



REGION 5: Southwest

Butler, Hamilton, Clermont,
Montgomery, Clinton

8

Total Grants
Awarded

8

Total Sites
Served

Working In Neighborhoods: Establishing a Safe Food Haven

Hamilton County, OH – Community Garden



THE NEED

Cincinnati's North Fairmount neighborhood is a stark food desert shaped by severe economic disinvestment, a 51.6% poverty rate, and a low life expectancy of 67.1 years. Local health disparities are severe: 53% of residents face obesity, 48.4% high blood pressure, and 23.5% diabetes. Lacking direct supermarket transit and a 13.5% zero-vehicle rate, this historically neglected area, 77% Black and 17.6% living with disabilities, urgently needs a safe space for healthy food access.

THE GRANT AT WORK

Because native soil sits on an asphalt lot with suspected lead contamination, the project bypassed traditional hurdles to construct an above-ground agricultural oasis behind a trusted local store. In partnership with the Beekman Corridor Garden Network and Working In Neighborhoods:

- **Safe Infrastructure:** Case Western Reserve University and the site coordinator secured and delivered supplies by mid-August 2026.
- **Community Cultivation:** Residents constructed raised beds and planted fall root vegetables and greens.
- **Ongoing Maintenance:** Local delegates managed daily garden care, culminating in a community celebration in mid-September 2026.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

The project directly serves 55 low-income neighbors reliant on SNAP/EBT, with momentum to reach the broader 8,172-person Beekman Corridor population. By turning an underutilized lot into a secure green space, it removes transport and environmental barriers, giving residents a safe place to gather and harvest fresh produce.

Partner Perspective

"Working In Neighborhoods helps people create sustainable futures through community building, housing opportunities, and financial education. We organize the Beekman Corridor Coalition, whose food team is working to increase access to healthy food in their neighborhoods. The Healthy Choices Mini Grant provides a motivated group of neighbors with the healthy soil that is needed to grow healthy food."

– HEATHER SAYRE
FOOD ACCESS COORDINATOR,
WORKING IN NEIGHBORHOODS



CASE WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY
Mary Ann Swetland Center
for Environmental Health

Healthy Choices Mini Grants support healthy eating and active living strategies at food pantries, farmers markets, early childhood education centers, K-12 schools, and community gardens.

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