



HEIRLOOM
TOMATO
\$5/lb

CUCUMBER
\$3.00/lb

AMISH
PASTE

SUSTAINABLE FOOD CENTER



2 0 2 2
IMPACT
REPORT

July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As this year comes to a close, I am proudly reflecting on how much I've seen Sustainable Food Center evolve over the past two years. SFC will soon celebrate our 50th anniversary as an organization, with roots dating back to 1975 as Austin Community Gardens. In the almost 50 years that we have served the Central Texas community, we've seen vast changes to the food system and food access landscape across the state.

SFC confronted and embraced these changes in 2018 and initiated an extensive re-visioning process. Through this journey, SFC identified systems-level change as our main method for transforming the food system.

But as an organization that was founded with a focus on direct social and educational services, like cooking and gardening classes, we first needed to build up our capacity for igniting systems-level change. This year, I am excited to share the results of our capacity building, which demonstrate how SFC has begun to create change on a larger scale.

Our work is more focused and far-reaching than ever before. SFC's core programs seek to get more nutritious, locally produced food onto Texans' plates through nutrition incentive and education programming, farmer support services, and value-chain building. Each of these programs uses advocacy, community engagement, and education as strategies to achieve change. At the heart of our mission to transform the food system for our health, land, and livelihoods is the conviction that every human deserves equitable food access. While there is always more work to be done when it comes to improving food access, as this year comes to a close, we're taking a moment to celebrate our successes.

This year, our flagship nutrition incentive program, Double Up Food Bucks, turned 10 years old. We took on our first operational branch outside of Central Texas, planting roots in West Texas to expand food access in rural communities. Looking to the future, we hope to share the knowledge and resources we've accumulated over the years in other regions across Texas. We are on the path to expand our food access work statewide, helping small and midsize producers thrive along the way.

Without your support, this immense growth wouldn't be possible. I'd like to extend my sincerest gratitude to all those who support our mission and enable our work to transform the food system. Thank you for seeing the value in a just and equitable food system.



Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Bethell".

Mark Bethell
Executive Director



OUR MISSION

Sustainable Food Center transforms the food system to nourish our health, land, and livelihood.



TRANSFORMING THE FOOD SYSTEM BY EXPANDING ACCESS TO LOCAL FOOD

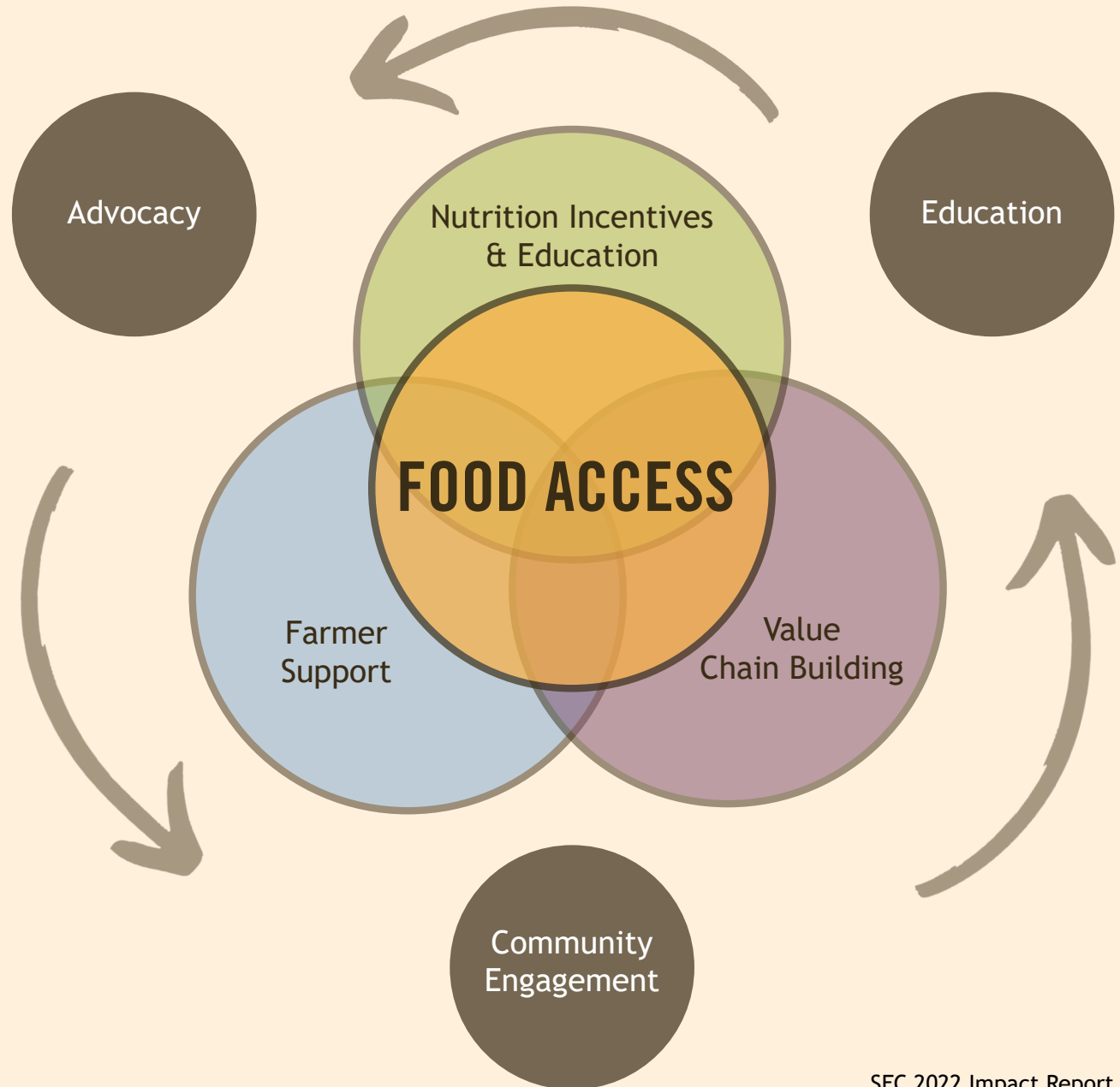
Sustainable Food Center creates thriving communities by expanding equitable food access through nutrition incentives and education, supporting local farmers, and building value chains.

