



IMPACT REPORT FY22



Dear Urban Roots Supporters,

It's been a **year of growth** at Urban Roots in so many ways. And **we haven't just been growing food – we've been focused on growing our impact.**

Urban Roots envisions a Central Texas with a thriving food system that is sustainable, equitable, and just. Unfortunately, Central Texas is far from that vision. Nearly one of every seven people in Travis County doesn't have reliable access to affordable, healthy food.* And most of those folks are concentrated in East and South East Austin - right where our farms are located.

Urban Roots is working every day with our partners and the community to push us toward that vision. Our **mission is to work with youth leaders to grow fresh food and build a community dedicated to achieving food equity.** What does it look like when youth are leading the way? Frankly, it's transformative!

- Our farms are a **refuge**. The land transforms through the work of the youth, and the youth are transformed by the experience of working the land. As the **plants are growing, young people are growing.**
- They get to experience the **whole food cycle:** seed > harvest > market > kitchen > plate.
- Our model gives young people the chance to be **leaders**. For example, when adult volunteers come to the farm, the youth are leading them. **Youth are the experts.** That reversal of traditional roles is a revelatory experience for everyone.
- One of the most **powerful** parts of our work is that we engage young people and adults from **all backgrounds to work across from each other.** Together we're working toward a **shared goal of nourishing the community.**

We are **incredibly grateful for all the staff, youth leaders, donors, funders, sponsors, food access partners, and community partners** who made our growth and success possible. Specific highlights from fiscal year 2022 (FY22) include the following:

- Planted deep roots in East Austin by **buying our farm** on Delwau Ln! Urban Roots will have a home to share with the entire Central Texas community through farming and fellowship for decades to come.
- **Graduated 67 youth leaders** (60 unduplicated) from 27 different schools from three different programs.
- Increased food access with **93% of the fresh produce we distribute going to our food access partners** - our highest percentage ever!
- Brought back our **large open volunteer days.**
- Added **two new board members** and increased capacity with **three new staff positions!**
- Returned to the **Farmers' Markets.**
- Brought back our fan-favorite summer **Community Lunch series.**

I want to close by sharing this idea. Farming is a declaration of hope. It's a statement that, often in the face of overwhelming odds (bugs, floods, hungry animals, and Snowpocalypse anyone?!), we believe we can nurture something that makes the world a better place. And I can't think of a better laboratory for learning about leadership and building community than through the act of growing and sharing food together.

Thank you for believing in our declaration of hope.

Keep on growing,



Urban Roots Executive Director

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

August 2021 - July 2022

youth programs

67 YOUTH PARTICIPANTS
FROM 27 SCHOOLS GRADUATED
FROM 3 PROGRAMS

...

\$106,651
PAID IN STIPENDS
DIRECTLY TO YOUTH

...

86% OF YOUTH
SEE THEMSELVES AS
MORE OF A LEADER

volunteers

756 DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS
FROM 123 ZIP CODES
COMPLETED 3,229 VOLUNTEER HOURS

that's
24,176 lbs!

119,198 SERVINGS
OF PRODUCE DISTRIBUTED

...

93% OF PRODUCE DISTRIBUTED
HELPS INCREASE FOOD ACCESS
IN CENTRAL TEXAS

...

12 FOOD ACCESS
DISTRIBUTION PARTNERS

food access



Urban Roots' greatest strength is our work with youth and the Central Texas community. Youth literally "dig in" during their time with us: into the soil, into learning leadership skills, and into supporting their community. And they help us address the short- and long-term impacts of food injustice. We share fresh, nutrient-dense produce with people who need food today. We equip youth with the knowledge and skills to make positive changes in their communities and our food systems.

MILESTONES

8/21

- Started the year diving deep into strategic planning

9/21

- Added capacity with new Finance & Operations Coordinator position

10/21

- Welcomed two new board members
- South Austin Farm Design Team began work to design new Urban Roots facilities

12/21

- Graduated 11 Food & Leadership Fellows from our fall cohort

1/22

- Featured on CBS Austin

2/22

- Added capacity with new Communications Intern position
- Featured on We Are Austin

3/22

- Selected as Edible Austin's "Local Hero" Award Recipient
- Added capacity with new Program Coordinator position

4/22

- **Purchased the East Austin Farm**
- **Featured on the following outlets: Culturemap Austin, The Austin Chronicle**

5/22

- Graduated 11 Food & Leadership Fellows from our spring cohort and 14 South Austin Interns from their yearlong program.

