

# ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY IN PHILADELPHIA

Too many Philadelphians are food insecure (18% in 2023). Driven by poverty, food insecurity occurs when a household cannot access adequate food due to insufficient resources. Food insecurity is associated with poor diet quality and increased risk of diseases. It is especially detrimental to children's health and has been linked to adverse developmental, behavioral and socio-emotional outcomes.

Over the past year, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention issued a \$350,000 request for proposals and allocated \$550,000 to the Philadelphia Food Justice Initiative to address food insecurity in Philadelphia.

## VENDORS TO ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY RFP

Released in December 2024, the Vendors to Address Food Insecurity in Philadelphia Request for Proposals (RFP) sought proposals to address Philadelphians' food needs, enhance efforts to provide healthy and high-quality food in a dignified manner, and address underlying causes of food insecurity.

A total of 27 proposals were submitted with diverse food distribution models:

### PREPARED MEAL DELIVERIES

**20** APPLICANTS WERE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

**5** APPLICANTS WERE FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

**7** APPLICANTS WERE MINORITY OWNED BUSINESSES

**2** APPLICANTS WERE DISQUALIFIED

### FOOD BOX PROGRAMS

### NEIGHBORHOOD MARKETS

### ON-SITE FOOD DISTRIBUTION

**8** APPLICANTS ALSO APPLIED FOR THE PHILADELPHIA FOOD JUSTICE INITIATIVE

**13** PROPOSALS ADOPTED A CITYWIDE APPROACH TO ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY

**12** PROPOSALS TARGETED HIGH-NEED AREAS IN SOUTH, SOUTHWEST, WEST, NORTH, AND NORTHEAST PHILADELPHIA

## AWARDED

**\$234,000**

### PHILABUNDANCE

- Distributed 109,083 pounds of fresh, healthy, culturally appropriate food to high-need neighborhoods
- Updated refrigerated truck fleet
- Provided 6 trainings to over 150 community partners on people-centered services and referrals

**\$116,000**

### DOUBLE TRELLIS FOOD INITIATIVE

- Expanded meal production and provided 32,598 free dignified meals, an average of 1,253 meals per week, which were distributed throughout 14 zip codes in collaboration with 22 partners
- Launched a new Workforce Development cohort
- Explored broader expansion and operational opportunities with partners

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*We learned of struggles to access food—especially fresh and culturally relevant foods... Our communities of Northeast Philadelphia consistently struggled with the lack of resources in our portion of the city.*

— RFP applicant

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## PHILADELPHIA FOOD JUSTICE INITIATIVE

PDPH administers the Philadelphia Food Justice Initiative (PFJI) in partnership with Reinvestment Fund. From 2019 to 2025, PFJI has awarded nearly \$2.5 million to 39 organizations in areas where access to healthier food is needed most. These organizations are community-rooted and are led by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; immigrants; people living with disabilities; and others with lived experience of food injustice.

In Winter 2025, PFJI received 99 proposals for:

FOOD  
DISTRIBUTION

FOOD  
BUSINESS

URBAN  
AGRICULTURE

EDUCATION AND  
TRAINING

IN ORDER TO:



Add value to  
communities



Increase equitable  
access to food



Build collaborative  
partnerships

### AWARDED (\$550,000)

Assata's House  
Crossroads Women's Center  
Dirtbaby Farm  
Fair Amount Food Forest  
Get Fresh Daily

Glover Gardens LLC  
Karen Community Association of Philadelphia  
Neighborhood Land Power Project  
Norris Square Neighborhood Project

Stacey Woodson, LLC  
Star Apple Nursery  
The Fridge on 52nd  
Tubman Guevara Brigade  
Workers Revolutionary Collective

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*This past season was unlike no other where we had seen grocery stores with empty shelves demonstrating the inefficiencies with our global food system. ...Our project helped us serve the need for fresh, affordable produce for community members, and also demonstrated how a local asset can be a part of more robust, localized food system that can serve them and be less vulnerable to these greater food chain disruptions.*

– PFJI grantee

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## FUNDING NECESSITY

With consistent funding, local organizations can continue to distribute food, expand food businesses, maintain gardens and farms, enhance the local food system, and build community resilience. Decreases in federal funding and elevated food costs are putting a strain on Philadelphia's food system. Cuts to programs like SNAP and TEFAP and agricultural grants for farmers impact resources for food banks, school food, and community organizations. Resources are underfunded and overstretched, as witnessed by the number of applicants to this RFP and round of PFJI. Sustainable investment in our local organizations running food assistance is critical to fighting food insecurity.