

Green Village Initiative Reservoir Community Farm

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The Youth Farm Crew washes the harvest for the farm stand at Reservoir Community Farm.



Food . Knowledge . Community . Leadership



Reservoir Community Farm + Reservoir NRZ Revitalization Plan

1	Community Leader Training/ Organizational Capacity Building Build capacity of emerging community leaders to organize the community and establish the NRZ as an organization. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ NRZ to participate in Citywide NRZ Leadership Program▪ Designate a program coordinator for NRZ
2	Neighborhood Event Programming Build capacity and develop the neighborhood's identity with frequent, recurring events, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ NRZ should create a neighborhood beautification committee▪ NRZ should partner with the City and community organizations to sponsor neighborhood clean-up events▪ NRZ should partner with the Reservoir Community Farm to develop events related to community farming and healthy food▪ NRZ should partner with neighborhood schools and local artists to develop an annual public art event



Reservoir Community Farm

1. Community Leader Training

- Youth Leadership Programs
- Urban Farmer Training Programs
- Serve Safe and GAP food safety training for new business owners and food entrepreneurs



Reservoir Community Farm

2. Neighborhood Event Planning

- Annual educational and art events are FREE
- 2019 Harvest Fest Drawing 300 people
- Hosted COVID safe volunteer days with FREE PPE
- 200 families shopped at Farmers Market in 2020
- 40 free community garden plots!

Public Space at Community Farm

Work with Community Farm to create public space for passive recreation (eg. benches, tables) and neighborhood events.

11	<p>Education and Job Training</p> <p>Expand residents' access to education and job training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop supportive educational programs for families around topics such as baby care and parenting, healthy eating and financial management ▪ Investigate local job training programs that prepare neighborhood residents for jobs in the City of Bridgeport and the region and develop strategies for connecting residents to existing programs. ▪ Develop new job training programs, as necessary, to meet neighborhood residents' needs and explore creative partnerships with the private sector to fund such programs. 	2-3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NRZ ▪ Bridgeport Public Schools ▪ CT Works ▪ Private sector partners ▪ Bridgeport Parent Center ▪ Reservoir Community Farm ▪ Bridgeport Family Health
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- 1. Education and Job Training**

 - Urban farmer training led to 2 additional Bridgeport-based, black-owned urban farms joining the farmers market for the full season of 2020
 - The farm has been a “first-job” site for dozens of Bridgeport teens and young adults entering the workforce with little or no experience
 - Demonstration cooking, food budgeting, container gardening, and financial wellness are among the free workshops hosted each year on the site with partners from across Fairfield County

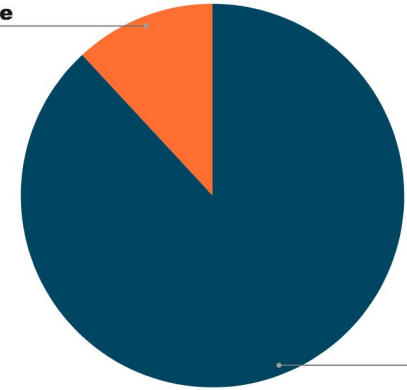
Hunger in Bridgeport

Food insecurity refers to **USDA's measure** of lack of **access to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods.**

- A survey conducted by the Bridgeport Department of Health and Social Services found that **50%** of **city residents are food insecure**
- **25%** of respondents surveyed by GVI and Sacred Heart University stated that **they are unable to access healthy food.**