Our expansion of Double Up nutrition incentives across Texas not only benefits food-insecure communities, it also brings more sales opportunities to local family farmers.

Our Farm Viability work ensures that small and midsize producers continue to thrive and provide nutritious options to their local communities in an ever-changing environment.

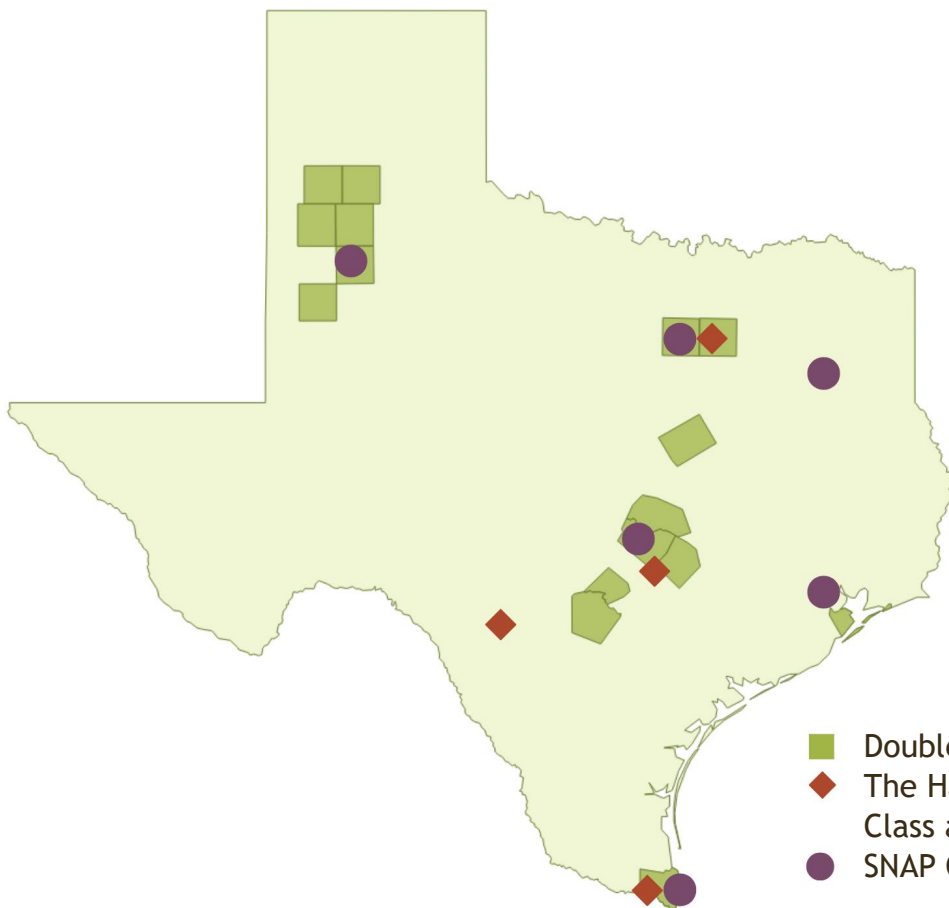
Our Value Chain work not only brings nutritious food options to children through our Farm to School program, it also helps farmers and buyers work together more effectively through matchmaking and education.

