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# Nourishing Communities

A Case for Investing in Place-Based  
Urban Food Systems

WHITE  
PAPER

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# Introduction

Across the United States, households are struggling with food insecurity. In response, Greater Twin Cities United Way (GTCUW) launched an innovative grantmaking strategy designed to foster a healthy and equitable community food system in one of the most food insecure neighborhoods in the Twin Cities metropolitan region. As Minnesota's largest non-governmental social services funder connecting area residents to needed resources, GTCUW recognized that hunger and food insecurity are key factors in inhibiting the economic and social potential of individuals, families, and communities. With a desire to build on the unique efforts of those committed to food systems work in the Twin Cities, GTCUW, in partnership with the General Mills Foundation, piloted an innovative, multifaceted grant program designed to strengthen the holistic and complex nature of local community food systems. This grant program deployed a place-based approach to community and economic development with the aim of reducing food insecurity through improving food access, food affordability, and food justice for a Minneapolis neighborhood facing systemic food security issues.



CREDIT: Minnesota Food Charter

This white paper builds the case for investing in local food systems, provides a brief overview of food insecurity in the United States, details why and how GTCUW structured a grant program to support food systems work, and shares best practices and considerations for effectively supporting grantees and community. GTCUW hopes that it will serve as a reference point for local United Ways and other philanthropic and nonprofit organizations interested in supporting and investing in community food systems.

## WHAT IS FOOD INSECURITY?



Buying fewer groceries so you can pay rent



Eating less food than needed



Going without so that your kids can eat



Lacking nutritious foods



Worrying that you won't have enough food

## FOOD INSECURITY IN THE UNITED STATES AFFECTS:

1 in 8 individuals

1 in 6 children

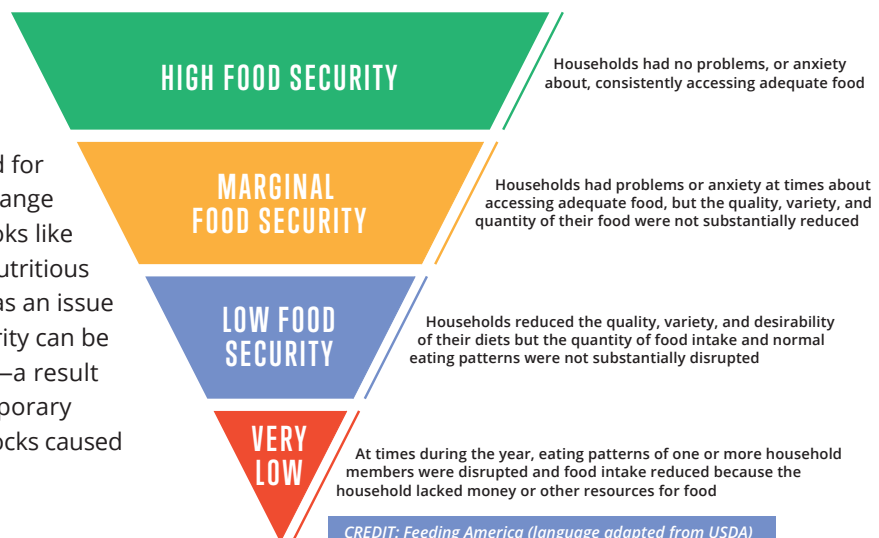
40 Million Americans

# The changing and pervasive nature of hunger and food insecurity

Food insecurity is a persistent problem that affects households in all corners of the United States. Research on hunger has become much more nuanced and is now defined and examined as an understanding of individual or household level food security—defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as, “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.”<sup>1,2</sup>

## WHAT DOES FOOD INSECURITY LOOK LIKE?

While food insecurity generally means not having enough food for every meal, it encompasses a range of experiences. For some, it looks like lack of access to healthy and nutritious foods; for others, it manifests as an issue of affordability.<sup>3,4</sup> Food insecurity can be seasonal, regular, or episodic—a result of fluctuations in income, temporary unemployment, or financial shocks caused by illness or other events.<sup>5,6</sup>



