSA) farm share, and information on how to find neighborhood resources for eating healthy on a budget. This program is dedicated to engaging youth, families, and seniors from WHGA’s housing portfolio as well as those who live, work, and shop in the larger West Harlem community.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL-BUILDING

Increase knowledge and build skills of residents, housing staff, and community service providers in nutrition, food preparation, and gardening. The goal is for participants to feel connected to good food (food that is healthy, sustainable, fair, and affordable), where it comes from, how it heals their bodies, and how it connects to culture. There is an intricate relationship between food, culture, and society that we do not often think about as we make our daily meal choices. How do we take advantage of that relationship by using food as a means to engage the residents? What happens when food is used to create community-led projects?

As you build these activities, ensure curriculum: 1) embraces the food knowledge and abilities that residents bring to the table and 2) gives participants the tools and knowhow to get involved in changing their food landscape.

Train the Trainer Cooking and Gardening Classes

Cooking and Nutrition Workshops

Gardening Classes

Combined Healthy Food Education & Physical Activity Programs

Connect youth, families, and seniors with fun and engaging physical activities like farmers market tours, walking clubs, and outdoor youth fitness events with nutrition education, cooking demos, and the promotion of food resources like recipe cards, neighborhood guides, and healthy cookbooks.

★ BEST PRACTICES: TRAINING

Train the trainer programs for residents were not only beneficial for building community-based skills, but they also drew more people to training sessions because residents often personally knew the instructors.

Plan to pay resident trainers. The trainers play an important role in training others to do important work. CDC staff members stressed that they felt more comfortable having high expectations when people were being paid and uncomfortable expecting as much from volunteers.

In your approach to training, remember that the more hands-on, the better. Emphasize traditional diets and cultural knowledge. Focus on whole foods and consider seasonal eating.

During activities make sure to serve food, provide child care and language interpretation, and consider the schedules of the participants.

FOOD AND FITNESS CONNECTION

CHLDC created a neighborhood Fitness and Nutrition soccer league for students in grades K-8. Almost 100 youth participated in the league. Workshops focused on healthy snacking and the importance of proper hydration for daily living and during exercise. Each team was named after a fruit or vegetable and the league jerseys reflected the color of the produce item. Kids were provided reusable water bottles and able to fill them with fruit-infused water on practice and game days. They were also given a copy of Leanne Brown's "Good and Cheap: Eat Well on \$4/Day" cookbook.



HEALTHY FOOD AS A TOOL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Disinvestment in low-income neighborhoods and lack of employment opportunities has created major barriers for residents to find steady jobs at decent wages. Historically, economic and social barriers have prevented healthy food retailers, enterprises, or incubators from entering underserved communities.

Families that struggle financially have few resources to shop for food. They need lasting ways to fill that gap. Those that work in the food system are also the ones that cannot afford the food they grow, process, cook, and deliver. Food workers make up the largest sector of the food system in the country, at 14%. Most of these jobs are low-wage positions. Many of these food workers come from historically oppressed communities that are rich with food traditions. While designing CfHF, these are the issues that CDC partners grappled with.

Bringing new food outlets into underserved areas or improving existing ones can be an effective tactic for boosting economic and community vitality. This includes providing new jobs and job training programs, increasing wages, creating new tax revenues, stimulating local economic activity, and improving the viability of neighborhood retail.

THE COMMUNITY CHEF EXPERIENCE

Ribka Getachew, a 27-year-old Crown Heights resident and long-time supporter of NEBHDCo's work, participated in one of NEBHDCo's Community Chef training sessions in 2016. The training challenged her to bring personal stories, knowledge, experiences, and expertise into the kitchen. Ribka was encouraged to make connections with everything from how food has helped her heal, to the food traditions that her parents brought from Ethiopia, to a commitment to dismantling racism. These reasons are exactly why Ribka became a Community Chef. Although Ribka was already a certified health coach with strong culinary and nutritional knowledge, NEBHDCo's Community Chef training provided a curriculum to build her leadership skills and give her tools to teach her craft in the community. Since becoming a Community Chef, Ribka has taught NEBHDCo's culinary course for adults and cooking demos all over the community—at early child care centers, farmers markets, health fairs, and more. Through Ribka's relationship with NEBHDCo, she has obtained more work, including a regular job teaching culinary education at an afterschool program.





GOOD FOOD JOBS

NEBHDCo created a Good Food Jobs component where they partnered with The Working World to provide entrepreneurial and financial support to develop worker-owned cooperative food businesses. They are in the process of developing the Bed-Stuy Cooperative Business Project. NEBHDCo is the community anchor for this project, which began in early 2015 with a 10-week course on starting worker-owned cooperative businesses. They have converted two established community food businesses to the cooperative model and launched a third.

With The Working World they are establishing a revolving neighborhood loan fund that provides new businesses with financing and technical assistance. Additionally, to facilitate their family, youth, and adult culinary and nutrition classes and cooking demos, NEBHDCo has a Community Chef Program that trains residents to become community chefs and leaders. In 2014, they took 18 community members through the Just Food Community Chef Training and now hire them to lead their culinary courses, workshops, and cooking demonstrations. In 2016, they held a training using their own curriculum, and they now have 20 active chefs.

Implementing economic development strategies can be challenging and takes a considerable amount of time. In order to see progress at a scale, think about connecting to larger citywide efforts or programs. For instance, the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) has programs, incentives, and seed funding to support: food entrepreneurship; small retail store owners; business training programs that help public housing residents start and grow food businesses; and a program that mitigates costs for grocery stores by providing zoning and financial incentives to eligible operators and developers in areas with limited availability of fresh food.

Many CDCs have experience in workforce development. Extending this experience to prepare residents for jobs in the large and growing food workforce can be a way to increase employment opportunities.

Enable economic development opportunities by:

Creating new community-based healthy food businesses

Creating or expanding food-related jobs (e.g., retail food, restaurant/chef, educator, farmer)

Providing training and services to support the launch of new healthy food businesses

Fostering farmers markets or food-related enterprises

NEBHDCo partnered with the Brooklyn Movement Center to bridge community organizing, retail work, economic development, and food access. Brooklyn Movement Center is a black-led organization that nurtures local leadership to improve Central Brooklyn. Together with other local organizations and residents, they are incubating the Central Brooklyn Food Co-op, an affordable neighborhood-owned, non-profit grocery.

CHLDC is taking a big step forward to spur economic development activity. Pitkin-Berriman Housing Development is nearly complete and will be a mix of retail and affordable housing that brings new life to a stretch of one of the neighborhood's main commercial corridors.

Located on a brownfield site steps away from a subway station, the project is a classic example of transit-oriented development.

The anchor tenant will be Fine Fare Supermarket, fulfilling CHLDC's goal from the first discussions of CfHF to bring in a supermarket for the underserved community. CHLDC staff have been working with Fine Fare on healthy food options and to ensure jobs for residents. The store will participate in the city's Food Retail Expansion to Support Health program (FRESH), which offers tax incentives for stores that meet a set of criteria for offering nutritious food.



SUPPORT SERVICES

Persistent poverty exacerbates neighborhood health disparities, where residents find themselves choosing between providing enough food for themselves and their families, irrespective of nutritional value, and paying the month's rent or utility bills.

To help alleviate these pressures, provide support services to residents such as health screenings and enrollment in nutrition assistance programs. Alternatively, integrate healthy food programming where support services are already provided.