Community engagement, education, and advocacy are the main methods we use to carry out our mission. These efforts not only increase awareness of nutritious food options among communities who experience barriers to food access, they also integrate community voices into our work to achieve a long-term solution to nutrition insecurity in Texas.



GROWING NUTRITION INCENTIVE PROGRAMS ACROSS TEXAS

This was a big year for our longtime food access program, Double Up Food Bucks (“Double Up”), a program that doubles Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition benefits. We celebrated Double Up Austin’s 10th anniversary and were awarded major federal grants to expand the program. These funds will provide multiyear support as we and our partners continue to expand our Double Up Texas program, focusing on Central Texas, West Texas, and the Rio Grande Valley. We also onboarded our first Double Up program outside of Central Texas this year. SFC now operates in the Lubbock area, which added nine sales outlets to our network.



In preparation for the 88th Texas Legislative Session in 2023, SFC is leading a collaborative effort to achieve state government funding for Double Up. This year, a key activity has been relationship and alliance building with food access and agriculture stakeholders across the state and nation.

- Double Up Food Bucks Site Counties
- ◆ The Happy Kitchen/La Cocina Alegre® Class and Replication Partner Sites
- SNAP Client Focus Group Sites

10

Years of doubling SNAP & WIC benefits in Austin



47

Double Up sites across Texas



1,000

WIC clients used Double Up in Austin and Waco



1,080

SNAP and WIC clients accessed the Double Up Help Desk



21,883

Texas SNAP households used Double Up



\$3M

Grants awarded to SFC to grow and support Double Up Texas



EXPANDING FOOD ACCESS THROUGH COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EDUCATION

Community outreach and education are critical ways to engage with communities who experience barriers to nutritious food options and higher rates of diet-related illnesses.

We use digital tools like social media alongside in-person events to spread the word about our programs and encourage healthy habits. SFC's Double Up Help Desk helps clients navigate how to double their federal benefits and provides service in both English and Spanish.



"We are very thankful for Double Up and the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (WIC Vouchers) because they not only help our community, but they also help our farmers and vendors. We also love that [customers] are able to feed their families more fruits and vegetables because of these amazing programs."

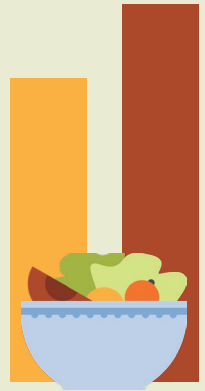
—Farmers' Market Owner



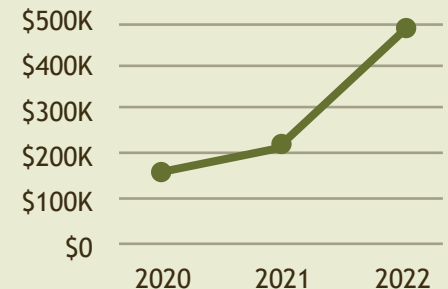
The Happy Kitchen/*La Cocina Alegre* resumed in-person classes in the spring with an updated and culturally sustaining curriculum. The Happy Kitchen is also being replicated by partners in Austin, Dallas, Uvalde, and Brownsville. Moving forward, we will be cultivating partnerships in areas of Texas where we are expanding Double Up.

AFTER USING
DOUBLE UP FOR
SIX MONTHS,

SNAP customers
increased fruit
& vegetable
consumption by
an average of
½ cup per day



GROWTH IN COMBINED BENEFIT
AND MATCHING INCENTIVE
SALES AT SFC DOUBLE UP SITES



338

Cooking & nutrition
and gardening class
participants



88%

Participants eat
more fruits and
veggies due to
cooking classes



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF COMMUNITY CONNECTION THROUGH FOOD



After two years of COVID-related adjustments, SFC's Farmers' Markets face a new challenge: ensuring markets remain accessible as Austin changes. While construction will affect our Downtown market location for some time, we're amplifying food access in new ways.