# Setting the context: Understanding food insecurity and food systems

For decades, much of the movement to address hunger and food insecurity revolved around trying to meet the immediate needs of individuals and families, often through the distribution of food via emergency food programs like food banks, congregate dining, food shelves and other emergency food services. While emergency food programs are a crucial and necessary part of the anti-hunger equation, many continue to grow in scale and capacity as needs and access increase; this pattern of growth is becoming increasingly concerning.<sup>7</sup> Emergency food programs do meet the critical and short-term immediate need for food. However, they are often limited in their capacity to do long-term work that addresses the root causes of hunger or the determinants of food insecurity. Many would argue that emergency food programs are a response designed to address a symptom but are not a cure.<sup>8</sup>

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS FOR FOOD INSECURITY

The social determinants of health and the social ecological model of health were used by GTCUW as conceptual frameworks for understanding root causes of food insecurity and proved instructive when brainstorming effective solution design.<sup>9</sup>

### ***The Social Determinants of Health***

A significant consequence of food insecurity is its impact on individual and community health. The social

determinants of health (SDoH) offer a useful framework for understanding individual and community health and well-being. The SDoH model shifts the burden of negative health outcomes away from the individual and considers the environment and conditions in which an individual is born, lives, works, and plays.<sup>10</sup> Research on SDoH has shown that health-related behaviors, socioeconomic factors, and environmental factors can account for up to 80-90 percent of health outcomes.<sup>11,12</sup>

### SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

ECONOMIC STABILITY	NEIGHBORHOOD + PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	EDUCATION	FOOD	COMMUNITY + SOCIAL CONTEXT	HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
Employment Income Expenses Debt Medical Bills	Housing Transportation Safety Parks Playgrounds Walkability Zip code/ geography	Literacy Language Early childhood education Vocational Training Higher Education	Hunger Access to healthy options	Social Integration Support Systems Community Engagement Discrimination Stress	Health Coverage Provider availability Provider linguistic + cultural competency Quality of care
HEALTH OUTCOMES					
Mortality   Morbidity   Life expectancy   Health Care Expenditures   Health Status   Functional Limitations					

The SDoH model provides a foundational understanding of how food insecurity impacts health outcomes and why investments in upstream solutions would improve health outcomes and minimize costs:<sup>13</sup>

- *Neighborhoods with low-income residents are less likely to have resources that promote health, including full-service grocery stores<sup>14</sup>*
- *Food insecurity increases the likelihood that individuals will experience chronic diseases during their lifetimes<sup>15</sup>*
- *The annual costs of hunger and food insecurity to the nation's economy, accounting for direct and indirect costs, are estimated at around \$160 billion<sup>16</sup>*

### **Social Ecological Model of Health**

The social ecological model of health fosters understanding for how personal and societal environments shape behaviors. Popularized by the Centers for Disease Control as a violence prevention strategy, it can be used more broadly in designing and implementing interventions for catalyzing various forms of social change. This framework considers how health behaviors are shaped across five levels:

- **INDIVIDUAL** – *the qualities of an individual that influence behavior change*
- **INTERPERSONAL** – *the social networks that influence behavior change*
- **COMMUNITY** – *the relationships within a community that influence behavior change*
- **ORGANIZATIONAL** – *the institutions that affect the kinds of services that are available to an individual and influence behavior change*
- **POLICY** – *the policies that shape an environment and influence behavior change<sup>17</sup>*

Interventions are stronger when they consider relevant factors across all levels. GTCUW used the social ecological model to grasp how food insecurity manifests for individuals and households in the context of interpersonal, community, organizational, and policy environments within North Minneapolis. This then allowed GTCUW to design a grantmaking strategy aimed at addressing the impact of food insecurity across all levels.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS FOR HEALTHY FOOD SYSTEMS**

For the purposes of grantmaking program design, GTCUW considered numerous definitions and models of “food systems” to inform the approach, focusing on local and healthy food systems. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) identifies five components of a local food system: land conservation; production; processing; aggregation and distribution; and markets and consumers.<sup>18</sup> Prior work by the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) defined food systems as “an environment in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution, and consumption are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, and social and nutritional health of a particular place.” They characterized healthy food systems as sustainable, just, and democratic, which are achieved through building community voice and capacity for change.

*Community food systems are “a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice.”<sup>20</sup>*

# Why United Way?

As one of the nation's largest networks of international grantmakers, United Way and its local affiliates provide significant investments and grants for vulnerable communities and populations of children and families at the highest risk for food insecurity. Furthermore, local United Ways have convening experience, in-house content expertise, and established partnerships with communities. Coordinating a grantmaking program through local United Ways therefore provides an ideal vehicle for addressing food insecurity from a community-based approach.

