PROJECT OVERVIEW
ATTACHMENT B

Farm to Fork: Cultivating Grassroots Capacity to Transform Food Access

HWFP PROJECT NUMBER 2007D-21

PROJECT SUMMARY
Describe the major purpose of the project, the need and how it relates to the Health Improvement Model. Briefly describe the project's implementation plan, methods to be utilized and involvement of affected communities. Detail the community-academic partnership plan. Specify the evaluation method that will be used to measure feasible, quantifiable and significant outcomes and the impact the project will have on the health of Wisconsin residents. Do not exceed this one page

This project will expand a grassroots coalition’s capacity to comprehensively address nutrition-related health risks and disparities in the Fond du Lac and North Avenue area of Milwaukee, which is primarily African American and low income. The 2000 Census showed over half of families were in poverty in 1999, compared to 11% for Milwaukee County; median household income was just over $15,000 vs. $38,000; and about 80% of residents are renters vs. 47% countywide. The Greater Johnsons Park Health Coalition formed in April 2006 to address health concerns related to obesity, physical inactivity, and food insecurity. Preliminary findings from a community health survey conducted by Coalition members confirmed that hypertension, diabetes, cancer, and obesity are among the greatest concerns to residents. A contributing health risk for this economically depressed neighborhood is a lack of access to groceries, and an over-reliance on high priced, low nutrition convenience products.

Partnering with area neighborhood associations and community groups, the Greater Johnsons Park Health Coalition and the MCW Center for Healthy Communities will identify the baseline data needs pertaining to nutrition-related health risks, food access and availability, and knowledge and attitudes toward food. Through a community-based participative process, the project will build a shared vision for a comprehensive, “farm-to-fork” strategy that encompasses growing, harvesting, preparing, storing and selling nutritious foods. A pilot program that addresses one segment of the comprehensive strategy will be designed, tested, and evaluated for broader implementation by Coalition partners. The project will also expand the Coalition’s capacity to implement the full comprehensive strategy over the long term to improve the community’s access to healthy, nutritious, affordable food and reduce nutrition-related health risks and disparities.

The existing coalition will use this development grant to strengthen our evolving community-academic partnership based on bidirectional dialogue, mutual respect and common goals for developing the community’s capacity to access nutritious food. The Coalition, including MCW academic partners, have set a goal of improving neighborhood-wide access to healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate foods, and share a commitment to a long-lasting partnership. We will connect existing resources through programs that meet residents’ needs across economic levels and age groups, and connect food and economic development for the community’s long-term benefit. This area has strong neighborhood associations, community groups, and non-profit organizations that have become Coalition members. We recognize the capacity of our grassroots community partners to build lasting relationships with neighborhood residents, assess residents’ needs, and plan pilot projects most appropriate for this community.

A multi-level evaluation will be conducted to assess the continued development of the partnership, including coalition structure and processes; input by the affected community and other key stakeholders; community assessment and the development of a shared vision and plan for the comprehensive “farm to fork” strategy. Process evaluation will include resources secured by program partners; new members recruited, the reach of the community assessments; and partnership synergy as measured by the workgroup’s goals, plan, and evaluation, the actions it carries out, new skills or capacities developed, and relationships with the broader community. Pilot program evaluations will measure the level of participation, changes in attitudes and behaviors regarding nutritious foods and food preparation habits. Further feasible, measurable outcome measurements will accompany the specific pilot program designed with the community.