Health screenings

Enrollment in nutrition assistance programs

Financial planning (including food budgeting)

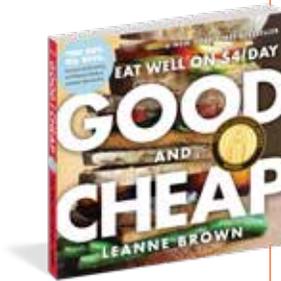
Provide sessions geared toward shopping habits, spending on a budget, and purchasing healthy food that is affordable

Free tax assistance

Affordable Health Insurance

★ BEST PRACTICE

Through the community needs assessment, find out what services beyond food resources are most important to residents. Then look for connections with the food projects and programs. Providing these services in an integrated way—rather than as stand-alone services—and with a long-term commitment is key.



NEBHDCo held a book signing and cooking with author Leanne Brown to celebrate and distribute her “Good and Cheap” cookbook, which is filled with cost-saving, healthy food shopping tips for individuals on a budget.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

CHLDC hired a part-time staff person to focus on food assistance (SNAP and WIC) enrollment during their community program and activities and at neighborhood anchors like farmers markets, health centers, churches, schools, senior centers, soup kitchens, and food pantries. This service helped increase enrollment in food assistance programs. Many NYC residents that are eligible for benefits do not enroll because of the onerous eligibility process and rules and fear of participation. As a result, many New Yorkers are forced to decide between buying food and paying for other necessities like rent or medical expenses.





PARTNERSHIPS AT WHGA

WHGA relied heavily on the Food Bank for NYC's Tiered Engagement Network (TEN) to identify partners, services, and funding opportunities to grow its choice food pantry and related programming. TEN started as a SNAP referral service and now links community organizations and provides 119 organizations with connections to over 180 services

BANANA KELLY AND LAUNDROMAT PROJECT

At Kelly Street, there has been strong integration among arts, urban farming, and advocacy. In partnership with Workforce Housing Group, Kelly Street Garden, and Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association, the Laundromat Project has transformed a two-bedroom apartment into a thriving, creative community hub with artist studios, arts programming, and community partnerships that engage the larger Kelly Street community. The Laundromat Project uses arts and culture to build community networks, solve problems and enhance a sense of ownership in places where people live, work and grow.

Called the Kelly Street Collaborative, the hub grew out of a collaboration between the Kelly Street Garden Committee and a team of fellows from the Laundromat Project's Create Change Program, "Grow Love". Grow Love was a daylong festival celebrating the bounty of the Kelly Street community and garden, centered around the question, "What would you like to grow in your neighborhood?"





ARTS AND YOUTH IN FOOD JUSTICE

New Settlement Apartments partnered with Groundswell to incorporate the arts into their youth food justice projects. Groundswell offered a service learning opportunity at the New Settlement Community Campus CMSP 327 to learn about the art of mural making and to paint a mural to be installed on a public wall across the street from the school entrance. After learning about the role of food workers in the food system, from the farm

to the Bronx, the youth designed and painted a beautiful and powerful mural with the theme *Good Food, Good Jobs*. The mural depicts farmworkers growing food on one side and food workers in the Bronx on the other. The youth conveyed the shared struggles and triumphs of both communities. The portraits of the people are modeled after people in the school community including the participants and a School Safety Agent.

OUTREACH AND MOBILIZATION

Community engagement and outreach is critical to the planning, implementation, and ongoing success of a CfHF initiative. The most successful efforts bring together people from inside and outside the community. Insiders have expert knowledge on local needs, assets, and history; outsiders have access to external resources and technical expertise.

CfHF leads have described the need for resident leadership development very early in the planning process. This is to ensure projects are community driven and led.

KEY STRATEGIES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

IDENTIFY TARGET POPULATIONS

Think about your intended audience. What are their demographics: cultural background, age? Know who you're trying to reach before you get started. Carefully define the population of interest to help focus and target your efforts. For instance, through WHGA's resident surveys and focus groups they learned a high number of seniors were grappling with food insecurity. WHGA created an outreach plan that targeted senior housing and centers and offices that serve vulnerable seniors in the neighborhood. WHGA had an overwhelming response from the senior population. They now have a packed weekly senior day at their client choice pantry and a delivery program for home-bound seniors.

CONSIDER LOCAL DYNAMICS

How do community members view your organization and other local groups? What are the other neighborhood issues that residents are grappling with and how does food fit in? What are the local food traditions?

LISTEN TO RESIDENTS

Listening to the needs of people with the most experience dealing with food issues enables outreach staff to effectively target the problems they face. For instance, Banana Kelly's CfHF first emphasized working with local bodegas to increase availability of healthy food. Yet through ongoing conversations with residents, Banana Kelly learned that community members instead wanted to focus on revitalizing existing garden plots to become a source for local produce and spaces for the community to safely congregate.

MAKE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

What are some existing resident networks such as churches, block associations, and schools to tap into to expand outreach and awareness?

CONSIDER YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Where and how can you realistically incorporate community member participation?

BEST PRACTICES

Partner with community anchors like churches, libraries, and schools for outreach assistance. For example, CHLDC advertised its Youthmarket and new farmers market at local libraries and schools and placed flyers in the foyer of the neighborhood churches. Some of the churches included a written blurb in their weekly bulletins.

Incorporate CfHF event and activity information into an organization's newsletters, tenant meetings, and rent rolls; start a neighborhood-wide text messaging campaign; and create multilingual postcards, stickers, and posters.

Distribute outreach items through door-to-door canvassing, at community partner sites, and at local events.

PITKIN VERDE FARMER'S M

Fresh, affordable vegetables and fruits
Fresh, affordable vegetables and fruits
Tue: 10 AM - 5 PM
Mar: 10 AM - 5 PM - July



ENSURE COMMUNITY IS ACTIVELY ENGAGED

How can your organization involve residents and outreach partner organizations to set up or operate each intervention? The goal is to ensure a community-responsive process.

How can residents be most helpful based on their skills, knowledge, and availability? Where could training help to build needed skills and expertise?

TOOLS

What tools do you need to gather ahead of time?

Invest in good design and material

Use GIS or Google Earth online mapping tool to create maps that highlight health and wellness services and activities in the neighborhood

Database system to collect resident contact information

Food, health, and wellness neighborhood resource guides for residents that provide information about healthy food activities and programs and fitness locations. Each CDC partner's healthy food sites and programs are highlighted to boost awareness and program participation.

EVENTS

Implement targeted neighborhood outreach strategies and programs. These activities and events have two purposes: (1) to familiarize residents not yet reached about the food program's activities and goals and (2) to engage residents who have attended a previous event to become more active, ongoing participants.

Attend health fairs with your own table for cooking demonstrations.

Events that incorporate 'healthy eating and living' themes to engage residents in CfHF programming and strengthen community networks. Examples: hosting documentary movie nights to help people identify potential leaders and foster greater involvement and action; health carnivals that provide interactive activities; and community dinners.

Farmers market tours that integrate culturally relevant cooking demonstrations

Grocery tours that help residents stretch their limited dollars, make nutritious food choices, and plan healthy meals

BOUNDARIES

What expectations do you need to set with the community? Consider:

- What is a reasonable launch timeline?
- How much you are willing to divert from your own plan/vision?
- Who has the power to make which decisions?

Be clear on these expectations from the beginning and let them shape how you communicate community involvement.

DICING UP SCHOOL FOOD

New Settlement is a service site with FoodCorps, a national organization that places AmeriCorps members in schools to connect kids to healthy food so they can lead healthier lives and reach their full potentials. The FoodCorps members deliver cooking and gardening lessons in the classroom and promote new menu items and a salad bar in the school cafeteria through special tasting events. The FoodCorps members also participate in the School

Wellness Council and assist with student and family events to support a school-wide culture of health. New Settlement's 2017-2018 FoodCorps member, July Alcantara de Martinez, grew up in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. She has lived in the Bronx for about nine years. She is a FoodCorps member where two of her children go to school. Recently, July started a cooking club to bring parents together to cook and share foods that reflect their culture.



ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Support and nurture youth and adult leadership on addressing food issues and engaging residents and leaders in local and municipal efforts to improve food policies.

Efforts to improve a community’s food system should be led by the people who are most impacted—residents. There are a wide range of issues that residents can tackle to address the roots of inequality. Here are some strategies CDC partners deployed to ensure community members led the efforts to advocate for equity and inclusion in the decision-making process that shapes the local food system.

CREATE TRAININGS THAT BRING TOGETHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND STAFF

It was important for CfHF that staff and residents worked together to advocate for change on food justice issues that impact their community. To start this conversation, LISC NYC and CDC partners coordinated a food justice training for residents, local organizations, and CfHF staff with Just Food, a NYC nonprofit that trains people on community-driven solutions to inequities in our food system. During the training, participants learned how to facilitate hands-on workshops about equitable local food and farm policy issues and develop skills in advocacy, community organizing, and grassroots campaigning.

FOOD JUSTICE FOR STUDENTS WORKSHOP

Banana Kelly partnered with buildOn to create a Food Justice campaign for students at Banana Kelly High School and surrounding schools. Two high school student interns led a group of their peers through a three-day intensive campaign workshop to learn about community-based injustices related to healthy food access and to develop skills to reduce inequalities. Participants volunteered at a food distribution center in Hunts Point, organized a neighborhood tour, and developed group presentations and action plans to collectively identify problems and brainstorm solutions.



HARVEST LEADERSHIP FROM WITH THE COMMUNITY

CfHF is intentional about hiring directly from the communities for program activities and growing leadership.

Co-creating a built environment that provides easy access to healthy food is important. But more important is creating opportunities for community-level power to define problems and solutions from within. For example, before you can talk about blood pressure, ask about the societal and living conditions that might cause high blood pressure.

Without community leadership, the initiatives to improve food justice fail because they are not embraced by the impacted communities. For example, consider a health impact fee imposed on sugary beverages to fund chronic disease prevention through improved nutrition, education, and clinical intervention. Such an effort will not be achieved unless communities push their elected representatives to support such a policy.

YOUTH-LED PROJECTS TO SPREAD THE WORD

Empower youth to lead and recruit residents to participate in programs through creating projects that give youth the opportunity to engage with the local community and its food system. Youth-led projects harness the energy of the next generation and are an opportunity to teach civic engagement.

NEBHDCo created a Youth Leadership Program that incorporated Food Empowerment Education and Sustainability Team (FEEST: an after-school program from Seattle). With FEEST, youth gain practical skills through cooking. Food becomes the vehicle for community building, cultural sharing, risk taking, and leadership development. Through a year long after school program, FEEST leaders learn about food justice activism and get involved in conferences, coalitions, marches and other events. FEEST members hold dinners where they begin to change young people's relationships to food and promote creative risk-taking and community connectedness during the cooking process. Youth gather to cook an entire dinner from scratch using fresh fruits, vegetables, and meat from local markets. Dinner themes also serve as a platform for anti-oppression education: discussing health inequities, our unsustainable food system, social and environmental justice, and youth movements. In this creative space, they build the strong relationships needed to create and sustain change over time.

In addition, NEBHDCo runs the TurnUp Youth Garden Internship Program in gardens connected to their affordable housing buildings. They prepare youth for successful and fulfilling lives after high school.

Banana Kelly engaged high school students to run a free farmers market in a community garden outside one of their affordable housing buildings. Staff recruited and trained 15 young people who planted, tended, and harvested at the College Avenue Garden. During the growing season, participants harvested food and distributed it door-to-door among residents of a building



adjacent to the garden. This market has become a place where youth connect to residents to educate peers and families about healthy eating, food justice, and racial equity.

New Settlement also created a youth-run farmers market in 2017, and employed 8 Youth Leaders to set up, stock, serve customers, perform outreach, and clean up. The Youth Leaders received intensive training and attended staff meetings on policies, procedures, and best practices in food vending and local food. The Youth Leaders also participated in wrap-around education and youth leadership programming including Food Justice Friday workshops, field trips, and an out-of-state trip to a regional conference to learn about activism in contemporary food justice issues. In addition to gaining customer service skills and practicing working as part of a team, the Youth Leaders became true believers and champions of the 170 Farm Stand. The 170 Farm Stand provides youth with a meaningful opportunity to serve their community. The 170 Farm Stand sold almost 10,000 lbs of produce over the 20 week season.



IMPLEMENTATION

WORKING THE PLAN

STAGGER INITIATIVE LAUNCHES TO WORK WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION'S RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS

Consider the complexity of the programs and projects when organizing your timeline. Balance the types of projects happening at the same time so the team is not spread too thin.

RUN PILOTS TO FIND THE ENERGY

Before committing people and financial resources to longer-term efforts, run a trial where possible. For example, run a single workshop or test out a farm stand as a special event to gauge resident interest and potential impacts. The process is iterative and every intervention will not be a home run. Focus on the programs that are resonating and creating positive impact, and move on from programs that are not.

BEST PRACTICE

Ensure a collaborative process when creating a memo of understanding (MOU) or legal accord. It is more important to first reach agreement and understanding, and then put this agreement in writing. To ensure a healthy and successful collaboration, it is essential to communicate openly, learn, adapt, and measure key indicators.

PARTNERSHIPS

To boost efficiency and expertise, CfHF relied on strategic partnerships to improve outreach efforts and enhance programs and services. A snapshot of CfHF partners can be found in Appendix 1 on page 77.

TYPES OF PARTNERS

COMMUNITY-BASED

Partners with boots on the ground in the neighborhood providing complementary services. These partners offer opportunities for both integrated programming and outreach support.

CITY-WIDE OR NATIONAL

Partners with specific food expertise such as nutrition education, emergency food, and SNAP enrollment.

PARTNERS FROM OUTSIDE THE FOOD SECTOR

The multi-sectoral nature of food access and justice required each CDC to collaborate with organizations across a spectrum of areas including schools, workforce development programs, neighborhood food businesses, the NYC Department of Health, and arts and advocacy organizations.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS AS YOU BUILD, MANAGE, AND GROW PARTNERSHIPS:

PARTNERSHIP GOALS

The first step to planning the partnership is to clearly define what you want to get out of it. Determine partnership goals to identify and clarify your organization's needs.

EXAMINE PARTNER'S MISSION AND VALUES

Examine potential partner's values. Do they align? If not, can they still be useful? How?

Look for red flags to avoid partnerships where you are not in alignment. Be clear on what value the organization can provide and what issues may arise due to differences in values or goals.

A potential challenge is partner organizations from outside the neighborhood bringing in cookie-cutter programs that are not culturally relevant or well suited for the neighborhood. Think about: What is the partner's knowledge of the community? How does its model allow for adaptation and responsiveness to the community?

ROLES

What will your organization bring to the table and what are your expectations of partners? Who will represent each organization in the partnership? Facilitate progress by including organizational representatives who have the authority to make decisions.



PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Critically consider the practical challenges of implementing an alliance while taking into account organizational culture and structure, strengths, weaknesses, leadership, governance, systems, and back-office support. Involve key staff at each organization to discuss the realities of their work.

DUE DILIGENCE AND NEGOTIATIONS

Complete a deep due diligence and negotiation process to ensure no major surprises once an agreement is reached.

