

## Final Report

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Training Beginner Farmers for Chicago's Urban Agriculture Community</b>		
<b>Sponsoring Agency</b>	NIFA	<b>Project Status</b>	COMPLETE
<b>Funding Source</b>	Non Formula	<b>Reporting Frequency</b>	Final
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<b>Submitted By</b>	Angela Mason	<b>Date Submitted to NIFA</b>	01/29/2016

**Program Code:** BFRDP**Program Name:** Beginning Farmer and Rancher**Project Director**

Angela Mason

847-650-7304

amason@chicagobotanic.org

**Recipient Organization**

CHICAGO HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

1000 LAKE COOK RD

Glencoe, IL 600221168

DUNS No. 068477231

**Performing Department**

{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Co-Project Directors**

{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Departments**

{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Non-Technical Summary**

The Chicago Botanic Garden's Windy City Harvest (WCH) will lead a network of organizations in "Training Beginning Farmers for Chicago's Urban Agriculture Community," a Beginning Farmers and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) project. Through WCH's nine-month training, beginning farmers will earn a certificate in sustainable horticulture and urban agriculture from Daley College/Arturo Velasquez Institute (AVI) of the City Colleges of Chicago. WCH also operates a production and training garden with the Cook County Boot Camp, an alternative sentencing facility for young, non-violent male offenders. Increasingly, urban agriculture is seen as a promising part of the solution to problems facing food-insecure communities, such as Chicago's North Lawndale, a food desert community where 45% of households and more than half of children below age 18 live in poverty. The unemployment rate for 20 to 24 year olds is 60%, and 57% of the adult population is involved with the criminal justice system. Additionally, 46% of children are obese, 17% of newborns have low birth weight, and the infant mortality rate is 55% higher than the City as a whole. Urban agriculture responds to these conditions by providing meaningful employment, contributing to food security and healthy nutrition, and educating people about the value of sustainable food. Yet for urban agriculture to flourish, the number of beginning urban farmers and workers has to grow. WCH trains people to grow food on small urban farms and gives them experience in wholesale and retail marketing. Additional specialized certifications will be developed, responding to demand from local farmers for training in areas such as aquaponics and roof-top food gardening, as well as more advanced financial and business training for entrepreneurship. A new incubator program will offer land, infrastructure, and mentorships to beginning farmers. The project will be measured against the following outcomes: OBJECTIVE 1: Develop the skills of beginning farmers and skilled farm workers through formal training and internships in sustainable urban agriculture. An anticipated 1,106-1,364 people will gain increased skills and knowledge in urban agriculture; 130-155 will earn specialized certifications; and 36-48 will enter careers as beginning farmers. OBJECTIVE 2: Assist beginning urban farmers to overcome barriers, including access to land, access to capital and credit, and access to markets. WCH will certify 20-40 beginning farmers in urban agriculture entrepreneurship and five to ten beginning farmers will establish new businesses. The project will also establish six urban farm enterprise incubators. OBJECTIVE 3: Support the expansion of urban agriculture activities in the Chicago area, creating mentored jobs for beginning urban farmers and farm workers, while supplying fresh produce to food-insecure communities. During the three-year period, WCH will create six new food gardens and employ 12-18 beginning farmers as seasonal growers, as well as 51-69 hard-to-employ transitional workers in urban agriculture.

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**Accomplishments****Major goals of the project**

