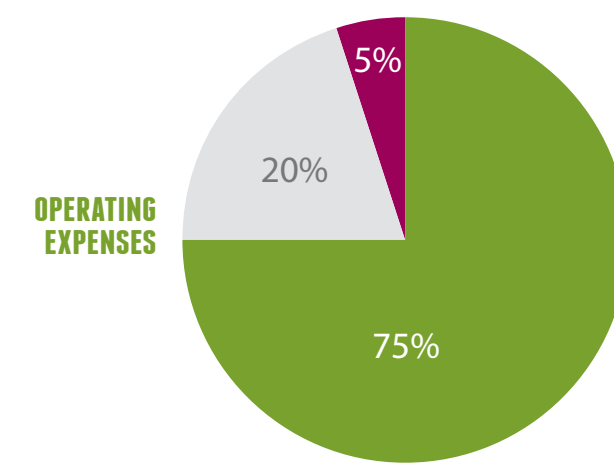
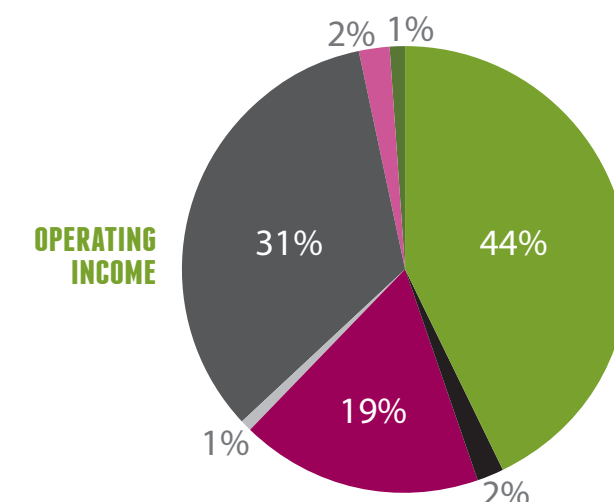


# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



| OPERATING INCOME | FY 2021             |     |
|------------------|---------------------|-----|
| Foundations      | 314,297.03          | 44% |
| Individuals      | 11,781.00           | 2%  |
| Government       | 133,088.25          | 19% |
| Corporations     | 8,807.51            | 1%  |
| Events           | 865.23              | —   |
| Earned Income    | 221,907.06          | 31% |
| In Kind          | 12,739.50           | 2%  |
| Interest         | 4,163.07            | 1%  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>     | <b>\$707,648.65</b> |     |

| OPERATING EXPENSES          | FY 2021             |     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----|
| Programs                    | 434,649.53          | 75% |
| Administration & Management | 112,933.19          | 20% |
| Fundraising                 | 28,307.11           | 5%  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>\$575,889.83</b> |     |

*FY22 income and expenses have shifted in proportion with expanded programs, services and geographic reach.*



## THANK YOU TO OUR GRANTORS AND SPONSORS



## A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# 20 YEARS!

IN 2001 KATE DEYST AND CINDY BUHNER FROM HARVARD, MA WERE INSPIRED TO HELP THEIR COMMUNITY THROUGH THE GIFT OF GARDENING AND ACCESS TO FRESH, HEALTHY FOOD.

With a few loyal volunteers, ingenuity, and donated garden supplies, they built the first raised-bed gardens for food-insecure households in North Central MA 20 years ago. After two decades, their legacy grows.

As part of an underserved region, many North Central MA residents are at an increased risk for food insecurity – unable to consistently access or afford adequate food. Every day, households must choose between paying for their housing, healthcare, transportation, education and food. This leads to stress, a strained local economy, and poor overall health and wellbeing. Growing Places believes that food insecurity is not an individual problem. Rather it is due to systemic inequities that are deeply intertwined and pervasive in low-income, low-access regions like North Central MA. To confront this complicated problem, we recognize that a community must unite and change the way their food system works.

Food security operates on a continuum from emergency relief to self-reliance and resilience. With many food pantries alleviating emergency hunger needs, Growing Places works on the next levels of the continuum. By building capacity, we

empower those who are food insecure to access healthy food through our programs. Community gardens, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and healthy food access distribution (farmers/mobile markets and home delivered produce) meet food insecure households where they are and provide them with the resources they need for self-sufficiency. To create long-term change, we unite diverse stakeholders within the food system to redesign how it operates based on our unique community context. We are accomplishing this by developing a North Central MA Food Center with farmers, residents, institutional buyers, makers, healthcare partners, and many more.

Growing Places is excited to continue this important work and would like to **thank our donors, partners, staff, and volunteers** for 20 amazing years. From backyard gardens to farmers markets to food centers, Growing Places' work remains focused on increasing community food security. Please join us as we improve the health and wealth of North Central MA in 2022 and beyond.

With gratitude,  
Ayn Yeagle, M.S., R.D.  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## ROOTED IN COMMUNITY

### 2021-22 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Mary Giannetti<br>CHAIR             | Sheri Bean<br>MEMBER                             |
| Rocco Mammone<br>VICE-CHAIR         | Rev. Dr. Susan Suchocki Brown<br>MEMBER          |
| Christianne Mylott<br>FINANCE CHAIR | Dr. Shelley Errington Nicholson, Ph.D.<br>MEMBER |
| Miranda Jennings<br>CLERK           | Kelly Johnson<br>MEMBER                          |

### STAFF

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Ayn Yeagle<br>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR                   | Kayla Kress<br>DISTRIBUTION ADMINISTRATOR | Minna Scholten<br>COMMUNITY NUTRITION COORDINATOR |
| Becki Gray<br>FOOD ACCESS COORDINATOR              | Kendal Royer<br>FOOD SYSTEM COORDINATOR   | Richelle Brown<br>FINANCIAL CONTROLLER            |
| Derek Alford<br>TERRACORPS SERVICE MEMBER          | Kyle Anderson<br>PROGRAM STAFF            | Victoria Prend<br>TERRACORPS SERVICE MEMBER       |
| Janet Edwards<br>DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS & OPERATIONS |   |   |



Growing Places' mission is to inspire and connect the North Central MA community to create equitable access to healthy food and environmental sustainability through education, collaboration and advocacy.

