

Sustainable Approaches to Food Desert Relief

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Step 1: Pick a topic, and focus it

- Improve access to healthy, affordable foods in Louisville by establishing community gardens in impoverished areas classified as food deserts. This will also allow for the education of communities on topics surrounding sustainable agriculture and environmental advocacy.

Step 2: Research the topic

- According to the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture), a food desert is an area where a substantial number of residents lack access to healthy, affordable foods.
- Living in a food desert can lead to higher risk of obesity, diabetes, cancer, and even shorter life expectancy (USDA).
- Lack of transportation and income insecurity are two of the main causes of food deserts, specifically in Kentucky. Many residents are unable to travel to supermarkets that sell healthy food options, much less afford them.
- In Louisville, more than 44,000 people live within the boundaries of a food desert

Step 3: Create a Strategy

- Solve the problem of transportation and income insecurity by partnering with nonprofits to bring healthy, affordable foods into communities
- Establish community gardens in impoverished food desert areas
- Raise funds and use sustainable farming methods to maintain the gardens
- Educate the community about the importance of sustainable gardening and healthy food sources in order to fight food deserts and improve quality of life.

Step 4: Create an Advocacy Plan

- Using guidelines from Option 1: Policy Recommendation / Specific Plan
- Food deserts impact over 40,000 residents of Louisville, affecting their health and overall quality of life. There are a host of causes, including lack of transportation and income insecurity, but there are also many solutions to consider.
- Unfortunately, there are limitations regarding budget. Creating greater access to healthy, affordable food is expensive. Growing the food, establishing community gardens, transporting and distributing fresh produce: all of this is costly and requires many resources. It also requires a lot of planning. This is where partnering with officials and nonprofits who already have established funding and action plans would be beneficial.
- Some nonprofits and officials to contact (through email and/or through project proposal either virtually or in person) include City Hall, the Mayor, The Food Literacy Project, Dare to Care, and the Gray Street Farmers Market
- I would organize others through my school, as well as through social media.
- Timeline: create presentation with action plan, reach out to nonprofits and officials about the plan, coordinate with them to gather funds and volunteers, enact the plan

Sources

- <https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/factors/food-desert/#:~:text=Louisville%20currently%20ranks%2010th%20among,mile%20away%20from%20a%20supermarket.>
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