The project "Training Beginning Farmers for Chicago's Urban Agriculture Community" will contribute to the long-term goals of the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program (BFRDP) to enhance the sustainability of beginning farmers through education, training, mentoring and outreach programs that enhance self-employment in farming opportunities. In particular, the project teaches production and management strategies that enhance land stewardship through growing food safely and sustainably on vacant urban land; offers business management strategies that support the financial viability of beginning farmers; and engages beginning farmers through participatory learning in direct and wholesale marketing strategies. The lead partner is the Chicago Botanic Garden's Windy City Harvest (WCH), in partnership with the Cook County Sheriff's Boot Camp, an alternative sentencing facility for non-violent male offenders, and Daley College/Arturo Velasquez Institute, a campus of the City Colleges of Chicago. The partners will collaborate with Angelic Organic Learning Center, FarmedHere, City Farm, Midwest Foods and another Chicago Botanic Garden program, the Green Youth Farm (GYF), toward the following objectives: OBJECTIVE 1: Develop the skills of beginning farmers and skilled farm workers in the Chicago area through formal training and internships in sustainable urban agriculture. Measured by: 480-580 individuals gain skills in sustainable urban agriculture through weekend courses; 60 potential beginning farmers attend Angelic Organic's Farm Dreams workshop; 195-225 students 13-18 years of age gain skills in sustainable urban agriculture and are introduced to possible careers in urban agriculture and other green industries; 60-75 potential beginning farmers are recruited into WCH certificate program; 45-60 WCH students successfully complete nine-month training program; 180-240 Boot Camp residents complete garden training; 51-69 Boot Camp graduates receive paid transitional jobs. OBJECTIVE 2: Assist beginning urban farmers to overcome barriers to urban farming, including access to land, access to capital and credit, and access to markets. Measured by: 6 new curricula for specialized certificates are created; 6 new farm enterprise incubators are created; 125-175 certifications are awarded to beginning farmers (45-60 certificates in the nine-month program, 60-75 certificates in specialized areas, and 20-40 certificates in urban agriculture entrepreneurship); 36-48 WCH certificate graduates obtain positions related to their training; 5-10 WCH certificate graduates establish new businesses. OBJECTIVE 3: Support the expansion of urban agriculture activities in and around Chicago, creating mentored jobs for beginning urban farmers and farm workers, while supplying fresh produce to food-insecure communities. Measured by: 6 new WCH urban farm sites are created, employing beginning farmers and transitional workers; 12-18 beginning farmers are mentored while employed as crew leaders on WCH projects; 1 final assessment is conducted of overall project outcomes.

**What was accomplished under these goals?**

WCH exceeded nearly every measure in the three objectives set during the course of the three-year grant period. Staff is extremely pleased with the results obtained in the BFRDP-funded program. Details on achievements follow.

WCH's short courses and workshops served a total of 947 through the duration of the grant (compared to the cumulative goal of 580). A total of 109 people participated in 17 weekend courses held at the Arturo Velasquez Institute of the City Colleges of Chicago. The three-hour courses featured an in-depth focus on a single topic, such as crop planning or season extension. An additional 1,023 participants in food preparation demonstrations at Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) sites learned how to prepare healthy meals.

A total of 39 students enrolled in the half-day Farm Dreams workshop held in early spring each year. Student feedback was overwhelmingly positive and students reported that they gained a better understanding of the risks and resources involved with starting a farm business.

Youth Farm programming included sustainable agriculture and workforce preparedness activities on four farm sites. Interest in Youth Farm led to 273 paid positions during the grant period--exceeding target enrollment by nearly 50 students. Students gained a thorough understanding of sustainable urban agriculture practice and impact, with 83% agreeing that they could lead a crew of their peers in gardening activities and 89% understanding how their work improves food access.

The nine-month Apprenticeship program enrolled 57 students, including nine (16%) with a history in the justice system and 40 (70%) low-income individuals. Each June through September, all students participated in an internship at WCH and partner sites, returning to the classroom in September for employment-related sessions. In total, 46 Apprenticeship students earned a certificate during the grant period (including graduates of the 2012 session).

The transitional jobs training program, Corps, served a total of 85 justice-involved men-- more than the 51-69 proposed--hired from Cook County Department of Corrections, Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, Safer Foundation, and other partners. Throughout the duration of the grant period a total 45 individuals were placed in jobs, with additional individuals returning to school. In addition, 16 Corps trainees who participated in the 2015 program continue to receive placement services through a newly introduced Job Club. Despite a difficult transition after departing the Cook County Sheriff's Boot Camp, the program

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maintained a 53% job placement rate over three years.

Four certificate curricula were created during the grant period, and the program granted 17 business and entrepreneurship certificates and an additional 17 industry-specific certificates. Combined with the Apprenticeship, WCH students earned a total of 95 professional certifications during the grant period, despite obstacles that prevented the launch of two additional courses, described in "changes/problems."

Apprenticeship graduates proved successful in finding employment in agriculture and related industries. Among the 44 graduates of the 2012-14 programs, an impressive 42 (95%) immediately found jobs, 40 (90%) in related industries. Despite graduating so recently, nine (47%) of the 2015 graduates have already found employment, eight (42%) in a related industry. WCH staff predicts that all graduates will be employed within six months.

