



## Request For Proposals (RFP) to Promote Healthy Food Resources in Silicon Valley

### I. Overview

#### RFP Purpose

The Health Trust is seeking to transform the health of communities by increasing the availability of fresh and locally grown produce in communities that have long lacked such access. Access to healthy food is a critical prerequisite for health and obesity prevention. By providing convenient access to affordable, healthy, fresh, and culturally appropriate food, a community can promote health for all of its residents. Traditional retail outlets (such as grocery stores and restaurants) potentially provide access to healthy food, but communities are increasingly looking to innovative, lower-cost strategies that may be easier to start and more responsive to local needs and preferences.<sup>1</sup> Healthy Food Resources such as gardens and farmers markets are an important part of the local food system and have the potential to support healthy eating, reduce environmental pollution, and promote economic vitality and self sufficiency.

The purpose of this RFP is to solicit proposals that promote healthy food resources in communities with the least access or the greatest barriers to healthful food in Santa Clara County and Northern San Benito County.

#### RFP Funding

The Health Trust has adopted a *Healthy Food Resources* framework that organizes new grant proposals under our Healthy Living Initiative's Garden Strategy into four broad goal areas: production, availability, affordability and consumption of healthful foods.

Through this RFP, The Health Trust will fund environmental and policy strategies that (1) expand, enhance or replicate efforts to promote healthy food resources in Santa Clara County and Northern San Benito County; and, (2) plan for and/or pilot innovative models that promote healthy food resources and have not been tested or implemented in Santa Clara County and Northern San Benito County.

The Health Trust anticipates funding grants in the range of \$20,000 - \$100,000 per year. Applicants may apply for up to two years of support. The maximum amount of funding for a one-year grant is \$100,000 and the maximum amount of funding for a two year grant is \$200,000. The Health Trust anticipates making four to six grants depending on the grant amount awarded.

#### RFP Timeline

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| RFP Released                            | September 20, 2010 posted to The Health Trust website |
| RFP Information Session Conference Call | September 24, 2010, 10:00 -11:00AM                    |
| Dial-in number                          | 1-866-740-1260  |
| Access Code                             | 5599385   |
| RFP Due Date                            | November 1, 2010, 5pm                                 |
| RFP Award Decision Announced            | December 13, 2010                                     |

#### RFP Questions

Please refer questions about this RFP to the Grants Administrator by emailing [grants@healthtrust.org](mailto:grants@healthtrust.org). A Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) document from the Information Session will be posted to The Health Trust's website on September 28, 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> Healthy Food Resource Assessment for Santa Clara County. Public Health Law and Policy/Planning for Healthy Places. 2010.

## II. Background

The Health Trust's Healthy Living Initiative aims to reduce obesity by creating changes in our environment to increase access to physical activity and healthy food opportunities for all residents. One of the strategies to address this goal is supporting and promoting community, home and school gardens. The Health Trust works in partnership with community and public agencies to expand home, school and community gardens as part of the regional food system, so that every community has access to fresh, healthy food. While gardens and urban agriculture are central to achieving this outcome, The Health Trust recognizes that additional types of Healthy Food Resources (HFR) play a part in increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables in low-income neighborhoods.

In September 2010, The Health Trust, in partnership with Public Health Law and Policy and the Clarence E. Heller Charitable Foundation, released the report: *Healthy Food Resource Assessment for Santa Clara County*. This RFP aims to fill the gaps and address the barriers identified in this report. The report is available online at: [www.healthtrust.org/foodaccess/index.php](http://www.healthtrust.org/foodaccess/index.php).

The following points summarize the findings of the report:

- There are a number of low-income areas in Santa Clara County that lack walkable access to HFRs; these same areas have a higher concentration of unhealthy food outlets such as fast food and convenience stores. The compounding effect creates a food environment where making a healthy food choice is difficult or impossible for low-income families.
- While most farmers' markets in the county accept Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) coupons and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) coupons, less than half accept Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps). Federal food assistance programs increase the purchasing power of low-income consumers and provide a revenue stream for local food enterprises. When markets don't accept EBT – even if they are located near low-income households – they may not be accessible to these consumers.
- CSAs have the potential to provide an accessible source of healthy food, especially for families without access to a private automobile, as farm products are delivered directly to the community. However, a lack of convenient drop-off locations and requirements for upfront payment may put CSA memberships out of reach for many low-income families.
- Long waitlists (on average, 46 people) prove the popularity of community gardens in Santa Clara County. A significant barrier to access is simply not having the garden capacity to meet the demand of local residents. Cities are missing opportunities for increasing and expanding community gardens through land use policy, development incentives, and public private partnerships.
- School gardens are largely informal programs led by a few teachers or parents, and rarely a schoolwide effort or district level initiative. Typical barriers include limited funding, limited staff time, and pressure related to standardized test preparation.