Due diligence should include talking to the group's existing and previous partners, especially if they have worked with other community-based organizations. What is their reputation in the community? Do they follow through on their commitments?

DURATION

Do you see the partnership as a way to kick off new projects or programs that eventually will be run by community members or CDC staff, or is this a long-term partnership? What is the sustainability of the partnership? In some cases, CfHF partners found it helpful to implement programs independently rather than being reliant on outside players. They found this reduced time coordinating with other partners, created curriculum that met the needs of residents, increased direct contact with community members to boost participation in activities, and enhanced integration with other programs within their own organizations.

ONGOING REFLECTION

This type of initiative is iterative. Even with extensive planning, the work will shift along the way based on what resonates in the community, what is having impact, and what fits best with community and partner capacity.

FUNDRAISING

To date, LISC NYC and CDC partners have leveraged over \$3.4 million for Communities for Healthy Food.

For Fiscal Year 2018, the third year in a row, **CfHF has successfully campaigned for and received \$500,000 from the New York City Council, totaling \$1.5 million over three years.** In addition, partners have successfully raised resources for their own programs with LISC NYC's technical assistance. This included funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Levitt Foundation, and other foundations, corporations, and government agencies.

Here are some suggestions for fundraising neighborhood-based food programs.

Find a funder that will seed the initial planning process.

One of the first steps for CfHF was creating a partnership with the initial seed funder, the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund. This allowed LISC NYC to put together a multi-neighborhood program with time for a comprehensive planning process.

State and federal grants were a key opportunity—particularly for larger projects.

Participating CDCs applied for USDA Community Food Project (CFP) and Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) grants. For example, CHLDC was awarded a \$300,000 USDA Community Food Projects grant. They redeveloped four vacant lots into community gardens and provided outreach and coordination support to a handful of existing under-subscribed community gardens. In addition, residents were trained as Community Educators to lead gardening and nutrition workshops and assist with garden membership outreach and recruitment.

Multi-sector programming can reach a mix of funding streams.

A food program that ties into various sectors like social justice, youth leadership, and economic development allows organizations to secure funding outside traditional funding streams.

Choose partners strategically to enlarge asset base, find in-kind donations and free technical assistance.

Collaborate closely with partners to overlap programming and gain access to free resources and technical support. For example, CHLDC partnered with NYC's Department of Health's Shop Healthy Campaign after DOH selected the neighborhood as a target for the program. DOH staff provided technical assistance to stores to facilitate stocking and preparing healthier foods. The staff also distributed incentives to help stores make these changes including: stands for displaying produce, and salad starter kits and blenders that enable retailers to sell value-added goods and minimize loss from perishable produce. Meanwhile, CHLDC promoted participating retailers throughout the community.



Plan to allocate staff time to fundraising.

It will be challenging for the CfHF Advocate if it is their sole responsibility to manage the projects and fundraising. Collaboration among staff is critical.

Secure ongoing city or state funding through coalition building.

LISC NYC and its partners successfully secured city council monies by demonstrating citywide impact and telling personal stories; establishing and reinforcing key relationships with City Council and decision-makers; navigating the local government budget hearing processes; setting up legislative meetings; and raising awareness of the CfHF program through social media, email blasts, local newspaper articles, and videos.

Seek funders who provide resources besides funding support.

The major funder for CfHF, the Illumination Fund, helped the program through: (1) elevating the visibility of the program and organizations with press coverage, digital and social amplification, and events; (2) creating a learning community amongst grantees to share successes and challenges, and to learn new skills from each other; (3) connecting to other potential funders, state and city initiatives, and thought leaders in the food space; and (4) providing insight into the priorities of the policy sphere. For instance, in 2015 the Illumination Fund convened grantees on the importance of strategic communications to organizational success and ways to invest in internal communications that pay dividends in amplifying organizational and program reach.

EVALUATION

The evaluation was designed over the course of almost a year through collaboration by LISC NYC staff, the outside evaluation team from the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute, and frontline staff of the CfHF sites.

While this lengthy planning process delayed the start of the evaluation, it also helped ensure that the evaluation reflected the experience, wisdom, and questions of these key constituencies. Note, it's important to “right-size” your evaluation to the needs of your organization, using discernment to collect only what you need.

CfHF EVALUATION APPROACH, FRAMEWORK AND METHODS USED

Sponsors of community food and other health and social development programs evaluate for several reasons:

Find out if program is working to achieve its goals so they can make adjustments as they go

Provide reports on implementation and impact to agency directors, funders and policy makers

Assist other programs to replicate the program in other settings

Seek additional support to expand or sustain program

Inform future planning for CfHF program and broader scope of CDC food work

LEVELS OF CHANGE MEASURED IN EVALUATION



Individual



Organization

Community



Partnership



The evaluation designed for Communities for Healthy Food sought to contribute to each of these goals.

VALUES AND BELIEFS

Several values and beliefs informed the evaluation:

- Community health food initiatives operate at several different levels— individuals and families, organizations, communities and municipalities—and effective evaluations seek to understand how the program works at each of these levels.
- All participants in a program have knowledge and expertise relevant to evaluation and the planning and implementation process should tap into these resources. Participatory action research or community-based participatory research are useful models for this approach.
- No single evaluation method can capture the implementation, impact, and outcomes of an intervention, so the most effective evaluations use multiple methods to gather evidence.
- When done well, the design and implementation of an evaluation can provide a forum for all program participants to consider the process and impact of the program, and to make real-time corrections as the program develops.
- Any evaluation faces limited resources. Evaluators and program managers need to find collaborative ways to balance the desire for a rigorous, useful evaluation with fewer resources than needed for an ideal evaluation.

DEFINING GOALS

The starting point for designing an intervention is to clearly explain the problem to be addressed. This is then used to define the goals of the intervention, usually to reduce the presenting problem in some specific ways. Describe program goals in clear ways that are measurable, consistent with the mission and values of the sponsoring organizations, and achievable with the resources available. Often the definition of goals is a back-and-forth process in which program planners, evaluators, and staff refine the goals as they develop the program. Here are the goals CfHF identified:

- Increase resident knowledge and engagement in nutrition, food preparation, gardening, community-based healthy food resources and overall health, and spark community dialogues on food and health.
- Expand food components of other CDC services (e.g., counseling, referrals, health care, public benefits, or Head Start).
- Create enduring partnerships with community and city-wide groups to improve local food environments.
- Expand healthy food choices in the community, mobilize the community to support healthy food campaigns and youth healthy food and arts initiative; strengthen or create new neighborhood healthy food retail outlets.

These four intersecting goals define the aspirations of CfHF planners at the

individual and family, organizational, community, and food system levels. The evaluation was designed to assess how and to what extent these goals were achieved.

LOGIC MODELS

Logic models provide a schematic illustration of a program and suggest the pathways by which program activities contribute to desired outcomes. For the CfHF evaluation, program planners and designers created several drafts of logic models, then consulted with program staff and modified as needed.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

This evaluation framework below shows a simple schematic in which CfHF activities lead to short-term changes at each level, which in turn lead to longer term changes that ultimately contribute to the desired outcomes of improvements in health and community development.