The past year brought a record number of farmers to the incubator program. Staff determined that a smaller plot--1/8 of an acre--was more appropriate for the farmers than the previously offered 1/4-acre. As a result, Legends could accommodate more farmers.

Eight small farm businesses and 15 small farmers were incubated from the 2012 pilot through the end of the grant period. One of the original incubator farms, Urban Aggies, ceased activity in 2015. Urban Aggies had already operated for two years, and those two farmers assumed full-time positions in urban agriculture careers: one as the WCH incubator farm coordinator and the other as operations manager of Garfield Produce. The owner of Your Bountiful Harvest moved to West Africa with her family and reluctantly left her farm. In 2015, 12 beginning farmers and five new businesses and one returning from the previous season, included Planted Chicago, Sweet Pea and Friends, Anarchy Organics, Creciendo Farm, and Return to Life.

The final evaluation report indicates that the WCH incubator program is thriving. The infrastructure provided by WCH is exceptional. The program provides significant support, mentoring, and responsive feedback that guides farmers as they develop their small business. Challenges remain and are being addressed through program changes (see "future plans"), but overall the incubator is operating as anticipated.

WCH now has 12 sites in the greater Chicago area, including five farms added during the course of the grant: the McCormick Place Rooftop (the largest edible green roof garden in the Midwest), Urban Garden Lab in the heart of Chicago's downtown, Legends incubator farm, PCC Austin community garden, and Chicago Hilton rooftop. The newest of these, PCC Austin and Chicago Hilton, were added in 2015. PCC serves the Austin community with fresh food and nutrition education and employs one Apprentice and one Corps trainee each year. Hilton rooftop farm produce goes to the hotel caterer.

Surpassing expectations, a total of 14 beginning farmers built sustainable agriculture skills while employed as crew leaders on WCH projects. For example, Stacey Kimmons has thrived as the coordinator of the Hilton rooftop garden and owner-incubator of Return to Life Farming, which supplies produce to the WIC program.

Evaluation was conducted throughout the three-year project period by the hired consultant, Martha Boyd of Angelic Organics Learning Center. She met with staff to review program components and also attended the monthly incubator meetings in 2015, since all issues were discussed here openly and in detail. WCH leadership and Boyd also conducted focus groups or surveys of program participants, alumni, employers, and customers.

The final assessment contains a wealth of information about Windy City Harvest. According to the report, WCH has created a coherent pipeline from basic information through more sophisticated courses, then directing participants to apply their skills beyond the program. The Apprenticeship program serves multiple audiences, including non-traditional students, and focus group participants confirmed the program made them more competitive when job seeking. The Legends farm itself provides good physical resources for the incubators and the immediate connection to markets is invaluable. Staff balance encouragement with high standards and are perceived by incubators as generous with their time and knowledgeable. Overall the incubator program breeds a strong community and commitment. The report acknowledges the difficulty in farming full time without external supports and offers 20 recommendations, including many affirmations of the program's current activities. Selections suggesting improvements include the following.

- Consider extending the option of a 3-year maximum at the Farm, with goal setting along the way so that people chart a course
- Assemble a team to provide technical assistance to farmers about key business issues like taxes, workers compensation and other labor/employee management, and insurance.

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- Continue providing access to the refrigerated truck and explore more ways to assist farmers with transportation issues.
- During their final season at the Incubator, assist farmers to find a place to farm the next year.

Staff will consider the outcomes of the report and integrate improvements where possible. Select areas will be addressed with planned WCH expansions.

### What opportunities for training and professional development has the project provided?

WCH's steadily growing reputation as a leader in urban agriculture and social enterprise has provided numerous opportunities to educate the public and other industry professionals about the program model, reaching more than 8,700 individuals. Highlights include participation in the 2013 through 2015 Good Food Festivals, where WCH staff presented workshops to the public--on topics such as home scale aquaponics and vermicomposting. Project leader Angela Mason presented the program as part of a keynote panel on sustainable agriculture at the Chicago Botanic Garden's World Environment Day (WED) alongside Danielle Nierenberg, founder of Food Tank, and other industry leaders. In 2014, Mason was selected by an advisory board, conference staff, and the public to conduct a panel session at South by Southwest (SXSW) Eco, a prominent conference that brings environmental experts together to engage and co-create solutions for a more sustainable world. A list of select presentations and workshops follows:

- EcoFarm Conference, Urban Agriculture Panel Presentation, January 23, 2013
- Chicago Botanic Garden, facilitator training, February 2, 2013
- Calumet in my Backyard Environmental Leadership Day, Field Museum, food desert problem-solving session, February 15, 2013
- Youth Farm program model presented at Roberti Community House's Leave No Child Inside Day, March 14, 2013
- Good Food Festival, Higher Education Panel Presentation, March 15, 2013
- Conference for Innovative Education, March 23, 2013
- Youth Farm program model presented at Waukegan Public Library's Dia de los Ninos event, April 21, 2013
- "Food System Chain Game," Rooted in Community Youth Leadership Conference, July 25, 2013
- North Chicago Community Days, Leave No Child Inside activities, August 3-4, 2013
- Good Food Festival, Public Private Partnerships, March 14, 2014
- Good Food Festival, So You Want To Be a Farmer, March 14, 2014
- University of Illinois, Chicago, Urban Planning Conference, Incubator Farmer Training, Feb. 2014
- Reaching Resilience, -Growing Farmers in the Midwest, April 9, 2014
- Chicago Botanic Garden Facilitator Training, Youth Development on a Sustainable Urban Farm, February 22, 2014
- Illinois Specialty Crop Conference, Food Safety at Your Farm, January 8, 2014
- Wheaton College, From the Ground Up: Social Movements and Soil Improvement, February 28, 2014
- Barrington Area Public Library, Flower Power, April 24, 2014
- Garfield Park Conservatory, Green and Growing Fair, March 22, 2014
- Abbott Green Partner Greening Your Home Garden, May 13, 2014
- Chicago Botanic Garden Corporate Roundtable on Sustainability: McCormick Place Rooftop and • Corporate Campus Gardens, May 10, 2014
- Advocates for Urban Agriculture, Incubator Programs in Chicagoland Area, May 14, 2014
- Good Greens Meeting, Incubator Programs, May 20, 2014
- MACE Sodexo, Utilizing Local Produce in Your Catering Events, May 6, 2014
- Chicago Botanic Garden School Garden Conference, Curriculum Development and School Gardens June 28, 2014
- Chicago State University Environmental Leaders of Change Career Panel, April 24, 2014
- Erie House Community Health Fair, Making Green Smoothies with Fresh Vegetables, June 20, 2014
- American Community Gardening Association, Chicago Food System Chain Gang, August 8, 2014
- KAM Isaiah Isreal MLK Food Justice and Sustainability Weekend, Season Extension in Urban Agriculture, January 17, 2014
- Youth Development in the North Lawndale Community, August 19, 2014
- Windy City Sustainability, Chicago, Sustainability in Agriculture Education, September 18, 2014
- Youth Voices Conference, The Youth Experience at WCH Youth Farm, October 17, 2014
- Chicago Botanic Garden facilitator trainings, January 31, 2015, and February 24, 2015
- North Chicago High School Parent Resource Fair, February 2, 2015
- "Beyond the School Lunch," ArtWorks Chicago, February 28, 2015
- "Food System Chain Game" and "History of Agriculture," Cristo Rey St. Martin College Prep Earth Day celebration, April 5, 2015
- "Cultural Studies of Science Education," University of Illinois - Chicago, April 15, 2015
- Presentation to Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (CLOCC), Lawndale Christian Health Center, April 16, 2015

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- WCH program model presented to Botanic Garden Conservation International, Chicago Botanic Garden, May 4, 2015
- WCH Apprenticeship program presented at University of Chicago Careers In STEM conference, Sand Hill Nature Center, May 15, 2015
- "Veterans in the Corps and Apprenticeship Programs," USDA GoodGreens Meeting, May 28, 2015
- "Veterans in the Corps and Apprenticeship Programs," Farmer Veteran Coalition launch of Homegrown By Heroes program, May 28, 2015
- WCH program model presented to the Washington Park Advisory Council, June 4, 2015
- "Feeding the Movement," American Public Gardens Association conference, June 25, 2015
- "Food System Chain Game," Rooted in Community Youth Leadership Conference, July 17, 2015

**How have the results been disseminated to communities of interest?**

During the grant period, promotional materials, media placements, social media, and the WCH website have increased awareness of the program's mission and activities and told the stories of beginning farmers supported by the project. Following is a summary.