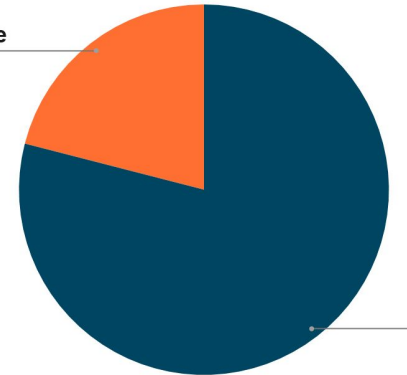
Connecticut

Food Insecure
11.9%



Bridgeport

Food Insecure
21.0%

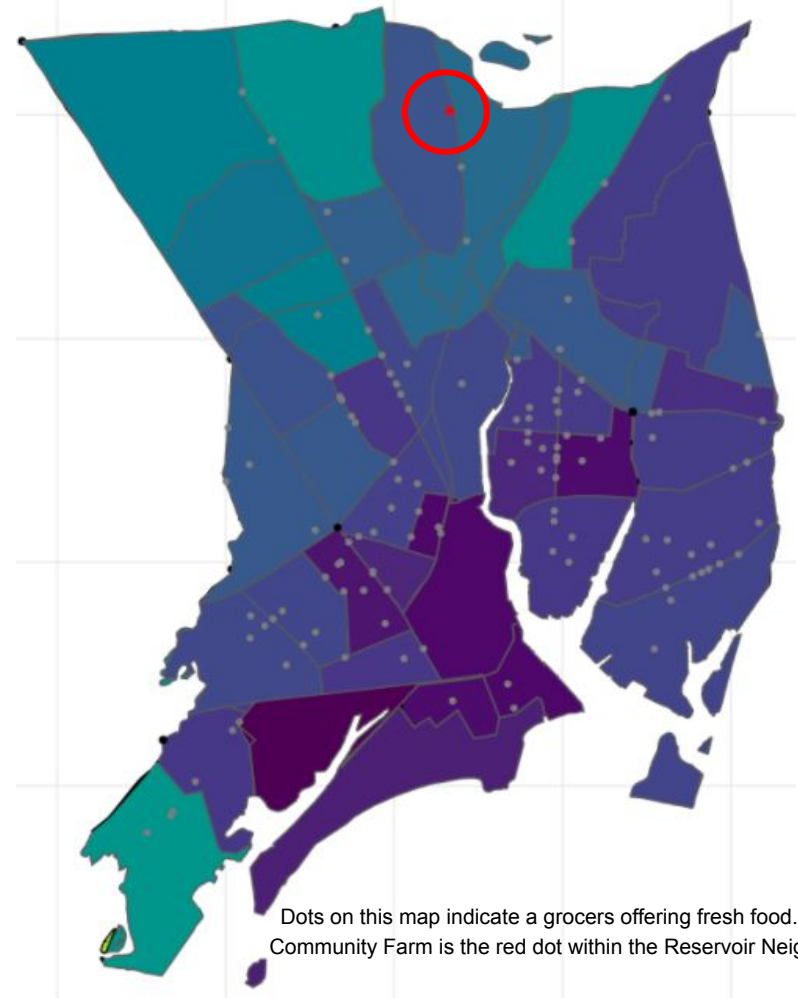


Hunger in Reservoir

North end Community Council Food Pantry is open weekly serving approximately **330 families** a week, with 70% from Reservoir neighborhood

Calvary Seventh Day Adventist Food Pantry is open twice weekly averaging **80 people** from the neighborhood

RCF donates an average of **711 lbs** of fresh grown vegetables to pantries each year



Dots on this map indicate a grocers offering fresh food. Reservoir Community Farm is the red dot within the Reservoir Neighborhood

Retail Data - CT DEEP, Race/Income Data from Census Bureau

GVI Investment in 1469 Reservoir

2012 - 2020 Capital Investments	
Utilities	\$25,500
Soil	\$22,100
Lumber	\$12,000
Other Farming Expenses	\$91,250
Infrastructure Investments	\$52,650
Youth Compensation through Program (3 yrs)	\$67,600
Compensation for Employees & VISTA	\$300,800
Farm Development Projects and Staff '12-'15	\$120,800
Internships (Local college interns)	\$53,600
Free-to-Public Community Events	\$15,000
Other	\$10,500
Program Lead Compensation	\$60,100
Total	\$771,800

This table was calculated in November 2020.



Bridgeport is Leading Fairfield County in Urban Agriculture through RCF

- National Young Farmers Coalition
- New CT Farmers Alliance
- Congressman Jim Himes
- Working Lands Alliance of American Farmland Trust
- Backyard Beekeepers Association

Below Congressman Jim Himes speaks with local business incubator and owner, Deb Caviness of OIC in RCFs okra patch



RCF has put Bridgeport on the map as an urban farming destination in CT!