Based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Greater Twin Cities United Way (GTCUW) serves a nine-county metropolitan area of approximately four million people. GTCUW galvanizes community by building pathways to prosperity and equity for all, creating conditions for lasting change through a set of broad, interconnected strategies. These strategies include investing in nonprofit programs, bridging critical gaps, engaging stakeholders across sectors to build awareness, fostering collaboration, and shaping systems and policies to strengthen community. GTCUW focuses on education, job creation, and safety net services—key avenues for carving pathways out of poverty.

## EVOLVING TO MEET NEW CHALLENGES

Founded in 1915, GTCUW has invested in the Twin Cities metropolitan area for over a century. While hunger relief has been a long-time focus, the changing nature of food insecurity spurred a recalibration of its funding strategy to include comprehensive programming that supports community food security and food systems development. In partnership with the General Mills Foundation, GTCUW adopted an additional strategy within its food security portfolio, which presumes that investments in food insecurity efforts should be holistic and include: 1) preventative, upstream approaches that address food insecurity and 2) an explicit focus on equity. GTCUW's grantmaking strategies are tailored to account for the racial and economic disparities that exist across demographic groups.

***GTCUW'S adjustment to its food security-oriented grantmaking strategy reflects a larger organizational shift. In fall 2018, GTCUW announced a new approach to community building, driven by a vision of communities where all can thrive, regardless of income, race, or place.***

# Prioritizing need: Choosing where to invest

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Minnesota has lower food insecurity than the national average (9.5 percent compared to 12 percent respectively), but there are distinct geographic pockets where the prevalence of food-insecure households sits substantially above this average. GTCUW prioritized these pockets as it considered where and how to invest its grantmaking resources.<sup>21</sup>

North Minneapolis, which flanks the west bank of the Mississippi River in the northwest corner of the city, is one such food insecure area, facing many of the same food affordability and access challenges visible in communities across the country. A patchwork of 14 neighborhoods<sup>22</sup> and home to over 40,000 residents, most of whom are people of color,<sup>23</sup> the poverty rate of the area has historically ranked higher than most other

regions of the metro area and state. Approximately 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line.<sup>24</sup>

These sobering statistics have been covered by local and national media with a critical eye.<sup>25</sup> Despite these issues, North Minneapolis residents have worked together to advance justice and equity via the development of their community's food supply.

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## A BRIEF HISTORY OF LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS EFFORTS

In the last decade, more people, organizations, and partnerships have rallied to build a better food system in North Minneapolis. In 2008, after years of informal organizing, a community-based coalition, Northside Fresh Coalition, was launched by Northpoint Health and Wellness, a longstanding health and social services clinic. Northside Fresh Coalition is now supported by Appetite for Change, a rapidly growing food systems-focused community development organization, and includes a network of over 60 community organizations and businesses.<sup>26</sup>

Northside Fresh promotes food policy, entrepreneurship, sustainability, leadership development, and more. This dynamic coalition has also made significant progress in addressing challenges caused by poverty, institutional disinvestment, racism, and inequities in education and the community's health infrastructure through its food systems-focused work.

Northside Fresh Coalition is emblematic of a similar growth in activity and innovation across the city and state.

The City of Minneapolis has provided local leadership and served as a national exemplar through food systems-oriented municipal initiatives and a food policy council, Homegrown Minneapolis.<sup>27</sup> These efforts are intended to promote healthy foods throughout the community and implement policies that improve healthy food access for all. At the state level, Minnesota launched an intensive public process in 2013 to develop a statewide food charter, as have several other states.<sup>28</sup> Developed from the engagement of thousands of residents, the Minnesota Food Charter offers proven policy and systems strategies for policymakers and community leaders and is designed to ensure all Minnesotans have equal access to affordable, safe, and healthy food regardless of where they live.<sup>29</sup>



# Essential ingredients for grant program success

In designing its grant program, GTCUW's food security team reflected upon the history and progress of food systems and other important work in North Minneapolis. They recognized past support and the ongoing need for investment in existing community food systems activity. Ensuring a new grantmaking initiative would complement and strengthen (rather than duplicate) existing work was fundamental to program design.