- Windy City Harvest reached new heights in media coverage in recent years, with features printed in Rolling Stone and frequent coverage in the Chicago Tribune. One Chicago Tribune story on urban rooftop farming was reprinted in the Los Angeles Times and the Omaha World Herald, reaching an audience of 1.4 million. An October 2015 editorial in the Chicago Tribune provided high praise for Windy City Harvest and project director Angela Mason. Total circulation is estimated at nearly four million over the duration of the grant.
- Windy City Harvest articles in the Garden's Keep Growing member magazine were distributed quarterly to an average of 55,000 member households (660,000 impressions).
- The Garden's communications department developed 500 copies of a Windy City Harvest brochure that includes farm site locations and addresses, a list of employment and service partners, and a graphic illustration of the employment and education model.
- Windy City Harvest was featured in the Garden's bi-monthly e-newsletter, which currently reaches 70,000 subscribers.
- The Garden's digital communications team reconstructed the web design of Windy City Harvest destination pages to improve navigation, functionality, and readability. Enhanced web content includes program and site descriptions, participant bios, market locations, and photographs. In total, these sites received 27,293 visits during the grant period.
- Program activities and accomplishments, as well as farmers' market times and locations, are periodically shared through the Chicago Botanic Garden's Facebook (93,888 likes), Twitter (17,000 followers), and Instagram (8,074 followers) pages as well as the WCH Facebook (1,586 likes), Twitter (466 followers), and Instagram accounts (509 followers).
- Broadcast and radio promotion of the project has been extensive during the grant period and included segments on WBEZ Worldview, WBEZ Afternoon Shift, WGN-Tonight, ABC Heart and Soul, and more. Links to select media spots are available on the Garden's website at [www.chicagobotanic.org/pr/video](http://www.chicagobotanic.org/pr/video) and [www.chicagobotanic.org/pr/audio](http://www.chicagobotanic.org/pr/audio)
- Invitations to President's Circle Urban Farm Tours, the WCH annual open house at the Arturo Velasquez Institute, and the Youth Farm Open House in North Lawndale were sent via direct mail and email to generate a total attendance of nearly 500 guests. These events introduced attendees to WCH programs, where community partners, residents, staff, and program participants met, toured the farm, and enjoyed a farm-fresh meal together.

Farm tours and other activities raised awareness of WCH, resulting in more than 2,000 visitors across all farm sites. Youth Farm visits generally included both a tour and hands-on volunteer work/team-building activities. Among other highlights, WCH was a featured farmer at the 2015 FarmAid 30 benefit, which drew 26,000 concert-goers. Activities included a sold-out tour of the Legends farm site in Bronzeville on October 18, the day prior to the concert. Darius Jones, former coordinator of the McCormick Place farm and a Corps and Apprenticeship graduate, hosted an additional 150 people for tours of the rooftop site. During the concert, Youth Farm students and Windy City Harvest staff sold fresh produce, Apprenticeship students educated concert attendees about the project and its mission, and staff presented WCH on two separate panels along with performers and other local farmers. Documentary film segments featuring Jones and Rosario Maldonado, Apprenticeship graduate and WCH market coordinator, were projected onto screens before and during the stage performances.

During the grant period, WCH farm sites hosted the following groups and individuals:

Accion  
 AgriBank  
 American Community Garden Association  
 American Society of Landscape Architecture

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Chicago Architecture Foundation  
 Chicago Public Schools  
 Christy Webber Landscapes  
 Deloitte  
 Design Evanston  
 FamilyFarmed  
 FarmAid  
 Food Tank  
 Girl Scout Leaders  
 Girl Scouts of America  
 Girls in the Game  
 Golub and Company  
 Governor's Office for Sustainability  
 GreenCorps  
 Grow Springfield  
 Growing Solutions  
 Hilton Conrad Towers  
 Illinois Institute of Technology  
 INUAg  
 Kansas State University  
 Kennedy King College - Washburne Institute  
 Lake Forest College  
 Lake Forest High School  
 Leichtag Foundation  
 Lincolnshire Garden Club  
 Loyola Environmental Sustainability Institute  
 Michael Pollan  
 National Park Trust  
 National Restaurant Association  
 National Worker Cooperative  
 Notre Dame Young People's Innovation Camp  
 Oman Botanic Garden  
 Organopoponico Vivero Alamar  
 Queen Lili'uokalani Trust  
 Roberti Community House  
 Seven Generations Ahead  
 Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders  
 The Ancona School  
 The President's Circle of the Chicago Botanic Garden  
 University of Guelph  
 University of Illinois - Chicago  
 Urban Roots  
 USDA Undersecretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, Kevin Concannon  
 World Link

### What do you plan to do during the next reporting period to accomplish the goals?

Although this is the final report for this project, WCH has significant growth plans for the near future to better serve beginning farmers. These include establishing a Windy City Harvest food hub and aquaponics center, graduated incubator site, and an increased partnership with Safer Foundation. Details follow.

