

Austin Fresh Grantees 2020–2025

Austin Fresh 2025 Grantees

The Austin Fresh funders collaborative, [Builders Initiative](#), [The Christopher Family Foundation](#), [Food:Land:Opportunity](#), [The Lumpkin Family Foundation](#) and the [Walter Mander Foundation](#), reviewed applications as part of Austin Fresh's second five-year commitment to work collaboratively with partners to expand healthy retail options, support community gardens and local food production, grow food enterprises, and protect and strengthen food assistance programs in the Austin neighborhood on Chicago's West Side. The Austin Fresh funders made 15 grant awards for 2025.

Projects being funded this year are:

- [Austin Coming Together](#)—for Austin Eats, a coalition working to strengthen the healthy food ecosystem in Austin by increasing the collective impact of its member organizations to improve education and economic development outcomes for the community. \$500,000 for two years
- [Austin Community Food Co-Op](#)—for further development and growth of its business plan and membership. Funds will support the Co-op's current momentum towards store opening. \$75,000
- [Austin Garden Collective](#)—for operational support to grow volunteer recruitment, direct food access, and improve their Community Garden spaces. \$280,000 for two years
- [Beyond Hunger](#)— for its Home Delivery program to further expand healthy, local food access and nutrition education in Austin for homebound individuals. Beyond Hunger will utilize new partnerships to distribute more food to unhoused populations and purchase food from Austin vendors. \$90,000
- [BUILD Inc.](#)—for the Austin Grown programming, garden maintenance, and staffing serving over sixty youth and hundreds of community members through youth programming, community education events, and weekly farm stands promoting food access and neighborhood pride. \$150,000
- [Circle Urban Ministries](#)—for its Seed 2 Success program to deliver fresh, year-round produce to families in Austin. Circle Urban Ministries will retrofit their Freight Farm with hydroponic and electrical systems to ensure a successful first year of cultivation. \$100,000
- [Evolved Network, NFP](#)—for its Redefining Access Project delivering immersive, relationship-centered experiences for youth in Austin schools and community centers focused on gardening, cooking, and shared presence. \$35,000
- [Food Access Project](#)—for its Coordinated Delivery for Individuals with Disabilities living in the Austin Community project providing monthly grocery deliveries and fresh produce to disabled individuals facing food insecurity in and around Austin. \$120,000
- [GSJ Family Life Center](#)—for its Circle of Nourishment project, building on the success of its Austin Incubator Kitchen. Through hands-on gardening, culturally responsive nutrition classes, and a low-cost meal line, Circle of Nourishment advances food sovereignty, chronic disease prevention, and access to employment. \$132,000

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- [Jehovah Jireh #1 Outreach Ministry](#)—for its Austin storefront food pantry operations, including providing residents with fresh produce, non-perishables, dairy, and hot meals as a violence prevention strategy. \$50,000
- [NeighborSpace](#)— for its Advanced Incubator Farm project to expand neighborhood-based economic and food systems strategy through supporting urban agriculture initiatives. The incubator farm will transform underutilized Austin land into productive, community-centered growing space for beginning and mid-level farmers to cultivate crops, receive mentorship, and connect to local food distribution systems. \$450,000 for two years
- [One Earth Collective](#)— for its Austin Eats Food Education Film & Action Programs that occur twice annually. One Earth Collective integrates storytelling with experiential community engagement addressing food justice and health disparities in the Austin neighborhood. \$30,000
- [PCC Community Wellness Center](#)— for their Diabetes Self-Management Education & Support Services program. The program will increase distribution of monthly local produce boxes to participants alongside cooking classes and diabetes management education. \$25,000
- [Task Force Prevention and Community Services](#)— for their food pantry program serving Austin families and LGBTQ+ youth of color. The food pantry is embedded within their broader network of holistic support services addressing interconnected needs such as professional development, housing, and affirming medical care for LGBTQ+ youth of color. \$30,000
- [West Side Health Authority](#)— for The Butchers Path: Workforce Apprenticeship Program. The 12-month program will partner with Forty Acres Fresh Market in Austin to train an apprentice butch in whole-animal butchery and other skill development. \$50,000

Austin Fresh 2024 Grantees

The Austin Fresh funders collaborative, [Builders Initiative](#), [The Christopher Family Foundation](#), [Food:Land:Opportunity](#), [The Lumpkin Family Foundation](#) and the [Walter Mander Foundation](#), reviewed applications for year five of Austin Fresh’s five-year commitment to work collaboratively with partners to expand healthy retail options, support community gardens and local food production, grow food enterprises, and protect and strengthen food assistance programs in the Austin neighborhood on Chicago’s West Side. The Austin Fresh funders made twelve grant awards for 2024.