USEFUL RESOURCES FOR CREATING A LOGIC MODEL

How to Develop a Program Logic Model by National and Community Service
<https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/upload/OpAC%20Logic%20Model%20draft%20in%20progress.pdf>

W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide
<https://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/resource/logic-model-development-guide/>

Community Food Project Evaluation Handbook by Community Food Security Council
https://nesfp.org/sites/default/files/uploads/cfp_evaluation_handbook.pdf

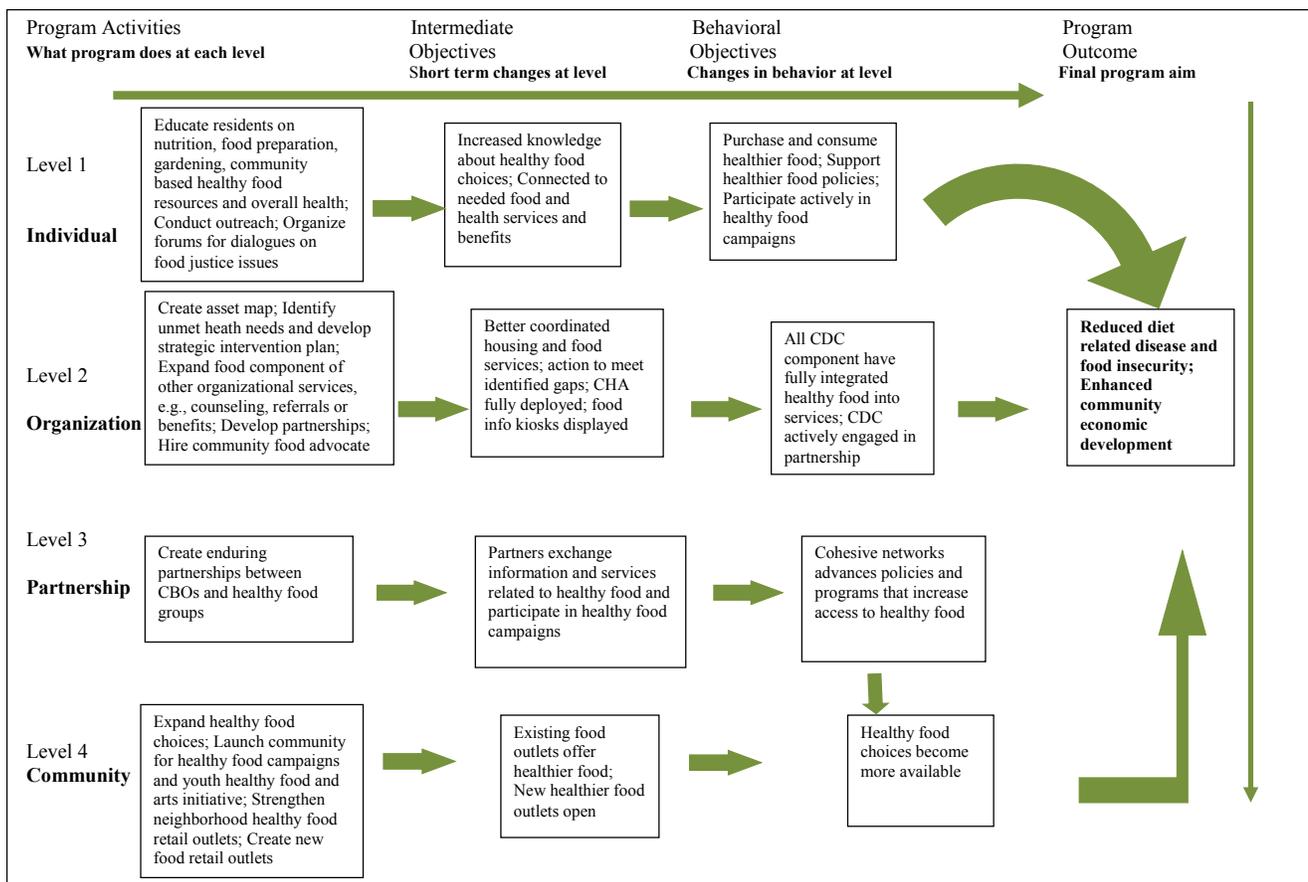
USDA Community Nutrition Education Logic Model Detail
<https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource/CNE%20Logic%20Model%20-%20Detailed%20Version.pdf>

CfHF EVALUATION FRAMEWORK



This basic model was then developed to show the more complex pathways at which each level of the program contributed to short- and long-term changes and desired outcomes, as shown below.

The first column shows CfHF activities at each level. These activities are expected to contribute to the specified intermediate (second column) and behavioral (third column) objectives and to the longer-term program outcomes (fourth column). For example, level 2 shows that CDCs (the organizations) may create new food programs in their existing child care program, use that to modify food-related behaviors of staff, parents, and children as well as the role of staff and parents in nutrition education. This will in turn lead to healthier diets and improved food practices at the child care program (third column), which in turn leads to improved child health, the ultimate goal.



EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Once the evaluation team defined a logic model, it was possible to pose research question at each level of the system. Below shows the questions posed at the start of the evaluation by level of organization. In turn, these questions led to the choice of methods for evaluation, the design of the surveys and other tools used to gather information, and the strategies to analyze the evidence gathered.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTION BY LEVEL

INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

How do people who participate in programs differ from those who do not?

How does food-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of participants change as a result of varying levels of participation?

To what extent are participants better able to play a role in shaping local food policy and environments?

SPONSORING ORGANIZATION

What sponsor characteristics are associated with varying levels of program participation?

How do assets and experiences of CDCs contribute to program participation?

To what extent have participating CDCs integrated healthy food into all program activities?

What are the characteristics of effective community campaigns for healthy food?

What roles do CDCs play in campaigns?

What is the value added that CDCs bring to community food interventions?

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

What roles do partner organizations play and what resources do they contribute?

What are characteristics of effective partners?

What processes contribute to effective partnerships?

COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

To what extent is healthier food available in communities?

To what extent is the community better able to participate in shaping food policy?

To what extent has healthy food risen higher on the community policy agenda?

What obstacles blocked or increased access to healthier food at community and municipal levels?

What policies enabled or blocked access to healthier food?

How do food environments in CDC neighborhoods differ from those in two comparison neighborhoods?

EVALUATION METHODS

After looking at these questions, the evaluation team selected seven methods to gather the evidence to answer these questions. Each method had strengths and weaknesses, summarized in a table found in Appendix 3. Together, they provided a rich body of data that enabled the evaluation team to begin to answer the questions. Not every evaluation of community food initiatives will have the resources and capacity to use all of these (or other) methods. Every team, however, can benefit from considering these methods and assessing their relevance to their projects.

COMPARISONS

Every evaluation study must ask the question: compared to what? What comparisons do evaluators, program planners, and managers make to judge the success or effectiveness of their intervention in achieving its specified goals? A discussion about the CfHF evaluation comparisons can be found in Appendix 2.

KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

REACH AND PARTICIPATION

CfHF activities **engaged tens of thousands of residents in a variety of food-related activities across the four participating communities.** In 2017, based on a household survey, evaluators estimated that about 29% of those living in proximity to the sponsoring CDCs participated at high levels (attending three or more events), 44% at moderate levels (attending one or two events), and 28% not at all.

In 2017, the proportion in the surveyed residents with **high levels of participation** in food related activities was 27%, an increase of 35% from the 20% participating at this level in 2014.

SHOPPING, COOKING AND EATING PRACTICES OF PEOPLE

The household surveys showed that **healthy food behaviors** increased in four of the five categories assessed:

1. eating meals prepared at home;
2. preparing healthy meals;
3. consuming fruit;
4. consuming vegetables (other than leafy greens).

The average increase in the proportion of respondents reporting that they practiced these behaviors always or most of the time for these four behaviors between 2014 and 2017 was about 9%.

