



Image: Jori Ketten

Southside CLT

Providence Community Growers Network

Background & Context:

In the early 1980s, the City of Providence had a large inventory of vacant/abandoned properties and set up a program to auction off tax-delinquent land at nominal prices. Southside CLT purchased a large vacant lot, formerly a chop shop for cars, and looked to create a safe, neighborhood open space for shared food production. Southside CLT partnered with local residents to develop the City Farm site.

Implementation:

Southside CLT started as a small volunteer-run organization and rehabilitated a ¾ acre site into City Farm over several years. Project funding for implementation and on-going maintenance is provided through donations, grants and revenues from plant sales and commercial produce sold to local restaurants. Southside CLT has since developed a network of 43 gardens and farms across the city – mostly in disadvantaged communities and provides programmatic support by delivering compost, garden supplies, and technical training.

“There are small areas where urban agriculture begins to become a market activity. Our expectation is that the market relevance will continue to grow over time.”

Challenges

Project financing continues to be an on-going challenge as acquisition and development costs are highly dependent on grants and donations, while land prices have stabilized. In response, Southside CLT has created the Providence Community Growers Network to coordinate local efforts at a larger scale.

Benefits

City Farm helped demonstrate the potential of bio-intensive, sustainable food production within a single urban block. Southside CLT also used the excess produce grown at it's sites to develop farmers markets, increasing the organization's visibility and efficacy. Residents have benefited from increased access to healthy foods, open space, and supplemental income from selling produce.

Project at a Glance

Location:	Providence, RI
Project Category:	Urban Agriculture
Year Completed:	1986
Agricultural Acreage:	5.5 Acres
CLT Role	Securing Land, Programmatic Support
Agricultural Activities:	Commercial Farm, Greenhouse, Children's Garden, 43 Community Gardens in Network
Tenure Arrangements for Securing Land:	Fee Simple Ownership
Major Partners:	City of Providence, State of Rhode Island
Website:	southsideclt.org
Staff Contact:	Margaret DeVos, Executive Director margaret@southsideclt.org

Lessons Learned

The Southside CLT is highly experienced and uniquely situated to provide agricultural programmatic support and engage in direct agricultural production. Southside CLT is the only CLT in the county with a sole focus on urban agriculture. Most of the City Farm programs are now financially self-sustaining. However, acquisition and development costs, capital improvements and educational components for the Providence Community Growers Network are still heavily grant dependent.