- [Austin Coming Together](#)— for Austin Eats, a coalition working to strengthen the healthy food ecosystem in Austin by investing in gardens and farms, culinary entrepreneurship, grocery access, food education, emergency food access, and marketing. They will develop a new strategic plan to guide the coalition’s work over the next three years. \$298,031. *An additional grant of \$225,000 has been advised by Builders Initiative (BI) staff to complement the Austin Fresh grant. BI is a funding member of the Austin Fresh collaborative.*
- [Austin Community Food Co-op](#) — to sustain the execution of project activities for their Austin Community Food Co-op including website development, refining and executing short and

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long-term communications strategies, analyzing survey data, creating profiles of different types of potential member owners and planning their first membership campaign. \$25,000

- [Austin Garden Collective](#) — to support their 2025 plans to expand their vision and reach by becoming an established 501(c)(3) organization, partnering with community and urban agriculture organizations to create incubator farming sites in underutilized garden spaces, and increasing their visibility and engagement in the Austin neighborhood through the hiring of a Community Engagement consultant. \$70,000
- [Beyond Hunger](#) — for its Nutrition Education and Fresh Produce Expansion in Austin. Their Home Delivery program will continue purchasing produce from [Forty Acres Fresh Market](#), increase its spending from [Austin Harvest](#) and [PCC Austin Farm](#), and grow the number of homebound persons receiving fresh produce. They will expand their Health Ambassador programming to increase engagement of the Austin community. \$60,000
- [BUILD Inc.](#) — for general support of its Austin Grown program which addresses food insecurity among youth by promoting access to healthy food options while teaching food preparation, youth leadership, and STEAM skills; providing youth with an opportunity to earn money by working on transformative community projects; and establishing a pipeline to Chicago's farm-to-fork economy. Key partners to the Austin Grown program include [One Earth Collective](#) and [After School Matters](#). \$150,000
- [Chicago Austin Youth Travel Adventures, Inc. NFP](#) — for continued support of its Austin Farm to Table Trolley & Grow project dedicated to providing Austin residents and visitors with discovery journeys of food and history in the Austin neighborhood. \$35,000
- [Christ the King Jesuit College Prep](#) — for its Cooking Club which teaches students culinary skills, healthy eating habits, and sustainable food practices. \$9,000
- [Circle Urban Ministries](#) — for its Seed 2 Success Program which seeks to address immediate food security needs by empowering youth with education and experience cultivating fresh produce in a hydroponic freight farm that will directly contribute to Circle Urban's food pantry needs while driving sustainable, community-driven solutions to combat Austin's food desert conditions. \$120,000
- [Front Porch Arts Center, INC](#) — for its public art and storytelling campaign, which will launch an outreach campaign to inform residents about healthy food options, community gardens, food enterprises, and food assistance programs in Austin through partnerships with local artists, food entrepreneurs, and community organizations. \$40,000
- [GSJ Family Life Center](#) — to support the stability, efficiency, and resilience of the newly launched Austin Community Incubator Kitchen which provides healthy and local food-centered, community-driven entrepreneurship and nutritional education opportunities for Austin neighborhood residents. This project builds on the work that Greater St. John Bible Church and Faith in Place have collaborated on since 2020. \$100,000

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- [The Evolved Network](#)— for its Redefining Access project which deepens the organization’s commitment to inclusivity and cultural relevance through programming that melds the tangible elements of food consumption, preparation, and community involvement with the intangible values of love, trust, and purpose, transforming meals into enriching experiences that nourish body and soul and challenge the traditional boundaries of food by demonstrating how culinary practices can empower youth and reconfigure community dynamics. \$25,000
- [Westside Health Authority](#)— for continued support of the partnership with [Forty Acres Fresh Market](#) and its workforce hiring and operational activities toward the opening of its newly constructed brick-and-mortar grocery store. Once completed in Spring of 2025, the market will increase access to affordable fresh food retail in Austin. \$260,000

Austin Fresh 2023 Grantees

The Austin Fresh funders collaborative, [Builders Initiative](#), [The Christopher Family Foundation](#), [Food:Land:Opportunity](#), [The Lumpkin Family Foundation](#) and the [Walter Mander Foundation](#), reviewed applications for year four of Austin Fresh’s five-year commitment to work collaboratively with partners to expand healthy retail options, support community gardens and local food production, grow food enterprises, and protect and strengthen food assistance programs in the Austin neighborhood on Chicago’s West Side. The Austin Fresh funders made nine grant awards for 2023.