#### Food Hub

WCH is partnering with Lawndale Christian Health Center (LCHC), a community clinic in one of Chicago's most high-need/low-opportunity neighborhoods, to develop a year-round facility for training, food aggregation/distribution, and nutrition education that will include a commercial-scale aquaponics system, kitchen, cold storage, and healthy corner store. The facility will build WCH's capacity to offer simulated work experiences in areas that have significant economic potential and great demand for a trained workforce. Industry partners are assisting with developing training components to ensure that participants are prepared for related employment. The building will operate as a food hub, providing space for processing

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produce for distribution from WCH's 12 locations, from incubator farmers, and potentially from other Chicago area urban farmers. A commercial kitchen will allow farmers to create value-added products, particularly with second-rate produce. This space will significantly increase WCH's capacity to serve beginner farmers.

The food hub will benefit other WCH areas as well, including year-round programming for Youth Farm participants, food demonstrations/nutrition education for community residents with diet-related illnesses, a prescription produce box program for LCHC clients, and more transitional jobs. Ten Corps trainees will install and operate the site's equipment with approximately 28-35 individuals ultimately working in the building year-round. The facility will generate increased annual income through year-round production of high-value greens and fish and create capacity to offer new paid workshops.

#### Graduated Incubator Space

WCH will build on a successful partnership with developer Brinshore-Michaels to install farms on Chicago's near West Side in the West Haven neighborhood among mixed-income housing. West Haven will emulate Legends South, the WCH incubator farm established successfully with Brinshore in 2012. Three separate farms will be nestled among the housing; one  $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre plot will contain hoophouse frames for year-round production, while two half-acre sites will be reserved for graduated incubator farmer space. This space will provide incubator farmers who complete the two-year program but still face barriers to accessing land with a more hands-off location to further develop their small businesses on a larger scale than the one-eighth to one-quarter acre farmed during incubation.

#### Safer Foundation

Safer Foundation is the nation's largest non-profit provider of services for people with criminal records. Safer's president has committed to channeling ex-offenders into WCH training and assisting with pre-screen and post-job placement, helping WCH shoulder a larger number in Corps. WCH will pilot this formal collaboration in 2016 and expand the partnership in 2017. This partnership will ensure a steady stream of vetted, qualified candidates for the increased openings, helping to replace the consistent source lost when the Cook County Sheriff's program was discontinued. Further, Safer Foundation has a vast network of employment partners, which could open avenues for WCH Corps graduates.

#### Additional Growth

WCH has applied to REDF, a social enterprise funder, to help expand the program to serve more individuals. WCH has made it to the fourth level in a five-step selection process. If funded, REDF will help to make WCH more sustainable overall through growth as a social enterprise.

#### Participants

##### Actual FTE's for this Reporting Period

Role	Non-Students or faculty	Students with Staffing Roles			Computed Total by Role
		Undergraduate	Graduate	Post-Doctorate	
Scientist	0	0	0	0	0
Professional	19.4	0	0	0	19.4
Technical	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Computed Total	19.4	0	0	0	19.4

#### Student Count by Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code

{NO DATA ENTERED}

#### Target Audience

This project engaged limited resource beginning farmers as well as individuals from the general public seeking professional training and certification for work in Chicago's growing urban agriculture sector and the local food system. Combined

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educational initiatives over the three-year grant period reached a total of 1,592 individuals. Participants in Windy City Harvest's sustainable urban agriculture training continuum included Youth Farm, a youth development program; Apprenticeship, a nine-month training certificate delivered in partnership with the City Colleges of Chicago; Harvest Corps, an educational and transitional jobs program for justice-involved youth and adults; and Entrepreneurship & Careers, which offers 14-week industry-specific evening courses and weekend workshops as well as the farmer incubator program. Staff leveraged partnerships with community-based organizations to reach socially disadvantaged individuals in Chicago's low-resource communities, an audience not typically engaged in agriculture initiatives. Out of the 611 participants for whom demographic data was collected, 423 (69%) identified as African American, 95 (16%) as Hispanic/Latino, and six (1%) as multiracial (combined total of 86%). Additionally, 486 (80%) qualified as limited resource. Limited resource status was measured by self-reported household income (based on a form developed by WCH in partnership with Daley College), history of incarceration, or eligibility for free or reduced lunch under the National School Lunch Program.