Prior to launching the grant program, GTCUW met with key stakeholders, leaders, and community members involved in North Minneapolis's food movement to obtain:

- *Perspective on the history, successes, challenges, and lessons learned from North Minneapolis' food system development efforts*
- *Opportunities to amplify and catalyze aspirations of North Minneapolis food systems leaders*
- *Deeper understanding of existing assets, resource gaps, and strategic opportunities for further investment*
- *Diverse and direct engagement with a network of key stakeholders to inform desired grant program components, outcomes, and priorities*

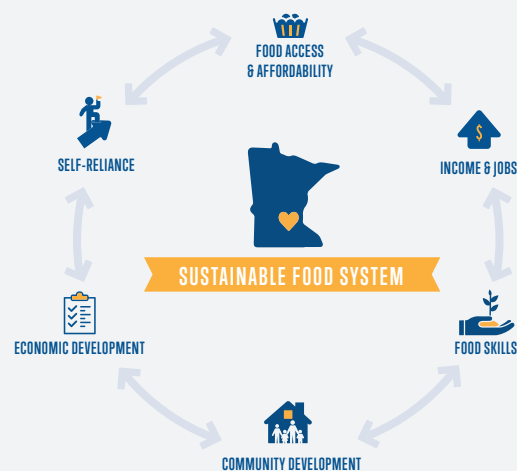
With community input, GTCUW identified a set of outcomes that the grantmaking initiative would facilitate: food access and affordability; income and jobs; food skills; self-reliance; and community and economic development.

## Food systems grantmaking must:

- *Establish a clear understanding of the present status of a community's food system*
- *Prioritize community input and buy-in during development and implementation of the program*

### DESIGN PRINCIPLES OF A FOOD SYSTEMS-FOCUSED GRANT PROGRAM

As a result of background research and community input, GTCUW identified a series of design principles to inform the grant program's structure. The following sections offer an in depth discussion of each design principle, including best practices and considerations for how they can be applied to the design and execution of a food systems-focused grant program.



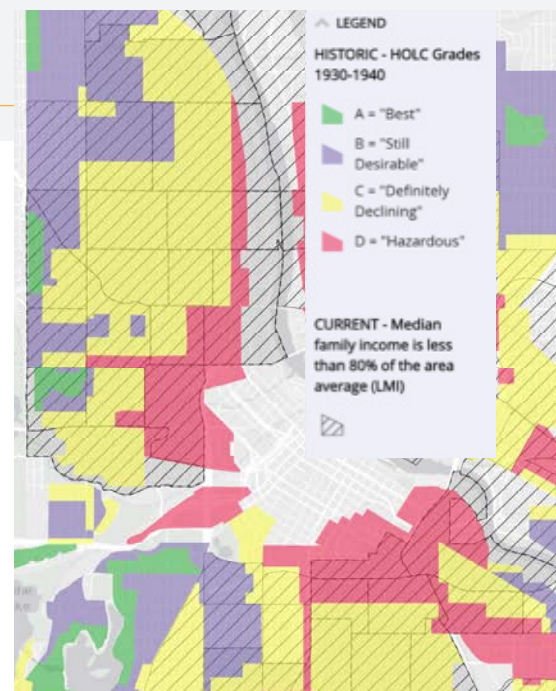
# Why grantmaking must be place-based and community-centric

The health and economic outcomes of individuals and communities vary drastically from one ZIP code to another. An understanding of this reality is instrumental to grasping the daily realities of communities experiencing food insecurity. For GTCUW, the need for place-based solutions emerged from the recognition that health and economic outcomes are interwoven with food-related issues, and that history has played a significant role in shaping those outcomes.

## THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF PLACE

It is impossible to talk about food insecurity and place without talking about racism and white supremacy. Slavery, Jim Crow laws, and discriminatory federal policies that have persisted through the 20th and 21st centuries have resulted in disproportionate outcomes and challenges for people of color. The Federal Housing Administration's practice of using color-coded maps developed by the Home Owners Loan Corporation in the mid-1930s—a practice now commonly known as “redlining”—was a defining moment in history that shaped much of the variances we see in health and economic outcomes across neighborhoods.<sup>30</sup> Redlining effectively shut African-Americans and other marginalized racial groups out of neighborhoods, forced segregation, and prevented many families of color from purchasing homes.<sup>31</sup> In Minneapolis, the effects of redlining are still visible. In fact, Minneapolis has one of the highest homeownership gaps by race in the country. In 2015, 23 percent of black households in Minneapolis owned a home, compared to 75 percent of white households.<sup>32</sup> This context is crucial to the development of solutions—if racism and white supremacy were upheld by policies, it is important to consider how policies can and should be developed to reverse their initial intent and reduce the resulting disparities.