6/22

- Summer Farm Program youth returned to the SFC Farmers' Market
- Over 100 guests attended our summer Community Lunch series

7/22

- Graduated 29 Summer Farm Program participants
- Board of directors passed our new four-year strategic plan for FY23-26



“ I learned a lot about food and my community while making strong friendships and gaining important skills such as public speaking. ”

YOUTH PROGRAMS

What makes Urban Roots unique is that youth are helping to lead the way. In three paid, deep-dive leadership programs, youth built their leadership skills while growing and sharing food with people who needed it. They experienced the whole food cycle, from seed, to harvest, to market, to kitchen, to plate. They worked on public speaking, community engagement, customer service, and how to lead a team.

In our programs, we create a safe place where youth know they are going to be seen for who they are, valued for their unique talents, encouraged to stretch themselves beyond where they thought they could go and to celebrate both wins and losses--because that's where the biggest growth happens. Youth emerge with the confidence, experience, and skills to lead and make a difference in their community.

67 YOUTH COMPLETED 10,739 HOURS OF FARMING AND WORKSHOPS ACROSS THREE PROGRAMS:

SUMMER FARM PROGRAM
(SUMMER, AGES 14-17)

SOUTH AUSTIN INTERNSHIP
(SCHOOL YEAR, AGES 14-17)

FOOD & LEADERSHIP FELLOWSHIP
(SCHOOL YEAR, AGES 18-23)



After youth participate in our programs:

95% :: report feeling improved social and emotional skills needed for success in leadership, relationships and careers

86% :: report seeing themselves as more of a leader

72% :: report feeling more able to address food justice and increase food access in their communities

VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY

We can't say **thank you** enough to the incredible group of dedicated volunteers who help us achieve our goals at the Urban Roots farms! We couldn't do this important work without the help of our amazing community.



VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS: (FY22)

52%
OF VOLUNTEERS

feel more confident, competent and inclined to grow, purchase and prepare healthy food as a result of the project.



756
DEDICATED
VOLUNTEERS



123
ZIP CODES
REPRESENTED



3,229
VOLUNTEER
HOURS LOGGED



"I wanted to get plugged into an organization that helped my community where I could perform tasks that excited me, like farming... It was fun just to be on the farm, working alongside people that enjoyed planting and harvesting, but the experience was tenfold richer knowing the little things I was doing were helping to feed people in need. It's also really cool that they have the youth program that they do, it would totally be a program that I would have been interested in at their age."

– Alexis Perkins, *Urban Roots Volunteer*

FOOD ACCESS



URBAN ROOTS

Youth and volunteers worked with the Urban Roots team to grow farm-fresh produce. We then shared that beautiful produce with our partners to increase food access in underserved communities in Central Texas. We worked with the following Food Access Partners this year: **Caritas, Farmshare Austin, Foundation Communities, Go! Austin / Vamos! Austin, Ghisallo Cycling Initiative, Keep Austin Fed, Manos de Cristo, North Austin Muslim Community Center, Out Youth, Serafina, Street Youth Ministry, and Vivent Health.**

“...Sourcing local produce can be really expensive. The price of food is going up all the time anyways, and we want to be able to provide not only healthy food but local, organically grown, really healthy food for our customers. Urban Roots is just amazing because they’re able to sell things to us for a low enough wholesale price that we can carry that for our customers, it really benefits them a lot. Farmshare and Urban Roots have collaborated together for a really long time. They’re definitely one of our strongest partners in Austin. This past year we were able to really formalize that relationship. So we’re purchasing a lot more produce from Urban Roots for Fresh for Less, which means that ... our customers get to have just an amazing variety and quantity of fresh, healthy food.”

— Heather Hellman,
Farmshare Austin Food Access Director

FOOD ACCESS IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS (FY22):

.....
119,198 SERVINGS
OF FOOD DISTRIBUTED

That's 24,176 lbs!

93% OF FOOD DISTRIBUTED
FOR FOOD ACCESS (BASED ON UNITS)

12
FOOD ACCESS PARTNERSHIPS



**YOUTH LEADERS
NOURISHING COMMUNITY**