The proportion of respondents to the household surveys reported decreasing the **proportion of meals purchased at fast food outlets**, falling from 18% who reported in 2014 that they purchased half or more of their restaurant meals at fast food establishments to 11% who reported this in 2017, a reduction of almost 40%.

Overall, the percentage of respondents who always or **frequently used food knowledge in these desirable ways** doubled, from 24% in 2014 to 49% in 2017.

Between 2014 and 2017, household surveys showed that the proportion of surveyed residents living near CDCs who always or most of the time **used knowledge on food pricing, meal planning, and nutrition** increased by about 15%.

Reports of sugary beverage consumption, however, saw no such fall. The proportion reporting no **sugary beverage consumption** in the last two months decreased by about 12% (from 32% to 28%) but the proportion drinking one or more servings of sugary beverages daily in the last two months increased from 46% in 2014 to 50% in 2017, a rise of about 9%. This points to the need to not only promote healthy food, but to discourage unhealthy food. CfHF strategies were more weighted towards the promotion of healthy food options.

ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES OF CDCS

Overall, CfHF provided the participating CDCs with **new ways to engage community residents**. In some cases, CDCs provided paid opportunities for residents as community food entrepreneurs or chefs. CfHF also offered CDCs an opportunity to **engage young people in learning about healthy food and developing leadership and professional skills**, particularly related to food justice. Both youth and adult residents gained awareness of the interrelated issues of healthy food access, social, and economic equity within the broader food and urban system. Between the beginning of the project in 2014 and the end in 2017, the CDCs gained a **reputation for doing healthy food work in the community** and have integrated an emphasis on healthy food into food-specific initiatives for residents and in some cases for CDC staff as well.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN CDCS AND OTHERS

In interviews in 2014 and 2017, staff from CDCs and other community groups **identified several partner characteristics** that were important to the most successful partnerships in which they had engaged as a part of the CfHF project. Willingness and ability to collaborate and share resources were key, as was transparency, particularly as many of the organizations often find themselves competing for funding from the same agencies or foundations. Staff and partners noted that it was at times inevitable that CDCs and organizations would seek funding from the same sources, given the relatively small pool of potential funders supporting healthy food initiatives. The willingness of CDC and partner staff to be honest about applications for grants was important to maintaining trust, and therefore positive relationships between the partners.

For both CDCs and partners, partnerships where each organization had a distinct contribution were easier to manage than those where the two organizations had overlapping missions and services. In 2014, when most of the CDCs had limited experience in food; **partnerships with groups like City Harvest, the New York City Health Department and Food Bank of New York helped to fill this need for food expertise**. Similarly, organizations like City Harvest which had well-developed food and nutrition education programs, but limited community bases came to depend on the CDCs to bring them together with residents who wanted their services.

COMMUNITY FOOD ENVIRONMENTS

According to the household survey, the proportion of residents who reported that they strongly or mostly agreed that **their local food environment made it easy to find healthy food increased from 40% in 2014 to 55% in 2017, a 38% increase**. The proportion who mostly disagreed with this perception fell from one in three to one in five.

DEMOCRACY, FOOD GOVERNANCE, PUBLIC POLICY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Between 2014 and 2017, the proportion of survey respondents who reported high levels of participation in community events such as neighborhood associations and community board meetings increased. The proportion of residents who reported high levels of participation in food-related activities also increased. Of interest, **people who participated actively in community events were significantly more likely to also have participated in food-related activities**, and the strength of this association increased between 2014 and 2017.

Endnotes

1. Murray DM, Varnell SP, Blitstein JL. Design and analysis of group-randomized trials: a review of recent methodological developments. *American journal of public health*. 2004 Mar;94(3):423-32.
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3. West SG, Duan N, Pequegnat W, Gaist P, Des Jarlais DC, Holtgrave D, Szapocznik J, Fishbein M, Rapkin B, Clatts M, Mullen PD. Alternatives to the randomized controlled trial. *American Journal of Public Health*. 2008 Aug;98(8):1359

Evaluation Recommendations Based on the CfHF Experience

The experience of evaluating CfHF led to several recommendations for planning and implementing such evaluations in other settings. These include:

- 1** To the extent possible, the planning of evaluations should begin at the same time as program planning and evaluators should be part of the program planning team.
- 2** Articulating the theory of change of a community food intervention and creating the logic model that illustrates that theory can help to design effective interventions and useful and meaningful evaluation studies. Creating such tools serves as a forum for reaching consensus on program goals and strategies.
- 3** Program planners and funders should identify as early as possible what data collection program staff and evaluators will be responsible for and ensure that each party has the training, time and support for carrying out these activities.
- 4** Developing standard evaluation instruments and outcome metrics that can be used across community food programs will help to build a body of knowledge that can guide interventions and reduce the time each program now dedicates to crafting its own instruments.
- 5** Several research and evaluation question warrant collaborative investigation by the staff of organizations leading community food interventions and evaluators and researchers. These include:
 - *How does gentrification influence food environments?*
 - *What are most appropriate methods for assessing the cumulative or synergistic impact of multiple food initiatives?*
 - *What digital or other technologies could facilitate data collection and better track participants across multiple intervention activities?*
 - *How can program planners and evaluators best choose appropriate levels of analysis and scale?*
 - *How can program planners more precisely define their target populations to enable evaluators to define the denominator of the population that could potentially be reached by a community food intervention?*

KEY LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

There are components of the food environment that are not under the control of the community.

It is difficult to have an impact on something as complex as the local food environment. In response, groups have deepened their commitment to addressing neighborhood needs and empowering residents to overcome barriers to access healthy food. Incorporating economic development initiatives into a community's strategic intervention plan leads to substantial growth and progress towards the right for residents to define their own food and agriculture systems. Examples are: leadership development trainings, good food jobs skill building, and cooperative business workshops.

Employ engagement strategies and shared learning opportunities for increased impact.

To reach more people and keep them active in programs, create opportunities for active, hands-on learning such as cooking classes, gardening, and neighborhood tours that combine exercise with increasing knowledge of healthy food outlets and food and nutrition resources. Work with fellow community anchor institutions to disseminate resources and host activities. Find opportunities to integrate activities that meet people where they are. Bring healthy food cooking demonstrations into an exercise class or afterschool sports activities.

Create meaningful partnerships and build support among neighborhood and citywide organizations and key city departments.

CfHF uses existing food partners to host programs and activities like farmers markets and community cooking and nutrition classes at CDC sites. These partners provide the technical expertise necessary for projects like healthy food corner store makeovers. Most CDC partners have assets, existing programs, and services in place and foundational trust amongst residents, but lack the expertise to implement a wide range of programs. Without these partnerships, an intensive amount of start-up time and staff capacity would have greatly impeded the scope and reach of activities for 2014 and hindered the initiative's long-term sustainability. Additionally, local partners were crucial in heightening advertising and marketing efforts with schools, community health centers, and employment centers.

Outreach workers must have listening and interpersonal skills.

When it comes to the challenging work of managing a diverse program implementation with limited staff, outreach skills are not enough. This work is about people—understanding people, listening to people, and building relationships within the community. Staff must have the skills, time, and capacity to build these relationships. Also, consider whether these skills are available in the community or from your partners—always look for opportunities to utilize and encourage leadership roles from the community and partner organizations.



Partnerships must be clearly defined up front.

An assumption was made early in the process that partner involvement would decrease the amount of CDC staff time required for various projects or program management, but this was not always the case. CDCs need to do more upfront work to outline roles and expectations, and to use memos of understanding (MOUs) to ensure everyone is on the same page. First, take the time to discuss the vision and values of the project: what each party believes about the work and the WHY of each group. Second, define roles. Taking the time to clearly define roles in the beginning can empower people in those roles to be more successful and independent, and alleviate the need for clarification later.

