



County Of Dane
Office Of The County Executive

Joe Parisi
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Dane County Awards \$19,500 to Advance Equity & Access to Local Food Systems Amid Pandemic Through Partners in Equity Food Grant Program

Today, Dane County Executive Joe Parisi announced nine local agencies have been selected to receive the Tamara D. Grigsby Office of Equity and Inclusion's 2021 Partners in Equity (PIE) Food Grant. The PIE Food Grant was created to encourage the innovative development of projects that advance equity and access in local food systems across Dane County through educational and outreach services. This year's recipients were selected based on proposals intending to address issues related to healthy food access, access to land for growing food, or issues related to food waste and recovery.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has put an unprecedented strain on our community and its emergency food distribution system. Those who were already struggling to put food on the table have faced additional challenges over the past year," said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. "By coming together and partnering on these projects, we can work to address inequities in local food systems and increase opportunity in our community. We thank this year's grant recipients for developing innovative solutions and striving to achieve greater equity in Dane County during this challenging time."

In total, \$19,500 will be awarded to recipients of the 2021 PIE Food Grant. 29 applications were received during the application period. More than \$95,500 was requested by applicants.

"The PIE Food Grant Program provides community organizations the funding necessary to combat food insecurity, and promote access to healthy sustainable food," said State Representative and Dane County Board Supervisor Shelia Stubbs. "I am proud to see this program continue, and I look forward to seeing these projects improve our community."

"The Dane County PIE Food Access Grants exemplify what is amazing in our community. Reading through the applications offers a glimpse into the innovative, caring, tenacious spirit of local organizations, creating new opportunities to care for our community," said Dane County Board Supervisor Michele Ritt. "Navigating the pandemic is a challenge, and these organizations prove we have the innovation and resilience we need."

The grant recipients include:

Small Grants (\$2,000 or Less) Totaling \$5,000 in 2021

- The Flock Independent Supporters Association Inc. – \$1,125
Flock Independent Supporters Association Inc. is planning an ongoing, multiple-year project that aims to increase access to fresh produce available at food banks and pantries by establishing a network of garden plots at the homes of members from The Flock—referred to as Volunteer Gardens. There are two additional components to The Flock Food Project: a direct-to-consumer delivery system for the produce grown within the City of Madison, and a Member Garden program to provide training and tools for food-insecure individuals and families to grow their own food.

- Kidlinks Briarpatch Vegetable Garden Project – \$2,000

The Kidlinks Briarpatch Vegetable Garden Project combines youth empowerment and skills training with a local agricultural effort to combat food insecurity in Dane County. Kidlinks World runs the garden and partners with Briarpatch Youth Services (BYS) to involve at-risk youth. Together, Kidlinks and BYS participants plant, tend, and harvest high-quality vegetables at a half-acre garden, which are then donated to local food pantries. In 2021, Kidlinks aims to expand the garden, involve 15-25 more youth, and increase fresh produce donations 25-30% by weight.

- Wisconsin Heights Community Garden Food Pantry Support – \$745

Wisconsin Heights Community Garden (WHCG) is located in Mazomanie and serves the residents of Mazomanie and Black Earth. One of the missions of the garden is to support each of the local food pantries with fresh produce, which is planted, cared for, and harvested by the gardeners in the Community Garden. Local residents do not have fresh produce readily available, as the closest grocery store is 10 miles away. By supplying local food pantries, WHCG can make nutritious food more accessible. Mazomanie/Black Earth Food Pantry supports 350 patrons and WHCG has been their only source of fresh produce apart from them buying it from the grocery store with their own funds.

- YMCA of Dane County Inc. – \$1,130

In the summer of 2020, the YMCA piloted a mobile food program that went into three targeted Sun Prairie neighborhoods that met the eligibility criteria for the USDA regulated Summer Food Service Program. Bringing these mobile meals to the kids was a huge success and the YMCA wants to bring it back in 2021. One of the most popular parts of the pilot program was called “Wacky Wednesday.” Each Wednesday mobile meals were taken to these neighborhoods, but staff also stayed and built relationships with the children. In return, the kids talked to staff on a more personal level and were connected to other resources the YMCA works with.

Large Grants (Greater than \$2,000) Totaling \$14,500 in 2021

- 1,000 Friends of Wisconsin – \$2,800

Aldo Leopold Elementary School hosts a food pantry stocked by Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin that provides access to free meals. 1,000 Friends of Wisconsin proposes to build a cedar-wood raised bed and crushed gravel path that are ADA-compliant. They are also planning to improve the community garden on school grounds by investing in improved infrastructure and hiring a part-time gardener from the community to supplement the food pantry with fresh produce from June to October. Long-term goals of the improved infrastructure are to have a community-friendly school garden that provides access to fresh produce and a place to learn and participate in urban gardening.

- Bayview Foundation – \$4,000

The Bayview Foundation’s food access support started with bi-weekly Second Harvest grocery deliveries made possible by CARES Act funding. The feedback was consistent: families needed more food but were unable to use much of the traditional American staples provided. By partnering with Rooted/Troy Farm last summer, Bayview was able to augment the Second Harvest deliveries with boxes of produce selected for Latinx, Asian, and African American CSA offerings. Food waste reduced dramatically among participating households. This proposal aims to work with area growers to promote the growing of produce that is desirable to different cultures. The program will help Bayview meet the needs of its residents and will expand local farmers' ability to meet the food needs of a more diverse consumer base.

- Goodman Community Center – \$3,500

Goodman Community Center is proposing to employ six to eight TEENworks youth to staff the Wednesday evening shift at the Fritz Food Pantry. A dramatic increase of demand for the food pantry has created a great need for workers, at the same time that volunteers have declined due to pandemic concerns. The project will serve six to eight youth who are credit-deficient, truant, court-involved, and/or working through mental and behavior issues, by instilling in them much-needed pride, confidence, self-worth, direction, and a sense of success and ownership. As a result of their work, 336 low-income households, in nearby low-income neighborhoods, will be provided over 120 pounds each weekly of highly nutritious food for the duration of a full year.

- Slow Foods | Just Food Group Inc. – \$1,000

Slow Food UW (SFUW) is the local student-run chapter of the international Slow Food movement that wants to support the South Madison Farmers' Market (SMFM) in their efforts to re-implement a SNAP/Foodshare program. At one point, SMFM was accepting this form of payment, but its point-of-sale device broke and the financial and time cost of replacement was too burdensome. Using grant funds, a new QUEST/EBT-capable device will be purchased to allow for food benefit use in support of the local economy. SFUW will also establish a temporary SNAP-like general fund. The beneficiaries of this project will be primarily residents of South Madison living near the locations of the SMFM: the Villager Mall, Novation Center, and the Labor Temple.

- Yowela Farms – \$3,200

Yowela Farms is leading a project in partnership with TradeRoots, Wild Bearies, Friends of Silverwood Park, and other partners that can help growers achieve a scale of production necessary to launch their own farms. This project's goals and outcomes include development of educational curriculum targeted to historically underserved groups; expanded awareness of resources available to new and aspiring growers; and strengthened networking among growers, chefs, and customers. Expanded production from the demonstration plots is intended to spark greater interest in Indigenous and African ingredients among chefs and customers while also supporting entry of additional growers into smaller-scale production agriculture based on specialty crops.

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