

# CHICAGO GROWS FOOD ANNUAL REPORT

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# Introduction

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As I reflect on the past year's journey, I am filled with gratitude and a deep sense of pride in the remarkable progress that the Chicago Grows Food community has made together. We are honored to present to you our annual report, which showcases the dedication and collective impact of our committed team, partners, and supporters.

This report highlights the accomplishments and stories from 2023. By exploring these pages, we invite you to witness the power of community, compassion, and collaboration. Each success, each milestone achieved, is a testament to the belief that positive change is possible when we come together with a common purpose.

Our journey is far from over, and with your continued support, we look forward with optimism and a renewed sense of purpose. Thank you for being an essential part of the Chicago Grows Food community and for joining us on this impactful journey toward a brighter and more inclusive future.

Gratefully,

Elizabeth Berkeley  
Director

"Oh, it was beautiful. That's the best garden I've had so far."

"Fue hermoso. Es el mejor jardín que he tenido hasta ahora".



# Food Sovereignty Through Gardening

## Mission

Our mission is to creatively connect advocates for safe and environmentally-conscious food production, land stewardship, food access, food security and nutrition to catalyze and sustain equitable and holistic health outcomes for the communities of Chicago.

## Vision

By reducing barriers to gardening, CGF hopes to increase access to fresh produce, reduce food insecurity and the financial burden of procuring fresh, healthy produce, and improve health equity.

**“What I have enjoyed growing the most are chili peppers, tomatoes, cilantro and herbs like parsley, mint. The program has helped me learn a lot about gardening before I didn't even know how to grow a tomato and now I feel confident to grow everything.”**





# Grow Kits

Launched in 2020, the Grow Your Groceries Grow Kit program provides individuals with a one- or five-gallon grow bag, seeds or seedlings, soil, and an instructional booklet available in English or Spanish.

## Highlights

“What I liked about the grow kit program was that the kit had everything one would need to grow something.”

**4,220 Grow Kits Distributed**

“My kid (age 10) was very enthusiastic about the grow kit, and took care of the seedlings. She's excited to try again next year, and was really proud of her ability to grow a mint plant”

**97 Community Partner Sites**

**57 communities reached**

**64 different zip codes**

# Home Gardens

Chicago Grows Food successfully piloted the Grow Your Groceries (GYG) Home Garden Program in 2022, providing customized garden installations. Participants of the program receive 12 five-gallon grow bags; one four by four raised bed; or one 100-gallon grow bag; soil; seeds and seedlings; and an instruction booklet in English or Spanish. The set-up is selected by the participant with support and guidance based on the participant's available space and gardening goals.