With a diverse set of partners comes intensive coordination.

Success of CfHF is highly dependent on a CDC's interagency linkages and external partnerships. Partnerships take time to establish and require continued efforts to maintain. To set clear expectations often required extensive deliberation with each partner, as each had varying levels of capacity and expertise. With external partners, it was challenging to gather program data points and information. Additionally, there are many local players, which led to some issues around competition for delivering healthy food services.

Harness the power of neighborhood youth.

Engaging youth in community involvement provides these future leaders with the skills and motivation to stay involved. Furthermore, research has shown that youth can have a significant, positive influence on their peers and parents to embrace community involvement. Therefore, considerable focus was placed on youth-focused interventions to foster leadership and drive. These interventions also contributed to the development of each individual in areas such as facilitation, time management, and critical thinking—skills that can be applied to food issues and beyond.

Transfer leadership to the community.

Developing meaningful opportunities for residents to build leadership, workforce, and life skills needs to be a priority in order to incrementally grow and mobilize a more vibrant and powerful community.

Economic development opportunities that connect to healthy food access take time, expertise, capital, and a constellation of partners.

CfHF was successful in training and employing low-income residents as community chefs and securing a new grocery store in Cypress Hills. LISC NYC and partner organizations would like to see broader economic development opportunities connected to healthy food access. There are a variety of circumstances prompting these roadblocks including space requirements, pre-development and financing needs, and expertise and time to create sustainable business plans.

Community input and participation is an intensive and continual process.

Community engagement doesn't end when a project is implemented. An extensive community engagement process must be continued to keep building the health of the community by fostering connections between neighbors, and to address some of the deeper root causes of the neighborhood needs. This process requires considerable time, expertise, and management.

Data collection can be intensive and challenging

Think about what type and how much data to collect and for what purpose. Data collection is laborious and in many cases reliant on partner organizations. For instance, CDC partners found it challenging to gather data about the amount of produce sold at farmers markets because not all farmers market partners collected this data point.

Food as a community building tool

Food plays an essential role in building community. For example, because of disputes over land, access to green space, and equal rights to the city, urban gardens have become a symbol of community activism and empowerment, and they are part of a contemporary grassroots movement supporting environmental justice, collective action, and equitable access to nutrition and good health. CDC partners have found gardens to be one way to fill a gap in the neighborhood and build a community gathering place for celebrating good food. It's also a way for residents to see more clearly where their food is coming from.

Sustainability of programming

The success and visibility of CfHF program activities will enable groups to leverage more resources and support beyond the pilot program. However, most CfHF activities have required grant funds so ongoing support will be a crucial need.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

PARTNER SNAPSHOT

Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation
buildOn
Center for Urban Pedagogy
City Harvest
City Meals on Wheels
Corbin Hill Food Project
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Creative Art Works
East New York Diagnostic and Treatment Center
East New York Farms!
Family Cook Productions
Food Bank for New York City
FoodCorps
Groundswell
GrowNYC
Just Food
Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy
Office of the Mayor's Food Policy Director
New York Common Food Pantry
NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
NYC Department of Parks and Recreation
NYC Economic Development Corporation
NYC Food and Fitness Partnership
NYC Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services
Office of the Director of Food Policy for NYC
Rebuilding Together New York
Teachers College at Columbia University - Program in Nutrition
United Way
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Wellness in the Schools
The Working World

APPENDIX 2

COMMUNITIES FOR HEALTHY FOOD EVALUATION COMPARISONS

Every evaluation study must ask the question “compared to what?” What comparisons do evaluators and program planners and managers make to judge the success or effectiveness of their intervention in achieving its specified goals?

In the CfHF food evaluation, four possible comparisons were considered:

- Comparison of variables of interest across multiple sites at Time 1, before or at start of program and Time 2 after program has been in operation for some time
- Comparison of each site to itself at Time 1 and Time 2, as above
- Comparison of intervention sites to comparison sites at Time 2 only
- Comparison of outcomes at Time 2 to targets specified in advance from the literature or through some other process

Each of these approaches has its strengths and weaknesses, summarized briefly below, and warrants consideration by investigators planning evaluations of interventions of community food interventions.

For this evaluation, the evaluator did not consider what many academics consider the gold standard for evaluation studies—a randomized trial of interventions in which intervention and comparison communities are randomly selected, then compared at the start and conclusion of the intervention. Such an evaluation design has many advantages. It provides confidence that observed changes are due to the intervention and not some other factors, and it provides some assurance that if replicated in similar communities, the program will also be effective. But as others have observed, randomized community trials are expensive, and many communities resent being subject to such experiments.

COMPARISON OF VARIABLES OF INTEREST ACROSS MULTIPLE SITES AT BEGINNING AND END OF INTERVENTION.

This comparison enables evaluators to assess changes between the start and end of the intervention and to compare findings across sites, proving insights into the effect of contextual variables. The hypothesis is that if changes are observed they are due to the intervention but if outside changes are also occurring their impact on outcomes cannot be assessed. For example, if a city creates a new city-wide corner grocery store intervention at the same time a program is being implemented in four neighborhoods in that city, evaluators will be unable to determine whether the changes in food purchasing they observed were due to the program they were evaluating or the citywide initiative. Careful documentation of outside efforts can minimize but not eliminate this weakness.

COMPARISON OF EACH SITE TO ITSELF AT BEGINNING AND END OF INTERVENTION

This approach uses each community at the start as a comparison group to itself at the end. Used at multiple sites, this approach provides more knowledge on how community and population characteristics at each site influence outcomes of interest. To ensure sample sizes large enough to make valid beginning/end comparisons, this approach requires more participants to achieve the needed statistical power to detect differences than the approach that lumps multiple sites at beginning and end.

COMPARISON OF INTERVENTION SITES TO COMPARISON SITES AT BEGINNING AND END OF INTERVENTIONS OR AT THE END ONLY

In this design, programs planners and evaluators selected communities similar to the intervention communities in all important respects. By collecting data on variables of interest at time 1 and 2, evaluators can have greater confidence than in the first option that the changes observed in the intervention community are due to the intervention and not, as in the above example, to the new city-wide grocery store intervention which also influenced the comparison communities in this design. In fact, collecting data on variables of interest at the end of the program only in an intervention and a comparison community provides more confidence than comparisons at a single site at two points in time.

COMPARISON OF OUTCOMES AT TIME 2 TO TARGETS SPECIFIED IN ADVANCE FROM THE LITERATURE OR THROUGH SOME OTHER PROCESS

Sometimes for organizational, political or cost reasons, a program will choose to specify in advance what differences they hope to achieve rather than measure variables of interest at start and finish. For example, a community food program may state it seeks to increase fruit and vegetable consumption by 30% in two years, a goal that will bring their consumption level to that of a neighboring better off neighborhood. The evaluation study will measure their success in achieving this goal.