In May, SFC invited 350 mothers and children living in South Austin to a special WIC event to distribute meal kits. The event was a great success, increasing both the number of families WIC reached and the number of clients SFC reached with the WIC voucher program.

With the 20th anniversary of the SFC Farmers' Market Downtown approaching in 2023, we're celebrating SFC Farmers' Markets as the intersection of our programs, serving as vital neighborhood meeting places and bringing customers in direct contact with the people who grow their food.

"The SFC Farmers' Market at Sunset Valley is the first farmers' market we ever did. It has always had the best organization around. Even as farmers' markets grew, I didn't feel like any of them were as well organized or cared as much about the farmers as SFC does, which is important to us. SFC makes sure we are doing well and being taken care of."

—Erica, SFC Farmers' Market Vendor | Bradshaw Farms



"SFC supports the Austin food landscape as a cohesive, integrated organism and makes it possible for small farmers and producers from diverse backgrounds to create good, healthy food... and then they help our local Austin community access that food!"

—Anna Claire, SFC Farmers' Market Vendor | Open Eye Beverage Co.

IMPROVING THE VIABILITY OF SMALL FARMS AND RANCHES

Our Farm Viability program provides aid and assistance to small and midsize family farmers, particularly those who are just starting out. Weather impacts farmers, and the last couple of years have seen extremes. In January 2022, a severe freeze was hard on crops. Summer then brought high temperatures and extreme drought. To help farmers through challenging times, SFC provided \$45,485 in relief and scholarships, reaching 40 producers.



Another way SFC helps farmers grow is through certifications. Larger buyers like grocery chains, hospitals, and school districts often require vendors to have specific certifications to verify criteria such as food safety protocols, environmental friendliness, or particular organic or animal husbandry practices.

To help our farmers scale up production for these buyers, we designed simple templates to gauge readiness for two of the most valuable certifications, Certified Organic and Certified Humanely Raised, and provide resources and financial assistance to obtain them. We also offer workshops in business basics, such as Quickbooks and recordkeeping, and scholarships to help farmers continue their learning journeys.



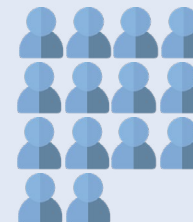
8

Farm business consultations



14

New vendors onboarded at SFC Farmers' Markets



25

Farms visited by SFC staff



1,400

Average weekly customers at SFC Farmers' Markets



\$22,000

Average weekly sales at SFC Farmers' Markets



\$2.3M

Total sales at SFC Farmers' Markets



GROWING CONNECTIONS AND STRENGTHENING THE LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY



Value Chain has grown into its own program focus at SFC, thanks to two federal grants that support the work. The Market Matchmaking Pilot concluded in 2021 with unexpected success given the dual challenges of COVID-19 and Winter Storm Uri in early 2021. Participating farmers saw their revenues increase by 34% thanks to wholesale readiness training and SFC-brokered connections made with wholesale and institutional buyers.

Our other major Value Chain project, Farm to School, works with three rural and peri-urban school districts in Central Texas to expand their local food procurement programs.

This project also established a statewide learning collaborative among Texas schools with Farm to School programs. Participants learn from each other and help bring more nutritious, local food to Texas children.

“Loved this event! Events like these always fuel me to keep forging a path for a sustainable and resilient food system and to fight to offer the best food in our schools, despite the obstacles.”

*—Farm to School Learning Collaborative
Event Attendee*

In Austin, SFC hosted an inaugural Chef to Market event, inviting local chefs to our SFC Farmers’ Market Downtown to talk with 25 local vendors about their farms and products. This event was the catalyst for new connections between vendors and restaurants.

This year, we also co-lead a project with the City of Austin to gather baseline data around production and consumption of local, sustainably produced food in Central Texas. Our analysis found that school systems participating in our Farm to School project increased the share of dollars spent on local food by 1.5%. We also developed an innovative buyer survey to better understand buyers’ drivers and barriers in procuring local food. The results will inform our value chain and policy work going forward.

8

Institutional buyers learned more about buying local



10

Growers participated in Market Matchmaking Pilot



10

Texas schools engaged in the Learning Collaborative



34%

Average revenue increase seen by farmers in Market Matchmaking Pilot



\$192,427

Spent on local food by three Farm to School partners



WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2022 MAJOR FUNDERS & SPONSORS

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City of Sunset Valley
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Travis County
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