

Healthy Food for Denver's Kids — Year 1

Supporting Healthy Environments

The [Healthy Food for Denver's Kids \(HFDK\)](#) Initiative established a fund supporting healthy food and food-based education for Denver's youth (during August 1, 2020 - July 31, 2021). HFDK's long-term vision is that all Denver children and youth ages 18 and under have reliable access to healthy, nutritious food and food education that helps them grow, learn, and thrive for life.

Gardening & Farming

Over the course of its first year, HFDK supported the establishment of nearly 500 new growing sites. Gardening activities were seasonal, with participants prepping gardens in the spring and harvesting in the fall. These new growing sites were located in neighborhoods with higher levels of food insecurity and served as local food sources available to communities as well as educational environments for youth and families.

Over 21,000 pounds of food were harvested from gardens, farms, and greenhouses, yielding \$54,619 worth of produce supported by HFDK funds. This food was then distributed in Community Supported Agriculture boxes; food pantries; community feeding programs; local children and families; and farmers markets to be sold, provided for free, or bought through a pay-what-you-can model.

Projects included school gardens, hydroponic classrooms, a large-scale greenhouse for use by the entire Denver school district, urban farms, and classes — some bilingual — on gardening and food systems.

Stedman Elementary reported having a successful community clean-up day in April 2021 to prepare the community garden for planting, which had not been utilized in two years.

The classrooms started seeds so that they can be transplanted by the end of the school year.

New Growing Sites and Gardens

In HFDK's first year, seven grantees established 490 new growing sites — gardens, greenhouses, and farms — in 35 schools, 57 community centers or nonprofits, 396 residential backyards, and two in other places throughout the City of Denver. Growing sites were established across the city of Denver in the ZIP codes of 80204, 80205, 80207, 80216, 80219, 80223, 80226, 80236, 80239, and 80249. These growing sites overlap largely with the areas of Denver that have higher [At-Risk Ranks](#).

Healthy Food for Denver's Kids supports healthy environments with new growing sites and gardens, hydroponic classrooms, and greenhouses to educate on food systems and distribute food.



Year 1 Grantees

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Denver Urban Gardens distributed seeds and seedlings to community members as part of the Grow-a-Garden program. South High School Food Pantry partnered with Grow Local Colorado to create a student-run community garden at a local high school.

They also partnered with other organizations (Ekar Farms, The Table Public House, and Slow Food Denver) to produce seedling packets for families to create and/or supplement their own vegetable gardens.

Denver Public Schools (DPS) broke ground this past year on its one-acre greenhouse project in the Marston Neighborhood. DPS will grow produce that will supply the salad bowl items for Denver students who participate in the school lunch program. When the greenhouse is financially and operationally sustainable, DPS will launch an urban agriculture Career and Technical Education Pathway for students and provide workforce development opportunities for students and adults.

Classes on Gardening and Food Systems

Many grantees conducted food education around production, farming, or gardening that often took place at growing sites. Gardens served as educational sites (and were often used in conjunction with a curriculum) for over 2,523 youth who interacted with the gardens.

The Urban Farm shared that it provided virtual programs to educate students/youth on growing methods (i.e, aquaponics, hydroponics, soil-based) and engaged youth in the installation, planting, and care of growing sites.

Eight grantees invested in equitable food education on farms and growing sites and were able to create and support 76 jobs, internships, and apprenticeships for youth. Additionally, \$124,204 was paid to youth staff to engage more meaningfully in the food system.

For questions, please contact: foodaccess@denvergov.org



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