APPENDIX 3

OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF EVALUATION METHODS FOR COMMUNITIES FOR HEALTHY FOOD

Method (Level of interest)	Description	Strengths	Weaknesses	Comparative Cost
Resident surveys (Individual and family, Community)	Surveys of a sample of households in CDC catchment area to assess perceptions of local food environments; self-reported dietary, food and food preparation behaviors and attitudes; self-reported health status and participation in CDC, community and CfHF activities.	Provides baseline and follow-up assessment of resident views; allows portrait of diversity of resident beliefs; can use standardized measure to compare with other populations	Obtaining representative sample expensive; imposes time burden on residents; labor intensive	High
Observations of food environments (Community)	Comprehensive audit of food environment in CDC catchment areas; includes direct observations and use of commercial databases to document the types of food outlets in each neighborhoods and assessments of types and quality of local food outlets.	Can use standardized measures to compare with other areas; allows assessment of changes in food environment over time	Does not measure changes outside catchment area; provides limited information on quality or price	Low
Interviews with CDC and partner staff (Organization and Partnership)	interview up to five staff members (e.g., executive director, manager of food project, community healthy food advocate, staff of partner organizations involved in CfHF) three times, in late 2013, June 2014 and November 2015 to assess their perceptions of program's implementation, achievements and obstacles, and participation in CfHF activities.	Includes voices of those most knowledgeable about program implementation; provides qualitative assessment of implementation and impact; allows evaluators to explore program issues as they emerge	Some respondents may fear making critical or negative comments; high staff turnover limits knowledge of some respondents	Medium

Method <i>(Level of interest)</i>	Description	Strengths	Weaknesses	Comparative Cost
Observations of CfHF activities <i>(Organization and Partnership)</i>	Observations of CfHF activities, using a standardized assessment tool to document activities, levels of participation, topics discussed and other characteristics of events or activities.	Provides an independent and structured assessment of program implementation; provides insights on implementation across sites	Observer may bias event	Low
Resident focus groups <i>(Individual, Organization, Community)</i>	Structured discussions with residents with interactions with CfHF activities to assess their perceptions of activities and the larger community food environment.	Allows residents to interact to define social impact of CfHF and to assess changes in norms; allows qualitative exploration of survey findings	Participants in focus groups may not represent community or all participants in CfHF	Medium
Review of program documents <i>(All)</i>	Compilation of documents related to CfHF including initial proposals, flyers, posters, presentations, reports, and other materials to be used for a thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and questions and to create a timeline of project activities.	Provides historical record of development and implementation of program and enables cross-site comparison of themes and priorities	Limited ability to assess accuracy of documents or to identify themes across heterogenous records	Low
Meeting with LISC NYC and CfHF staff <i>(All)</i>	Discussions with CDC and LISC NYC staff to discuss evaluation progress, problems and preliminary findings; elicit feedback and interpretation and plan upcoming evaluation activities.	Enables LISC NYC and CDC staff to interpret findings and shape evaluation questions and to correct evaluator biases or mistakes	Presentation of evaluation findings may alter implementation (a strength and weakness); staff may be disappointed in preliminary findings	Low

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

Communities for Healthy Food was developed by



LISC NYC

With residents and partners, Local Initiatives Support Corporation forges resilient and inclusive communities of opportunity across America – great places to live, work, visit, do business and raise families. The local New York City program, LISC NYC, has invested over \$2.7 billion, leveraging an additional \$6 billion in low-income communities. This has resulted in over 38,000 affordable homes built and preserved as well as 1.8 million square feet of retail and community space created. Additionally, LISC NYC builds the capacity of CDCs to undertake work in the following areas: integration of green and energy-efficient measures into affordable housing; healthy food access; and economic development. Our CDC partners in turn continue serving as valuable stewards of affordable housing and social services for low and moderate income families in New York City.

Funded by



THE LAURIE M. TISCH ILLUMINATION FUND

The Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund (LMTIF) is a New York City-based foundation that strives to improve access and opportunity for all New Yorkers. Founded in 2007 by philanthropist Laurie M. Tisch, the Illumination Fund plays an active role in supporting innovative approaches to the arts and arts education, healthy food and health disparities, and civic service in order to foster healthy and vibrant communities.

Evaluated by



CUNY URBAN FOOD POLICY INSTITUTE

The CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute provides evidence to help solve urban food problems. Based at the City University of New York Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy, the Institute evaluates food related programs and policies; analyzes the impact of food and other policies on diet, health and food security; and convenes policy makers, advocates and community leaders to develop innovative solutions to equitable access to healthy food in New York and other cities. The Institute brings the expertise and passion of CUNY's faculty and students to assist communities, government and civil society groups to create healthier urban food environments.

Key Community Partners



BANANA KELLY COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, INC.

Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association, Inc. is a non-profit community development corporation located in the South Bronx. Our mission is to contribute to a revitalized, safe and economically vibrant South Bronx. They accomplish this through the development and management of affordable housing and a combination of social services, community organizing, and advocacy. Annually, they provide direct services to over 5,000 residents and support services to the community at large. Banana Kelly owns and operates 49 multifamily buildings comprising approximately 1,240 units and is committed to maintaining rents at levels that are truly affordable for the local community.



CYPRESS HILLS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation (CHLDC) is a 35-year-old community development organization located in the Cypress Hills neighborhood of East New York, Brooklyn. With community residents leading the way, the mission of CHLDC is to build a strong, sustainable Cypress Hills and East New York, where youth and adults achieve educational and economic success, secure affordable housing and develop leadership skills to transform their lives and community. They serve over 10,000 residents each year through a broad array of programs and services, including affordable housing development, workforce development, adult education, afterschool and summer programming for young people, financial literacy and foreclosure prevention counseling, college access and college persistence services, community organizing for tenants and students, and Cypress Hills Verde, which promotes healthy food access and other efforts to make the neighborhood green and sustainable. Together, our programs strengthen the area's physical and economic infrastructure, provide quality educational and social services, and foster local leaders.



NEW SETTLEMENT APARTMENTS

New Settlement Apartments is a 28 year old settlement house based in the Mt. Eden community of the Southwest Bronx, with a demonstrated commitment to increasing preparedness and access to safe and affordable housing, high-quality public and post-secondary education, expanding opportunities for healthy and active living, and fair and sustainable employment. New Settlement Apartments began in 1989 with the acquisition and renovation of abandoned buildings to create affordable homes for more than 3,500 people, 30% of whom are formerly homeless. Recognizing that a community is not made simply of bricks and mortar, New Settlement launched a range of community-based services in health, education, counseling and workforce development. New Settlement has become a thriving community with services that provide important resources to the neighborhood's youth and families. Grounded in their commitment to affordable housing and a thriving neighborhood, they collaborate with community residents and develop partnerships to create services and opportunities that celebrate the inherent dignity and potential of individuals and families.



NORTHEAST BROOKLYN HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

NEBHDCo's mission is the preservation, development and management of affordable housing and homeownership opportunities; community and economic development initiatives and human services that effect social change in Central Brooklyn. As a leading affordable housing developer in Central Brooklyn since 1985, NEBHDCo has planned, joint-ventured, and developed 3215 housing units of which 1097 are owned by the organization, as well as nearly 52,000 square feet of commercial space throughout the Central Brooklyn community. Their Community Programs Department works across two broad areas:

Healthy Food and Living area includes the Golden Harvest Client-Choice Food Pantry, increasing availability of and education about fresh produce. Tenant and Community Supports area includes: Benefits, employment, and educational referrals and SNAP, SCRIE and virtual tax prep offered directly.



WEST HARLEM GROUP ASSISTANCE

West Harlem Group Assistance, Inc. (WHGA), a community development corporation, was established more than 45 years ago to revitalize West and Central Harlem. WHGA has developed 1,693 units of affordable housing and owns 43,676 square feet of commercial space. WHGA also manages housing, commercial and community spaces, and delivers an array of social and economic development programs and services. The organization's work has become even more crucial as the area, once riddled with dilapidated and abandoned buildings is experiencing rapid change and gentrification. WHGA seeks to quell the negative impacts of gentrification on their low to moderate income residents.





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