*The color-coded maps like the one pictured were developed by the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), a federal agency that has since been terminated. HOLC graded neighborhoods by racial and ethnic composition. Featured here is a snapshot of North Minneapolis and its corresponding gradings in 1930-1940.*



Grades/Minority	White	Minority
A Best	97.47%	2.53%
B Desirable	82.35%	17.65%
C Declining	49.93%	50.07%
D Hazardous	47.13%	52.87%

## Economic predictors and outcomes

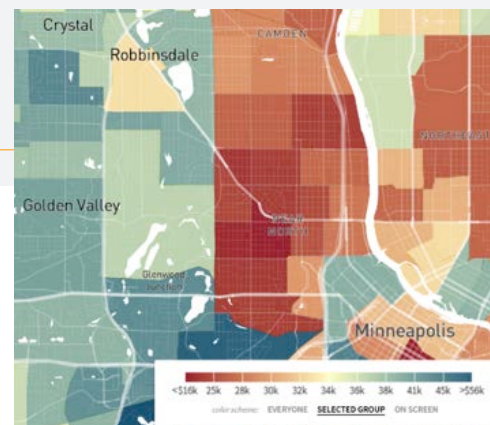
ZIP codes also signify differences in the educational and employment opportunities that enable or inhibit social and economic mobility. Research reveals that a childhood ZIP code predicts lifelong economic outcomes. For a low-income family, moving a child from a neighborhood with below-average opportunity for upward mobility to one with above-average upward mobility can increase lifetime earnings by \$20,000. In neighborhoods across North Minneapolis, median income outcomes for children range from \$20-30,000, significantly less than neighboring communities in the suburbs of Golden Valley or Brooklyn Center, which range up to \$39,000.<sup>33</sup>

## Why place-based strategies are key to creating viable solutions

Significant economic and health disparities across geographies are also reflected in disparities among communities' food environments. ZIP codes can also be a predictor for the adequacy or inadequacy for healthy food access and the relative quality of the community's food supply.<sup>34</sup> As research suggests, where you live—the economic environment, social environment, physical environment, and service environment—has a strong influence on how you live.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, every ZIP code or neighborhood is unique in its history, assets, environment, and challenges. It's important to tailor solutions that account for these aspects. Place-based strategies do just that.

Community engagement is also an essential component of an effective place-based approach.<sup>36</sup> Locally focused strategies are strengthened when communities are engaged and can inform, influence, and own the solution to the problem. By doing so, solutions are well-suited to address problems because they are developed by those with intimate knowledge of local challenges, needs, and opportunities. GTCUW designed its grantmaking program with feedback from the community, and accommodated ongoing community input throughout the execution of the program.

*ZIP codes predict the economic, health, and social outcomes; solutions need to be tailored to fit the unique characteristics of specific localities.*



# Defining outcomes and developing an evaluation strategy

Guided by community priorities, GTCUW identified specific program outcomes that the grant program would seek to support and facilitate: food access and affordability, income and jobs, food skills, self-reliance, and community and economic development. Organizations focused on the following goals received grant support to advance program outcomes in North Minneapolis:

- 1 **BETTER ACCESS:** Ensuring a diverse variety of healthy and culturally appropriate foods, in close proximity to where residents work, live, learn, and play
- 2 **GREATER AFFORDABILITY:** Offering adequate availability of affordable, nutritious foods needed to sustain a healthy lifestyle
- 3 **IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:** Building know-how for healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate meal preparation
- 4 **ENHANCED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY:** Growing income and job-related skills within the food systems sector
- 5 **STRENGTHENED SELF-RELIANCE:** Growing the ability of residents and the community to provide for their own food needs
- 6 **THRIVING COMMUNITY PROSPERITY:** Advancing economic and community development goals for North Minneapolis via a healthy, equitable, and food-secure community<sup>37</sup>

GTCUW retained a third-party evaluation team to assess program outcomes throughout the grant cycle. The evaluation team worked with grantees to identify their work within each outcome area and track progress across all outcome areas.

In developing a grant program to support community food systems, GTCUW recommends collaborating with community members to both identify desired program objectives and outcomes and develop appropriate evaluation models to measure progress and impact. (This concept will be revisited in the section on capacity building.)



