



# Healthy Food Access For All Minnesotans



## Good Food Access Program Grant Recipient Profile

### OUR COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS

#### Washington County, Minnesota

A cooler and storage system provides farmers with more certainty.

For Our Community Food Projects the central goal has always been to provide a source of locally grown, healthy foods for the residents of Washington County. Established in 2010, the organization began several farms that produce a diverse array of vegetables and greens. As demand for local produce has continued to grow, distribution now includes a corner-store, farmers markets and a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture).

But one of the challenges the organization and its participating farmers faced is trying to figure out just how much food to grow, and equally important, how to keep the harvested produce fresh. Several of the farmers had been harvesting what they could fit into their trunk and then rushing it home and putting it in their refrigerators.

“The farmers have always had a hard time figuring out how much to produce if they don't know that they have a secure place to store it,” says Ben Devore, a young farmer in training at two of the farms associated with Our Community Food Projects.



A view of locally produced, peak-season vegetables for sale at a small farmer's market near Forest Lake, Minn. (Washington County).



*“Having a mobile cooler ... is a huge step in helping distribute food out into the community and helping the farmers produce the food and store it.”*

Ben notes that investments like that provided by the Good Food Access Fund reach beyond individual farmers and the people they serve. It also has a widespread impact on farmers' markets in surrounding communities because if farmers have more stability in the handling and storage of the food they grow, that will positively affect the markets they provide food to.



#### ABOUT THE GOOD FOOD ACCESS PROGRAM

Recognizing the need for food access solutions in Minnesota, the American Heart Association, together with local and state coalition partners, advocated for the creation of the Good Food Access Program within the Minnesota Department of Agriculture in 2016. The program provides grants, loans and technical assistance to local enterprises for innovative food access solutions.

Learn more at [www.mnhealthykids.org](http://www.mnhealthykids.org)