Consistent with the report, this RFP emphasizes the following Healthy Food Resources:

**Community Gardens** allow residents to grow their own produce and share it with their family and neighborhoods, reducing household food costs, increasing “food literacy,” creating neighborhood green space for recreation, conservation, and beautification; and improving public safety by connecting neighbors and activating underutilized spaces.

**Home Gardens** provide households with direct access to fresh fruits and vegetables that are preferred by the household members. Home gardens can play an important role in the affordability of high quality, locally grown produce.

**School Gardens** provide children and youth with a hands-on classroom experience in nutrition, science, math, cultural studies, and the pleasure of growing food, and can foster life-long healthy eating habits.

**Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA)** initiatives bring consumers fresh local food through subscriptions or shares of the harvest from a particular farm or group of farms. Like farmers' markets, CSAs offer similar ecological and economic development benefits with one additional feature: CSAs often deliver to neighborhood drop-off sites or directly to consumers' home or workplace.

**Farmers' Markets** provide consumers the opportunity to maximize their food dollars, by supporting farms that employ sustainable and organic farming practices, grow regional and culturally specialties, minimize energy consumption by transportation and storage, and re-circulate dollars directly back into the local and regional economy.

**Mobile Produce Markets/Farm Stands** are emerging practices that bring low-cost farm and garden fresh produce directly to neighborhoods lacking such access, often on a smaller and more tailored scale. Examples of such efforts include the New York City Green Cart program<sup>2</sup> and Oakland-based People's Groceries and City Slicker Farms.<sup>3</sup>

### III. RFP Goals, Outcomes and Theory of Change

The Health Trust's **vision** for healthy food resources in Santa Clara County and Northern San Benito County includes:

- Local and sustainable production of healthful food is maximized
- Fresh produce is valued and in demand
- Equity in access and affordability is prioritized
- All neighborhoods have healthy food resources within walking distance

This RFP seeks to address the following four **goals**:

- Increase local production of fresh fruits and vegetables through gardens and urban agriculture.
- Increase and protect the availability of healthy food resources in low-income communities lacking such resources.
- Increase the affordability of healthy food resources for low-income communities.
- Increase utilization of healthy food resources by low-income communities.

This RFP seeks to achieve the following **outcomes**:

- Increased production of healthful food
- Increased availability of healthful food for communities lacking access
- Increased affordability of locally grown produce for low income communities
- Increased consumption of fruits and vegetables

These outcomes align with The Health Trust's overarching outcome for its garden strategy: ***Residents have access to affordable locally grown produce within 1/2 mile of their neighborhood.***

