



# Feed Denver: Urban Farms & Markets

**Feed Denver is a Regional Training Center partnered with Growing Power, Inc.**  
Feed Denver: Urban Farms & Markets is a project of the Colorado Nonprofit Development Center, a 501(c)3

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**Feed Denver: Urban Farms & Markets** is a non-profit education and development organization created to empower local-level economic independence through modeling sustainable small-scale farms and markets in urban settings.

Feed Denver offers a powerful solution to a multitude of critical social issues. Urban farms hold the potential to provide universal access to fresh, high-quality healthy food throughout urban environments, repair declining or broken economies, build urban quality of life, and foster the physical and mental health of city dwellers neighborhood by neighborhood, empowering local-level economic independence through small urban farm businesses.

These businesses can offer sustainable economic opportunities, education, and training for aspiring entrepreneurs, youth, women, minorities, the

undereducated, and the unemployed or underemployed. Urban farms embody economic stimulus at the grass roots level. They represent the potential for a local, rewarding, and accessible livelihood for many whose urban environments currently provide little opportunity, and for whom success seems impossible to achieve.



Figure 1: First Harvest at our 42nd Ave. Parking Lot Farm



Figure 2: Tool Shed and Sign



Figure 3: Building a Farm in a Parking Lot

Additionally the farms themselves revive and refresh urban areas otherwise dominated by decaying housing & industry, polluted air, and social mistrust. Urban agriculture holds enormous potential to heal cities, providing safe environments for battered women to gain skills; for children to learn about food, nutrition, health, and science, and to gather social skills; for the disenfranchised to bring their skills and talents in active participation with society, and for everyone to enjoy the calm and refreshment afforded by the presence of plants and animals.

## Mission, Vision, Goals

**MISSION:** Teach entrepreneurs to develop successful small-scale neighborhood urban farms & markets that will provide local access to food, offer economic opportunity, and enhance the health and quality of life for city dwellers.

**VISION:** Improve local economies, food quality/access, and physical and mental health through urban farms.



Figure 2: Youth Corps Cooking Class

### **GOALS:**

#### **Develop sustainable local access to healthy food.**

**Strategy:** Establish model urban farms in food deserts to provide universal access to fresh, high-quality food.

**Benefits:** Producing food locally reduces pollution, cycles economic gain back through the community, and reduces production costs.

#### **Provide viable economic alternatives by empowering local-level growth.**

**Strategy:** Train and educate individuals to build, manage, and maintain successful urban farms.

**Benefits:** Offering avenues to financial success within the community, builds quality of life at the local level, reducing poverty, crime, and drug abuse.

#### **Foster physical, mental, and civic health.**

**Strategy:** Create refreshing and restful social environments, repair air quality, and provide access to high quality, fresh food.

**Benefits:** Urban farms typically become gathering places, offering informal avenues to socialize and build community trust.

## Strategy

These three strategies implemented in concert and interdependent in their execution, form the basis for Feed Denver's path to create first, second, and third-level urban farm projects.

- **Model:** by creating a successful urban farm, from design to market, as a lab project.
- **Educate:** through internships, classroom, and workshops, using the model farm as a lab environment.
- **Involve:** local residents, communities, and groups through outreach and partnership.

## Current Model Farms and Projects

**Community demographics:** At Feed Denver our projects extend our outreach to over 66,532 residents in the Five Neighborhood Food Desert of (NE Park Hill, Park Hill, East Montclair, NW Aurora, and Stapleton) as well as the Globeville/Swansea/Elyria Neighborhoods' 10,000 residents. Our projects address the shortage of available food in these areas known as food deserts as they are currently served by only one grocery store or less, depending on corner stores, fast food, and liquor stores for food sources. Over 80% of these individuals are low income and 27% live in poverty, making accessing fresh foods more of a challenge. These diverse neighborhoods include strong ethnic cultures representing predominantly African-American, Latino, and Asian communities.



Figure 3: Young Urban Farmers

**Feed Denver projects include:**

**The Feed Denver Project at The Urban Farm at Stapleton:** Feed Denver has partnered with The Urban Farm at Stapleton, to enhance existing farm facilities to include a soil producing compost program, seasonal farming and farmer’s market, and a greenhouse aquaculture operation to produce nutrient-rich greens, vegetables, and fish. Urban farming and business courses are offered in three seasonal cycles: Autumn, Winter, and Spring and include these focuses: Agriculture in the City, Animal Husbandry 101 – For City Folks!, Practical Skills: Tools and Craft, The Business of Farming, as well as, Two-Day Hands-On Weekend Workshops



Figure 4: Year-Round Farming



Figure 5: Youth Corps Posing

**The Globeville/Swansea/Elyria Urban Agriculture Project:** At this community-based project we transformed a parking lot into a full production farm and market located at 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Steele Street. Partially funded by City of Denver Office of Economic Development, this is an urban agriculture project explore farming stories, history, and application in the central urban community made up of the Globeville, Swansea, and Elyria neighborhoods. Programs include a **Community Steward Program** and a **Youth Corps (self-named The**

**Worms)**. These programs serve the immediate community and are exploring and developing skills in the vibrant green and sustainable

industry of urban agriculture while creating and operating a summer farm and market through summer 2010. Participants are learning about urban agriculture and developing urban farming skills through involvement in various projects currently underway. This includes: soil development through compost and vermicomposting; bio-intensive organic planting; aquaponics fish and plant systems; and building and managing growing structures. Both teams are creating “StoryCorps” style video documents from their differing perspectives of urban farming stories from the community through surveying various community groups and gathering places. The documentation will be made available to the public.



Figure 6: 42nd Ave Parking Lot Farm in the Globeville/Swansea/Elyria Neighborhood



Figure 7: Will Allen Growing Power Workshop

**Regional Urban Agriculture Training Center:** We offer hands-on urban farming training courses as well as small business classes to inspire and strengthen the first wave of workers and managers of the new urban agriculture industry. Course tracks run from Growing in the City to Animal Husbandry for City Folks! Business courses range from Project Planning and to Writing a Business Plan.

Feed Denver is a regional training center recognized by and partnered with Growing Power Inc. Feed Denver’s initiatives are based on research and field work developed by Will Allen, McArthur Genius Grant Fellow, through Growing

Power – Allen’s non-profit, located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Feed Denver is a Growing Power Regional Training Center and Model Farm (ROTC). The vision for a Growing Power ROTC is to provide Growing Power’s technical training support at a regional level which can be replicated in other neighborhoods and communities.

Feed Denver staff has attended the Growing Power intensive, five-month Commercial Urban Agriculture Course. Allen and his Growing Power team return to the Regional Training Center annually to hold weekend workshops.

**Refugee Work Placement Program:** We have partnered with the Ecumenical Refugee and Immigration Services to create and manage a work placement program for their clients on TANIF and in the process of orienting to their new homes through language and culture programs. Our current participants are Bhutanese refugees utilizing their own agriculture backgrounds while assisting Feed Denver in developing our model farms.



Figure 8: Bhutan Farmers

We hope to extend this project by creating a paid management



Figure 9: Market Basket

apprenticeship program to lead to urban agriculture management certification. This may assist these refugees in stepping up as the first wave of urban agriculture managers and business owners in Denver.

**Market Basket Program (Under development):** Through partnering with local farmers, fresh food distributors, and other local agencies, a food basket distribution program is being created to allow people in the communities we serve to purchase fresh foods at an affordable rate.