Projects being funded this year are:

- [Austin Coming Together](#)—for Austin Eats, a coalition working to strengthen the healthy food ecosystem in Austin by increasing the collective impact of its member organizations to improve education and economic development outcomes for the community. \$450,000 (second year of a grant previously approved in 2022)
- [Beyond Hunger](#)— for its Fresh Produce Initiative that will forge partnerships with local farms and produce suppliers to increase access to fresh produce for food-insecure older adults living in Austin. Funding will deepen the organization’s work with [Forty Acres Fresh Market](#), while allowing it to seek new local producers to establish purchasing agreements. \$70,500
- [BUILD Inc.](#)—for the expansion of Austin Grown programming and staffing at a new facility and farm and for renovations to their outdoor education center allowing for year-round utilization, and a hydroponic garden. The greatly expanded facility will enable BUILD Inc. to serve over 45 youth BUILDers and feed hundreds of families in the surrounding Austin community, helping to shape healthy habits for years to come. \$215,000
- [Chicago Austin Youth Travel Adventures, Inc. NFP](#)—for its CAYTA CARES - ChiTown Soul Trolley Fresh Food Tours, a program dedicated to providing Austin Community residents with discovery journeys of food and history. Funds will support expanding the ChiTown Soul Trolley Black Restaurant & History Tours, a participant food consumption evaluation and customized healthy meal planner, cooking classes and fresh produce and meals on the tour. \$30,000

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- [Food Access Project](#)—for its Coordinated Delivery for Individuals with Disabilities living in the Austin Community project providing monthly grocery deliveries and fresh produce to disabled individuals facing food insecurity in and around Austin. The project cohort is composed of local businesses and community organizations so that investments in the program stimulate economic development and local job growth. \$150,000
- [GSJ Family Life Center](#)—for its Austin Community Incubator Kitchen: Operations Ramp Up, 2023-2024 project, which seeks to provide healthy and local food-centered, community-driven entrepreneurship and nutritional education opportunities for Austin neighborhood residents through the establishment and operation of a community kitchen. This project builds on the work that Greater St. John Bible Church and Faith in Place have collaborated on since 2020. \$43,500
- [NeighborSpace](#)— for its Austin Community Gardens: Catalysts for Feeding and Connecting Communities/Phase 3 project. Funds will allow the Austin Garden Collective to increase its capacity to distribute and manage seven to ten sub grants for garden repair and infrastructure projects; seven to ten sub-grants for garden programming; and stipends for community outreach and engagement. \$200,000
- [Root-Riot Harambee](#)—general operating support to assist Root-Riot Harambee in achieving its long term sustainability goals, including enhanced programming, staffing, consultants, capital improvements, and/or the development of new programs at the Harambee garden, one of the longest-running volunteer gardens in Austin. \$50,000
- [The Evolved Network](#)—for its Holistic Healing for Youth through Culinary Arts and Gardening project which provides holistic healing with experiential programming through culinary arts and gardening, equipping youth in systematically oppressed communities with transformative healing, skills and support needed to evolve into masters of their unique gifts. \$30,000

Austin Fresh 2022 Grantees

The Austin Fresh funders collaborative, [Builders Initiative](#), [The Christopher Family Foundation](#), [Food:Land:Opportunity](#), [The Lumpkin Family Foundation](#) and the [Walter Mander Foundation](#), reviewed applications for year three of Austin Fresh's five-year commitment to work collaboratively with partners to expand healthy retail options, support community gardens and local food production, grow food enterprises, and protect and strengthen food assistance programs in the Austin neighborhood on Chicago's West Side. The Austin Fresh funders made six grant awards for 2022.