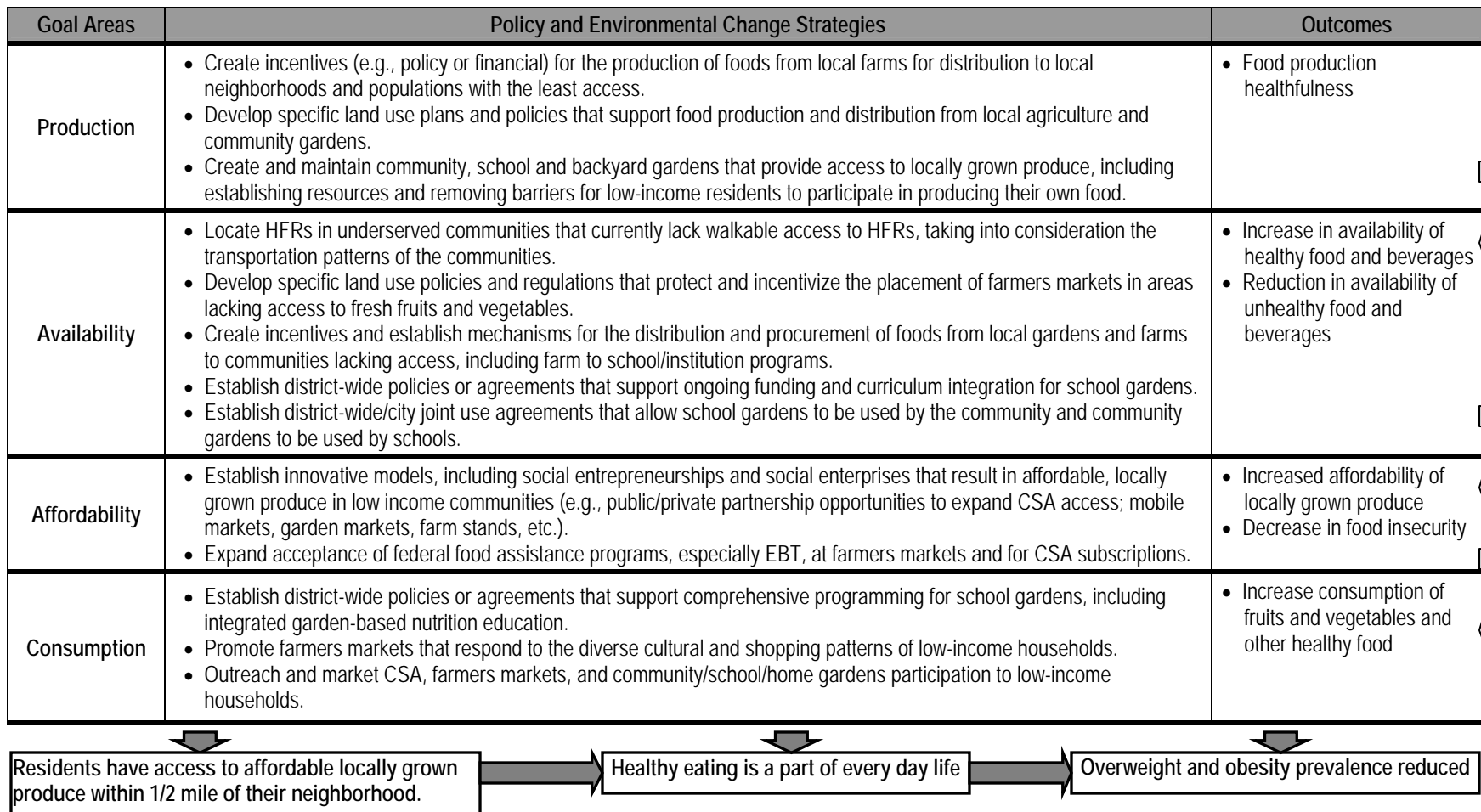
The Healthy Food Resources **Theory of Change**, presented below in Figure 1, shows the four goal areas: Production, Availability, Affordability, and Consumption. Each goal area is associated with several potential environmental and policy strategies. These strategies comprise the allowable objectives to be funded under this RFP.

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<sup>2</sup> See: [http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cdp/cdp\\_pan\\_green\\_carts.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cdp/cdp_pan_green_carts.shtml)

<sup>3</sup> See: [http://www. http://www.peoplesgrocery.org/](http://www.peoplesgrocery.org/) and <http://www.cityslickerfarms.org/>

**FIGURE 1. HEALTHY FOOD RESOURCES<sup>4</sup> (HFRs)– THEORY OF CHANGE**



**Assumptions:**

Educating people about the importance of healthy eating is not, in itself, enough to change behavior. The production, availability and affordability of healthy food also directly impact consumption of fresh and healthful food. There are nutrition environmental inequities for low income communities, and policy and environmental changes are necessary to address these inequities. Supporting gardens and urban agriculture as a part of a local food system has the potential to create greater access to healthy food for all. Strategies are most effective and sustainable when demanded by, informed by, and driven by engaged community members.

<sup>4</sup> Healthy Food Resources: Community-based for-profit and non-profit initiatives that provide healthy food, including farmers markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) programs, and community, school, and home gardens.