325 LINDELL AVENUE LEOMINSTER, MA 01453  
TEL: 978.598.3723 GROWINGPLACES.ORG

# CONNECTIONS



# CONNECTIONS

Our mission to increase equitable food access in North Central MA means we are connected to every player in our local food system. Who does that include? It begins with our farmers – the hard-working folks who produce the fruits and vegetables, meats and poultry, dairy, and eggs we all rely on.

We have partnerships with local buyers and sellers, from small bodegas and family restaurants to large school systems and healthcare institutions. Our municipalities create and influence policies that shape how our food moves through our region. We work alongside other nonprofits and emergency food assistance agencies like food banks and food pantries, who, like us, seek to improve our community resilience. And, of course, we are connected to all residents as consumers, relying on fresh, local food for their health and wellbeing. As much as our work is about food, it is ultimately about people. Below are some of the important connections that Growing Places supported in 2021.

## CONNECTING ACROSS SECTORS...

We are proud to act as the backbone organization for a coalition of passionate individuals, each representing broader sectors in our community, who are working to foster inclusive communication, understand our region's needs, and build momentum to re-envision an equitable, sustainable local food system. This group formalized in 2021 as Local Food Works and hosted a successful first community convening in November with more than 60 stakeholders attending.

Represented within Local Food Works are: farmers, healthcare institutions, agricultural commissions, planning agencies, schools, philanthropy, residents, makers, buyers, municipalities, nonprofits, and youth.

## CONNECTING FARMERS WITH FORKS...

In the second year of the pandemic, our programs connected more people than ever with fresh produce, grown with love here in North Central Massachusetts (NCMA). We run a seasonal mobile market (20 stops in 16 communities, June–November), a year-round home-delivered produce program reaching 165+ households from Athol to Harvard, and our summer farmers markets monthly in Leominster and weekly in Fitchburg. Each program is another opportunity for people to use their Healthy Incentive Program benefits.

PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: Three NCMA stakeholders at our November Local Food Works event; Derek, TerraCorps Service Member, in the Growing Places warehouse; Youth Venture students at the Winchendon Community Farm; Winchendon middle school student planting the Winchendon Community Farm pollinator garden; local goody baskets from the Local Food Works event raffle; The Winchendon School students learning about healthy eating with Growing Places.



## BY THE NUMBERS

|  | FY 2020 | FY 2021 |
|--|---------|---------|
| Total Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) / Mobile Market Participants | 2,636   | 8,725   |
| Percentage of SNAP/HIP Participants                                      | 57%     | 70%     |
| Total CSA / Mobile Market Connections                                    | 14,081  | 23,173  |
| Pounds of Local Produce Distributed                                      | 52,588  | 69,048  |

## VOLUNTEERS

|            | FY 2020 | FY 2021 |
|------------|---------|---------|
| Volunteers | 149     | 268     |
| Hours      | 1,443   | 3,792   |



## LET'S TALK ABOUT THE FOOD SECURITY CONTINUUM

Never heard of it? But you're on it! And it guides Growing Places' choice of programs and strategies. *Let us explain.*

The food security continuum is a range of experiences, going from starvation and severe hunger at one end to equitable food security at the other. Every individual is somewhere along the continuum, and can move freely toward one end or the other.

STARVATION

COMPLETE FOOD SECURITY

Equitable food security means everyone has reliable access to enough, affordable, desirable, nutritious food. Pretty good, right? That's our goal!

But food security is a complicated issue in NCMA; it requires multiple strategies working in concert to help everyone shift all the way to an experience of complete food security. Depending upon where someone is along the continuum, e.g. experiencing severe hunger vs. having adequate, but unreliable food, different strategies are appropriate.

### WHEN THE NEED LOOKS LIKE:

Food insecurity (starvation, acute or chronic hunger).

### THE STRATEGIES ARE:

Immediate, short-term relief. People need food now! E.g. food banks, food pantries, and soup kitchens.

### LIMITATIONS:

These strategies address immediate need, but don't change the situation for long. They simply "give a man a fish."

### WHEN THE NEED LOOKS LIKE:

Less severe, perhaps intermittent or "hidden hunger."

### THE STRATEGIES ARE:

Capacity-building! E.g., community gardens, a community kitchen and buying clubs.

### LIMITATIONS:

These strategies "teach a man to fish," providing skills and individual capacity to move up the continuum toward greater food security, but do not change the current environment to ensure there is enough fish for everyone.

### BUT TO GET TO THE OTHER END OF THE CONTINUUM?

For that, we need a systems overhaul. Our environment – not just individual people – has to change. Here, we're looking at strategies like food networks, partnerships, and changes to the policies and systems that guide how food moves through our region. Think of it like stocking the pond with loads more fish for everyone. While these strategies don't address individual need immediately, they create a viable and sustainable path toward the goal of equitable food security.

## GROWING PLACES' GOAL

Equitable food security means everyone has reliable access to enough, affordable, desirable, nutritious food.