**58 Customized Home Gardens Installed**



# 2023 Program Reach Grow Your Groceries



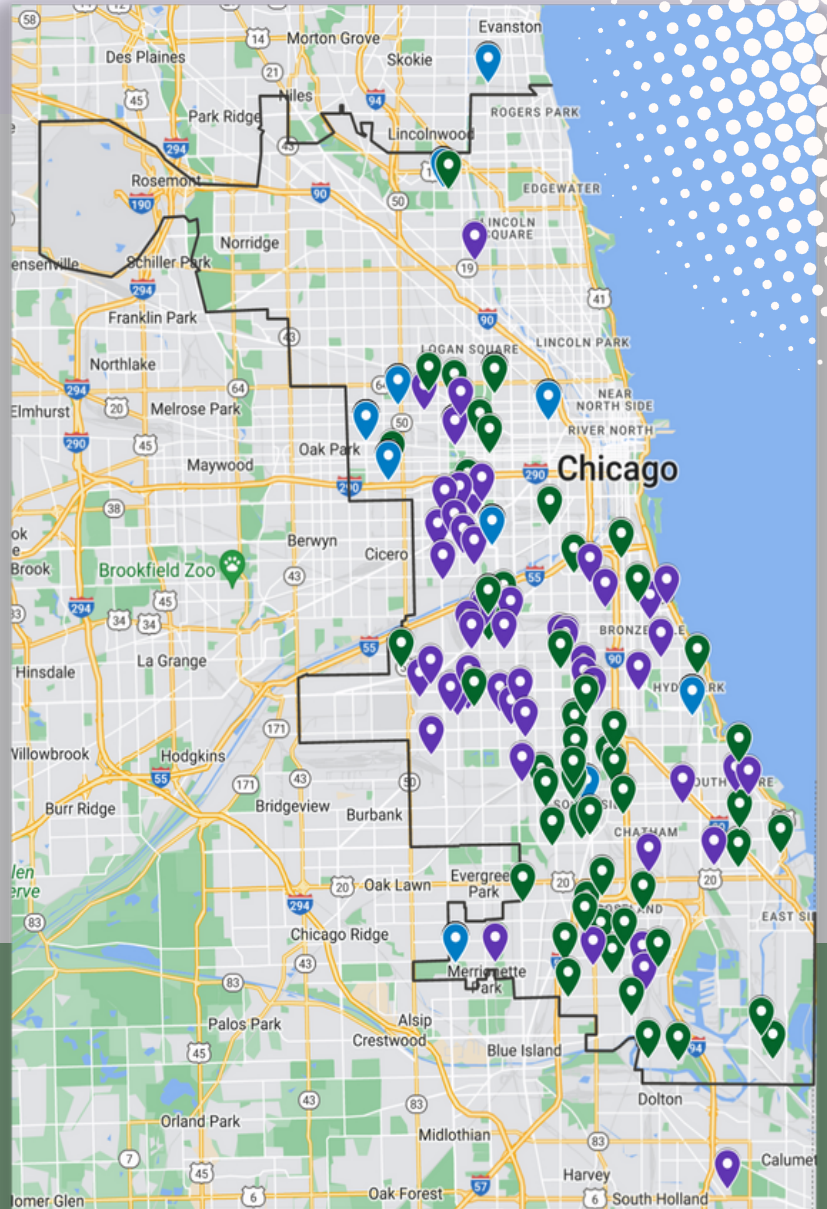
**Grow Kits**  
4,220 kits | 70 sites



**Home Garden**  
58 homes



**Community Distributions**  
27 sites



**Thank you to all our  
distribution sites!**



## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Revenue	
Release of Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	\$ 101,645.19
Grants	\$ 139,699.50
Individual Contributions	\$ 3,529.51
Program Service Fees	\$ 9,450.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 254,324.20</b>

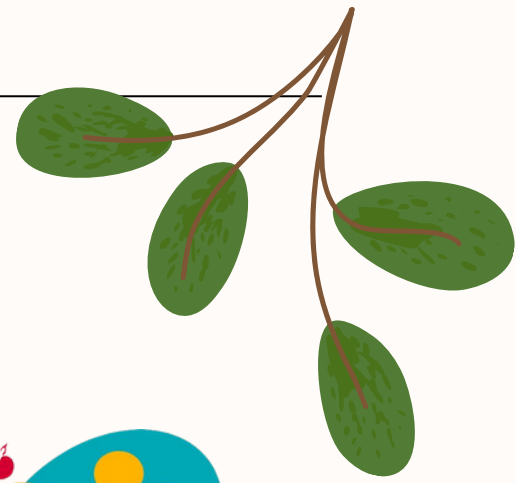
Expenses	
Staff	\$ 57,756.54
Contracted Services	\$ 45,311.70
Marketing & Technology	\$ 3,154.87
Direct Program Expenses	\$ 40,131.88
Fundraising	\$ 18,991.81
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$ 165,346.80</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 88,977.40</b>

"Para mí cultivar mis propios alimentos, sabiendo que tengo éxito, es como cultivarme mis tomates, mis chiles. Todavía no voy a comprarlos a la tienda. Como que yo me siento contenta por qué pues en ver mis propios vegetales y estoy cosechando, y eso me da a gusto ver todo eso."

"For me growing my own food, knowing that I'm successful, it's like growing my own tomatoes, my own chili peppers. I still don't go to the store and buy them. I'm kind of happy to see my own vegetables and I'm harvesting them, and that makes me happy to see all that."

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# Chicago Grows Food Collaborators



ROBERT  
JOHNSON



CHICAGO  
PARTNERSHIP FOR  
HEALTH  
PROMOTION



MARJORIE  
KERSTEN



**openlands**  
conserving nature for life



UI Health

Office of Community Engagement and  
Neighborhood Health Partnerships



 **DEPAUL UNIVERSITY**

**IRWIN W. STEANS CENTER**

FOR COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE LEARNING & COMMUNITY SERVICE STUDIES

**HEALTHY SCHOOLS  
CAMPAIGN**

PETER  
HOY



**gardeneers**

growing school gardens

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# Thank You To Our Supporters



richard fisher dealerships

alfa romeo | austin | fiat | honda | mazda | nissan | nissan evanston | volkswagen | volvo cars | volvo cars



BUILDERS INITIATIVE



CHICAGO REGION  
FOOD SYSTEM FUND