Projects being funded this year are:

- [Austin Coming Together](#)—for Austin Eats, a coalition working to strengthen the healthy food ecosystem in Austin by increasing the collective impact of its member organizations to improve education and economic development outcomes for the community. \$900,000 for two years (\$450,000/year)
- [Beyond Hunger](#)—for the In The Kitchen: Generational Change through Community Health Ambassadors program. In a partnership with New Moms, ambassadors provide cooking

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instruction and nutrition information; advocate for healthy cooking and eating habits; and address chronic health issues. \$25,000

- [BUILD, Inc.](#)—for the Austin Grown program, which addresses food insecurity among youth and families in the community by promoting access to organic food options while teaching healthy food preparation and youth leadership. The program expands on BUILD’s learning garden, The Iris, to create job experiences for teens as they learn about urban agriculture, food production, and food justice. \$175,000
- [GAP Community Center](#)—for Chiquitos in the Kitchen/Juntos in the Kitchen, a cooking and gardening program that empowers students on the north side of Austin to creatively and sustainably engage with food in the garden, in the kitchen, around the table, and in the community. \$50,000
- [GSJ Family Life Center](#)—to help launch and ramp up community driven operations at the Austin Community Incubator Kitchen, which provides healthy food-centered local entrepreneurship opportunities and nutrition education for Austin neighborhood residents. This project builds on the work that Greater St. John Bible Church and Faith in Place have collaborated on since 2020. \$75,000
- [Westside Health Authority](#)—for the partnership with [Forty Acres Fresh Market](#) toward construction of a brick-and-mortar grocery store. Once completed, the market will increase access to affordable fresh food retail in Austin. \$500,000

Austin Fresh 2021 Grantees

The Austin Fresh funders collaborative, [Builders Initiative](#), [The Christopher Family Foundation](#), [Food:Land:Opportunity](#), [The Lumpkin Family Foundation](#) and the [Walter Mander Foundation](#), reviewed applications for year four of Austin Fresh’s five-year commitment to work collaboratively with partners to expand healthy retail options, support community gardens and local food production, grow food enterprises, and protect and strengthen food assistance programs in the Austin neighborhood on Chicago’s West Side. The Austin Fresh funders made six grant awards for 2021.

- [Bethel New Life](#): for phase 1 of their Mildred Wiley Wellness Hub at their Beth Ann Campus. The wellness hub will include gardens, a sunroom for senior residents to enjoy and for the processing of vegetables, and nutrition education in partnership with the Illinois Extension Service. \$200,000
- [Beyond Hunger](#): to train nutrition ambassadors who can provide cooking instruction and nutrition information focused on how to prepare healthy meals with the food available from emergency supply, in a partnership with New Moms. \$28,000
- [BUILD, Inc.](#): for the redevelopment of the Iris garden and associated programming, at Michele Clark High School (temporary location) and ultimately as it returns to the location of their completed new facility. \$180,000
- [Faith in Place](#): for additional costs associated with rezoning and completing the build-out of a certified kitchen at Greater St. John Church, which will be open to the community for

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development of commercial food products, cooking classes, and sanitation certification for those seeking employment in the food industry. \$33,425

- [NeighborSpace](#): for coordination of activities at all of the Austin-based community gardens and the development of one additional Peace Garden. \$92,000
- [Westside Health Authority](#): for the partnership with [Forty Acres Fresh Market](#) toward construction of a brick-and-mortar grocery store, specifically for marketing outreach and purchase of equipment once construction on the store is complete. \$593,000

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- [Austin Coming Together](#): to support coordination efforts on all food-related work in Austin as it pertains to the community's quality of life plan, and to help build the collective, positive narrative of the changes coming to Austin. (\$125,000/year)
- [BUILD, Inc.](#): to expand their Iris garden, and involve more youth in its care, as well as to add some gardening efforts off-site, where youth will work with elders in the community to grow food. \$81,000
- [By the Hand Club for Kids](#): to take their [Austin Harvest](#) pop-up market from a 12-week pilot last summer to a year-round program making low-cost produce available in the community and teaching entrepreneurialism to the youth. \$75,000
- [Faith in Place](#): to build out a commercial kitchen at [Greater St. John Bible Church](#) where residents can obtain their sanitation certificates, and caterers can execute contracts in a legally licensed kitchen. \$85,000
- [GAP Community Center](#): to teach children from the north end of Austin to cook, and to build a bridge between Austin's Black population and the growing Latino population on the north end of the neighborhood. (\$22,312/year)
- [NeighborSpace](#): to improve facilities at a group of Austin community gardens and to re-activate the community around each garden to make best use of it. (\$150,000/year)
- [Westside Health Authority](#): to work with [Forty Acres Fresh Market](#), an existing for-profit fresh market concept, to move them into a permanent space and provide a full-service produce store in Austin (site and much funding already acquired). This funding will help to build out a site on Chicago Avenue for a full-service produce market. \$957,500