## Products

{Nothing to report}

## Other Products

### Product Type

Data and Research Material

### Description

The final evaluation report was developed in the last grant period. The report contains:

- A description of the external evaluator and the evaluation objective, plan, timeline, and materials;
- Outcomes, impacts, and insights on the Apprenticeship and industry-specific classes and training, Legends incubator farm, and incubator program;
- Executive summary with primary recommendations; and
- Addenda, including focus group summary, sample business plans, land use agreement and incubator farmer policies, and a sample farmer evaluation form.

Additionally, curricula for two industry-specific courses—edible landscaping and aquaponics—were completed. All certificate courses total 56 contact hours, integrate experiential and classroom learning, and are targeted toward aspiring urban agriculture entrepreneurs with a firm foundation in growing techniques. Classes enable students to hone specialized skills in niche areas of urban agriculture in order to refine an existing business, expand into new markets, or build skill sets that appeal to potential employers.

### Product Type

Educational Aids or Curricula

### Description

The edible landscaping course culminates in the creation of a four-season planting plan. Classroom topics include:

- Edible plant materials, including shrubs, perennials, vines, bulbs, and annuals;
- Design principles, including “taking your garden plan off the page,” creating a base map, and reading a plot map;
- Ornamental edible plant maintenance, including different soils for different situations (containers, rooftops, etc.);
- Growing for chefs;
- Container planting (selection, placement, design, and some construction);
- Kitchen gardening (e.g. potager, square foot gardening);
- Vertical and rooftop gardening; and
- Permaculture principles.

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**Product Type**

Educational Aids or Curricula

**Description**

The aquaponics production course culminates in the design of a home aquaponic system. Topics for instruction include:

- Aquaponics fundamentals and history;
- Biology and chemistry of aquaponic systems;
- Aquaponics systems operation and design, including seed propagation, crop management, harvest methods, food safety, integrated pest management, and maintenance;
- Fish selection, care, environmental parameters, and disease; and
- Commercial aquaponics methods.

**Changes/Problems**

The Windy City Harvest program was delivered from September 1, 2012, to August 31, 2015, in a remarkably similar fashion to what was originally proposed in November 2011. In most cases, goals were exceeded. However, some difficulties were encountered. The elimination of the program at the Cook County Sheriff's Boot Camp (also known as the Vocational Rehabilitation Impact Center) reduced the Garden's ability to deliver on objective one, since fewer Boot Camp residents completed garden training (95 versus 180-240 projected). However, the transitional jobs component continued, and the Garden engaged more ex-offenders than originally projected through WCH Corps. One other problem encountered resulted in fewer industry-specific certificates developed. Four of the six certificates were developed and delivered, engaging more individuals than anticipated. However the composting certificate was put permanently on hold due to insurmountable city regulations relating to composting. The value-added products certificate had to be delayed due to the lack of commercial kitchen or partner with this kind of facility, but this certificate will move forward when the Lawndale Christian Health Center facility is built. Staff plans for this certificate to launch in fall 2016. Small changes were made to the incubator program as that part of Windy City Harvest was refined and updated to respond to farmers' needs and the site's capacity, leading to even better results.

Overall the most significant unexpected outcome generated as the result of the BFRDP grant is the incredible growth in Windy City Harvest's profile over the past few years. The program has harnessed new partners, received significant media attention, and been identified as a leader in sustainable urban agriculture and its application to workforce development and health in the Chicago region. One example includes the Clinton Global Initiative's endorsement of Windy City Harvest's commitment to "Resilient Communities: Jobs, Food, and Health." Another is Windy City Harvest's recent participation in FarmAid40, when a former WCH incubator farmer and current employee appeared on stage with Willie Nelson and other music legends to talk about urban farming. The Chicago Tribune's October 2015 editorial, full of praise for WCH's leadership and its ability to harness urban agriculture to improve the city, is yet another incarnation of this success. These results were made possible through USDA's support, which helped WCH grow in new ways to develop beginning farmers in Chicago.