...and what does that mean for Reservoir?

Urban Agriculture

“The USDA recommends farmers' markets as a community-level intervention to address food accessibility in food deserts.”

Urban Farming Benefits

- Whole foods
- High proportion of fruits and vegetables
- Promotes a connection between whole foods and consumer
- Reduced food miles
- Reduced waste
- Promotes community and individual wellbeing
- Diverse economic opportunities
- Increases air and soil quality



Reservoir Community Farm

- **90** varieties of *culturally relevant* vegetables
- **2+ tons** of fresh vegetables for the community; donated or sold at our Farmers Market
- Double the value of purchases made with SNAP and EBT, WIC, Senior Check acceptance
- Satisfying **community demand** for locally grown food
- **Local Green Jobs - 19+ jobs each season**
- Summer Youth Jobs and Development
- Free community classes / knowledge sharing
- Free Community programming

The Hub of Urban Agriculture in Bridgeport is in Reservoir

400+
volunteers
each year

40 FREE
classes,
workshops,
community
events
annually

Green space
=
better health
outcomes

Employment for
youth and
adults - over 19
jobs annually

12 FREE
fieldtrips for
BPT school
kids each year



The Hub of Urban Agriculture in Bridgeport is in Reservoir

Customers for
the first
all-BPT-grown
market



At Reservoir Community Farm we have evidence of **incubating small businesses**, and the growth of **culinary and farmer training programs** that are allowing food entrepreneurs to **launch businesses**, learn from peers and benefit from real-time customer feedback.



We have redeemed
thousands of WIC,
SNAP, and Senior
Dollars

Left, Richard and Don wash produce for a farmers market day at a newly constructed wash station. Right, Khadijah and Mario of Bridgeport's Blissful Awakening Farm

Sustainable Economic Development

- Local employment - 70 cents of every dollar earned stays in community
- Long lasting solutions and efforts - collaborative business models
- First jobs for youth and those previously incarcerated
- **70%** of respondents to GVI and Sacred Heart University's survey would like to see existing gardens protected on city-owned lots
- **77%** would like to see locally grown food made more available

When asked which garden or farm has had a positive impact in their community, ***nearly all respondents mentioned Reservoir Farm***, school gardens, the Michelle Obama community garden or other community gardens.

Community Quotes

Christine M-King - youth parent and gardener :

“I would like to thank GVI for the work that they have done with my daughter. She was one of the fortunate ones hired this summer.

She was able to earn college credit via Housatonic Community College.

Her work there prompted us our family to volunteer at the farm.

We has since gotten a [community garden] plot and are beginning to learn more about farming. We are very supportive of GVI.”



**BPT Agriculture =
BPT Food Security
and Health!**

Community Quotes

Erik K. - volunteer

“I'd like to note the mental health benefits. I deal with PTSD from my time in the military.

Working the soil and experiencing the wonderful community has been a HUGE help to me. Reservoir Community Farm has definitely helped me heal. Also almost everything I know about growing food I learned at GVI.”



Yoga and
breathwork
workshops are
hosted at no cost

Community Quotes

E. Moore- customer:

“Fresh Vegetables, they are delicious and different. The prices are good, and it’s great for the community.”

Food is sold below market price for organics



Community Quotes

W. Diaz :

“The energy at this market transcends and recreates farmers markets. The community feeling and vibe is great. The people who work at the farm stands are great! I love the relationship with the community especially the youth is amazing to see. What GVI does is invaluable.”

Our market supports SNAP, Senior, WIC incentive dollars



Considerations



addedvaluefarms
Bridgeport, Connecticut



23 likes

addedvaluefarms Look at all the eco warriors! 🌱
What a beautiful day spent at the Reservoir
Community Farm - thank you @greenvillageinitiative
for hosting the YFJN!



Why not both?

Let the farm stay on its legacy site and continue to build community through free events, community employment, youth leadership, farmers market, and providing the neighborhood with healthy food, a backyard, and calm greenspace for all of us!

We can have literacy and health, employment, community garden beds, and green space all in the Reservoir neighborhood if we locate a new library on another site in the Reservoir neighborhood!