# Understanding the existing food system and influence on grantmaking strategy

To effect real change, the grant program had to be designed to support the vitality and development of North Minneapolis' food system. Past research identifying issues, components, assets, and needs of North Minneapolis's food system, combined with the knowledge and active efforts of community members and participating grantee organizations, helped clarify and establish collective knowledge about needed outcomes and strategies to strengthen the community's food system.

A key challenge in undertaking food systems development is striking an effective balance between supporting diverse components of the system and responding to individual needs of each component. Food systems are multi-faceted and extend across multiple sectors and scales.<sup>38</sup> Strategic clarity about how best to navigate within and across domains of the food system is critical to program success. Furthermore, variation in definitions for the food system abound, across scales (from local to global) and across sectors (from production to the post-consumer waste stream).<sup>39</sup>

GTCUW's grantmaking approach focused on a locally scaled food system—including production, processing, and distribution, as well as getting, preparing, consuming, and disposing of food. The grantmaking approach had to encompass these components of the community's food system in North Minneapolis to achieve their stated outcomes for the initiative.

This understanding of North Minneapolis's food system guided the development of the grant program's Request for Proposals (RFP). Built in response to feedback provided by community leaders, applicants could request support

for specific priorities identified by the community. This approach decreased competition and encouraged specialization among grantees, strengthening their respective skills and capacity. The grantmaking strategy thereby ensured that grantees did not pitch or attempt projects that extended beyond their capacity or expertise.

Collecting community input during the development of the RFP also led GTCUW to test two new funding models. The community expressed a desire to have more autonomy in determining how funds would be invested. In response, GTCUW funded a pilot program via a local nonprofit to regrant to smaller projects within the community.

The second tested funding model expanded the purview of the line items that could be funded by the grant. While GTCUW has traditionally not funded infrastructure, conversations with leaders within the North Minneapolis food system revealed an explicit need for grant dollars that could be used to purchase property. In response, GTCUW made it possible for organizations to apply for infrastructure-specific funding.

## THE FOOD SYSTEM



CREDIT: MN Food Charter

# Designating resources for capacity building

Philosophies, focus, definitions, strategies, and approaches for capacity building abound.<sup>40</sup> Components of capacity building can include consulting and technical assistance in planning, fundraising, communications, technology, evaluation, and other areas.<sup>41</sup> Grantmakers support a broad array of capacity building activities, designed to maximize philanthropic support and increase the likelihood that nonprofits will be successful.<sup>42</sup>

Despite varying definitions for capacity building, one survey reports over 90 percent of foundations indicate that capacity building is somewhat important or very important to their mission.<sup>43</sup> Why? Because capacity building is fundamental to improving organizational effectiveness.<sup>44</sup> There are many different approaches funders can take to fund capacity building—from grants and awards to general operating support to peer-learning networks.

The Ford Foundation's BUILD program is a recent example of significant capacity-building funding. Operating support granted to hundreds of social justice organizations offered the Foundation and its grantees increased flexibility, freeing them from the burden associated with reapplying for year-to-year grants.<sup>45</sup>

## STRATEGIES FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING GRANTMAKING

GTCUW determined that bundling capacity building grants into the wider grant program would be an effective way to supplement grantee projects. Doing so would provide additional expertise and knowledge that would enable programs and services to be more impactful and efficient. The general approach to capacity building was driven by a combination of what grantees identified as important and what GTCUW learned from the field. Outlined here are recommendations for capacity-building techniques to support food systems work and characteristics GTCUW prioritized in building the grant program.

***“Capacity building is anything that helps a nonprofit perform at its peak.”***

**Grantmakers for Effective Organizations**

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## PRIORITIZING CROSS-COLLABORATION AND PEER LEARNING

Cross-collaboration and peer learning – opportunities that allow grantmakers, nonprofits, and other partner organizations to align ideas and resources, and share knowledge for the purposes of achieving a specific end – are vital to food systems work. Because food systems involve a diverse array of stakeholders, priority should be given to building channels and relationships that encourage strategizing and learning between all involved. This includes grantmakers learning from grantees, grantees learning from grantmakers, grantees learning from grantees, and both learning from external players as well. When creating an environment that enables cross-collaboration and peer learning, it is important to keep the following in mind:

- *The role grantmakers play in collaboration should be driven and determined by what resources they are best able to offer to grantees<sup>46</sup>*
- *Trust is essential; it comes from building genuine relationships—listening, compromising—with grantees and other stakeholders<sup>47</sup>*
- *Peer learning is vital.<sup>48</sup> Foundations observe more effective learning when grantees have the ability to work within peer groups and drive some or all of the learning agenda<sup>49</sup>*

## CASTING A WIDE NET

Community focused initiatives can benefit from cross-collaboration and peer learning. Capacity building programs should be open to relevant individuals within an organization and extend beyond leadership.<sup>50</sup> Simply establishing a network and allowing grantees to engage within that network can also encourage innovation and improve communication between all involved.<sup>51</sup>

## BEING RESPONSIVE AND FLEXIBLE

Striking a balance of how prescriptive or reactive to be when providing capacity building support is challenging.<sup>52</sup> However, allowing room for change and adjustments in the learning agenda and/or goals of capacity building opportunities can have long-term payoffs. Adaptive capacity—the ability to assess, monitor, respond to, and create internal and external changes—is key to nonprofit stability.<sup>53</sup> The same is true for the design and execution of capacity building initiatives.

## LEVERAGING OUTSIDE EXPERTISE

Engaging consultants and outside expertise is a productive and effective way to address grantee capacity building needs when internal resources are limited or do not reflect the specific content expertise required to meet grantmaker or grantee capacity building needs.<sup>54</sup> Including third-party organizations in the work, especially when doing program assessments or evaluation, can also ensure transparency, as well as maintain trust and buy-in from grantees.

GTCUW grantees identified the need for evaluation and communications support as priorities for capacity building assistance. They hoped to receive throughout the grant cycle. GTCUW did not have the capacity internally to provide this assistance. Funding was thus specifically allocated to hire two consultants—an evaluation firm and a strategic services firm providing support at the intersection of food, health, and agriculture—to work with grantees over the course of the grant cycle.

# Conclusion

Just as hunger, food insecurity, and food systems are complex, so too are the strategies required to creatively, constructively, and effectively engage them. Through a comprehensive grantmaking initiative, GTCUW crafted new approaches to funding food systems development, while incubating needed organizational innovation for their own grantmaking. Conceptual frameworks relating to food insecurity and hunger in the United States, the public health dimensions of these issues, and the role and complexity of community food systems in fostering food security all informed GTCUW's theory of change.

Key insights from this effort include:

- *Food insecurity is widespread and variable. It is different across households, is interwoven in the mental and physical health of individuals and their families, and is often a product of place.*
- *The complex nature of food insecurity demands multi-faceted solutions, grounded in place-based approaches to foster community and economic development.*
- *Grantmakers must consider the diversity of the nonprofits doing food systems work and where they fit within the food system, tailoring grants to match the unique needs of organizations.*
- *Funders should prioritize grantee learning and development as part of their investment in a funding initiative, using multiple strategies and resources for grantee support. Capacity building and technical assistance will ensure long-term returns and growth for all organizations in the grant program.*
- *The community and the grantees are partners in this work. Grantmakers must be willing to do the work, relinquish control where necessary, and have difficult conversations. Partnerships must be built on trust and compromise—especially if the grant program prioritizes cross-collaboration and peer learning.*

Constructing a grant program centered on place-based strategies, defined outcomes, an understanding of the components of food systems, and capacity building enabled GTCUW to effectively support its grantees. Over the course of the grant cycle, progress was achieved across all outcome areas. The discovery process for learning how to best support community food systems is ongoing, and the long-term impact of the strategies outlined in this white paper are yet to be fully evaluated and defined. As this work progresses, GTCUW looks forward to continuing to learn from involved communities, other local United Ways, and the wider network of philanthropic and nonprofit organizations dedicated to strengthening community food systems.



# Acknowledgments

The strategies and outcomes described in this report are a result of shared efforts of organizations and stakeholders working to strengthen North Minneapolis' community food system. Full Lives grantees and Greater Twin Cities United Way (GTCUW) would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their involvement and support in the production of this publication:

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## **About Greater Twin Cities United Way**

Greater Twin Cities United Way (GTCUW) believes that the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area will reach its full potential when everyone participates. GTCUW fuels lasting change toward this aim, by advancing equity and uniting people for social good. By using its position to create a community that benefits everyone, GTCUW fosters opportunities for all people through collaboration with partner agencies, corporations, community leaders, and people like you.

## END NOTES

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