## IV. RFP Eligibility Requirements and Proposal Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following requirements and criteria:

- Applicants must be nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations or public agencies.
- Projects must directly benefit residents of Santa Clara County and/or Northern San Benito County.
- Proposal addresses at least two of the goal areas in the theory of change. Proposals that address one goal area will be considered but will be less competitive.
- Proposal includes one or more healthy food resources as defined under Section II of this RFP.
- Proposal addresses a healthy food equity gap with particular attention to low-income households.
- Proposal addresses a geographic gap, consistent with the *Healthy Food Resources Assessment in Santa Clara County* report, if applicable.
- Project includes partners necessary to achieve success, including when appropriate, partners that will help bolster and sustain the proposed project's policy and environmental changes through advocacy, programming, outreach and education.
- Community residents and stakeholders will be engaged in a meaningful way to ensure the project's success and sustainability.
- The project is informed by or modeled after local, state and/or national experiences and best practices in creating equitable healthy food access.
- Project has a feasible sustainability plan.

Priority will be given to proposals that best meet the criteria and align with the goals, outcomes and theory of change of this RFP. The Health Trust is focused on communities with the least access to affordable healthy food resources as identified in the *Healthy Food Resources Assessment in Santa Clara County* report ([www.healthtrust.org/foodaccess/index.php](http://www.healthtrust.org/foodaccess/index.php)) and/or defined by other valid sources. Northern San Benito County may extract applicable findings and recommendations from the report but should provide other evidence for meeting the equity and geographic gap criteria outlined above.

## V. Application Instructions

Applications may be submitted via email or regular mail. The narrative portion of the application should not exceed 6 pages, using 12-point type and one-inch margins.

1. Complete RFP Coversheet
2. Complete the Evaluation Plan Matrix
  - a. Review the Healthy Food Resources Report and Theory of Change (TOC)
  - b. Assess how your proposed project fits this Theory of Change
    - Which goal area(s) does your project address? (see left column of TOC)
    - How does your project contribute to the outcomes? (see right column of TOC)
    - Which of the policy and environment change strategies does your project address? (see middle column of TOC)
  - c. For each goal, complete a separate matrix. Write the goal at the top of the matrix, and list the objectives aligned with the goal. The objectives should reflect strategies presented within the TOC.
  - d. Tailor your outputs and outcomes for your project.
3. Complete a narrative (6 pages max) addressing all areas below:
  - a. Describe applicant organization and project partners' mission, programs, expertise and capacity.

- b. Referencing the Healthy Food Resources Report and the Theory of Change, describe the project and how it meets each of the following criteria and cite data sources:
  - Addresses at least two of the goal areas on the Theory of Change.
  - Focuses on one or more healthy food resources as defined under Section II.
  - Addresses a healthy food equity gap with particular attention to low-income households. (Define the target population and/or target community)
  - Addresses a geographic gap, consistent with the Healthy Food Resources Assessment Report, if applicable. (Define the target community or geographic area)
  - Includes necessary partners to make the project successful and sustainable.
  - Includes a strategy and process to engage community residents and stakeholders in a meaningful way to ensure the project's success and sustainability.
  - Is based on a local, state and/or national experience or model to create equitable healthy food access.
  - Includes a feasible sustainability plan.
- c. Referencing the Evaluation Plan Matrix, explain in more detail the anticipated short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes.
- d. Referencing the Evaluation Plan Matrix, describe key activities and timetable necessary to meet the project objectives.
- e. Referencing the Evaluation Matrix, describe how you will evaluate the extent to which you achieved your goals, objectives and outcomes of this project. The Health Trust will be utilizing an external evaluator, but you should indicate who will be responsible for implementing the evaluation from your organization.
- f. Provide a narrative for the budget and describe the cash and in-kind resources needed to achieve the proposed objectives.

#### 4. Complete Budget Template

## VI. Required Attachments

Provide these attachments for the applicant organization and any project partners that will receive 33% or more of the requested funding.

- A. Current Operating Budget
- B. IRS Determination Letter
- C. Current Board of Directors List
- D. Most recent Audited Financial Statement (if available)
- E. Most recent Annual Report (if available)

## VII. RFP Selection Process

Staff will conduct due diligence between November 2 – 12 and may schedule either a phone call or site visit during this time period.

The Health Trust Grantmaking Committee will review proposals and recommend for funding the proposals that most closely meet the criteria, align with The Health Trust's Healthy Living goals and have the greatest potential for sustainability.

Awarded Grantee Expectations include:

- Submit an interim report at the mid-point and a final report at the completion of the grant period.
- Participate in an external evaluation and host one site visit during the term of the grant
- Take advantage of resources and technical assistance offered through The Health Trust and the Silicon Valley Food System Alliance.