

Urban Farming Institute



FOUNDED: 2012

CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET: \$688,000

CONTACT: Patricia Spence, President & CEO

PHONE: 617.989.9920

EMAIL: info@urbanfarminginstitute.org

WEB: www.urbanfarminginstitute.org

Investment Opportunity

UFI is seeking \$1.85M over the next two years. These funds will allow the organization to increase its footprint, programming, and organizational capacity. UFI will use this funding to further develop existing farm sites and add two new farm sites, hire additional staff members including an operations manager and grant writer, develop new farmer training classes, and double the number of community education classes. UFI also plans to expand the Urban Farming Conference. The organization is working to fully activate Fowler Clark Epstein Farm as not only UFI's headquarters but also the hub of urban farming in Boston.

Urban farming is flourishing in Boston, where vacant land is abundant, food cultures are diverse, and people are excited to grow and share food. Headquartered in Mattapan, the Urban Farming Institute (UFI) is building on this strength and turning neighborhoods green. It is building farms, training farmers, growing vegetables, and cooking up healthy ideas to combat some of the negatives that plague the community:

- Over 48% of Boston Housing Authority residents surveyed reported that they always or sometimes run out of food and don't have money to get more, and 29% reported being hungry but not eating because they couldn't afford food
- Dorchester, Mattapan, and Roxbury were among the neighborhoods with the highest heart disease hospitalization rates, according to the Boston Public Health Commission's 2015 Health of Boston report
- Boston residents in households earning \$25,000 or less (13,094 families in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan) reported higher rates of asthma, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and obesity compared to higher-income residents
- Unemployment rates are highest in Mattapan (17.3%), Roxbury (16.8%), and Dorchester (16.2%)

UFI is developing and promoting urban farming, creating green collar jobs for residents, and engaging urban communities to build a healthier and more locally based food system.

Two-Year Goals

- Increase the number of farm sites from seven to nine
- Increase staff from eight to 13 employees
- Add new farmer training classes
- Convene 7th and 8th Annual Massachusetts Urban Farming Conferences
- Deepen community and corporate partnerships and volunteer outreach

Ways to Invest

FINANCIAL

- \$175,000 develops a 1/4 acre farm
- \$50,000 hires a grant writer
- \$25,000 funds a 12-week workshop series
- \$10,000 funds an entire 9-week farmer training program
- \$4,000 provides a stipend for one farmer training student in the 20-week program

IN-KIND

- Marketing and technical assistance
- Donation of equipment (farm equipment, kitchen equipment, hoop houses, beehives)
- Volunteer time on the farm

Leadership & Governance

The Urban Farming Institute taps the strength and diversity of Boston's neighborhoods. Its diverse board and staff are professional leaders, experienced farmers, and developers who represent the richness and complexity of the work and community.

Patricia Spence, the current CEO and President, has experience in corporate sales and served as the Community Field & Literacy Coordinator for Boston Public Schools. Pat is buoyed by a board with years of experience, many of whom have been with the organization since its inception, including Glynn Lloyd, Klare Shaw, and Mel King.

“

I think my spirit was craving something different, something real, and that led me to growing. In UFI's training program, I weeded, seeded, prepped beds, and harvested – learning the day-to-day of growing food. Through this work, I learned patience, I learned endurance, and I learned critical thinking.

”

SIERRA MORTON

The Food Project Youth Supervisor



URBAN FARMING INSTITUTE'S MODEL



UFI Builds Farms

UFI is acquiring land and building farms. With its partner, The Trust for Public Land, UFI created the first as-of-right commercial urban farm in Boston. With the help of the City of Boston, neighborhood residents, farming friends, and developers, UFI is finding more land to turn into farms.

To preserve and protect the farms, UFI established the first community land trust (CLT) for urban farms. The CLT will hold and manage the land to ensure the farms will be growing food well into the future.

UFI Operates Farms

UFI manages seven farms in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan from its flagship headquarters at the Fowler Clark Epstein (FCE) Farm in Mattapan and earns income from selling produce to several local restaurant partners, including Area Four, Mei Mei, City Fresh Foods, Dudley Cafe, Fresh Food Generation, Tanám, American Provisions, Oasis Vegan Veggie Parlor, Café JuiceUp, and Juice and Jazz Cafe.

UFI Trains Farmers

Every year since 2013, UFI has welcomed up to thirty people to its nine-week Urban Farmer Training Program, a classroom introduction to small plot farming. Students learn plant health, crop planning, and the business of farming.

Interested trainees move on to intensive field courses for hands-on experiences for 20 weeks on the farms. From the task of weeding to the thrill of the harvest, from mornings at the farm to afternoons at the farmers markets, from classroom to farm visits, participants get immersed in the real world of urban farm life. Additionally, UFI's Young Farmers Project is growing as it moves into its second year.

UFI Educates and Advocates

Community-based urban farms welcome people to stop by, ask questions, and learn new tips and tricks during the spring, summer, and fall. Every year, over 740 organized volunteers come to the farms through UFI's volunteer program. UFI keeps people excited about farming and food through the winter with indoor workshops like *Growing Food Without a Garden*, *Food as Medicine*, and *Bees, Bees, Bees* until it is time to head back outdoors in the spring for *Foraging for Wild Edibles*.

UFI has been advocating and planning at City Hall and the State House to raise the profile and impact of urban farming. UFI and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources co-sponsor a statewide Urban Farming Conference. Attracting vendors, sponsors, and over 400 participants from across the state, the conference is the place for networking and knowledge sharing.

“

We don't just grow food, we grow people.

”

BOBBY WALKER
UFI Farm Trainer



Key Investors

- THE BROMLEY CHARITABLE TRUST
- CABOT FAMILY CHARITABLE TRUST
- CEDAR TREE FOUNDATION
- CUMMINGS FOUNDATION
- HENRY P. KENDALL FOUNDATION
- JANE'S TRUST
- JOHN HANCOCK FINANCIAL
- MABEL LOUISE RILEY FOUNDATION
- MASS. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES (MDAR)
- MERCK FAMILY FUND
- TREFLER FOUNDATION

Partners

- CITY OF BOSTON
- DUDLEY NEIGHBORS, INC.
- THE FOOD PROJECT
- HISTORIC BOSTON INC.
- MATTAPAN FOOD & FITNESS COALITION
- PROJECT BREAD
- THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND

WHERE UFI FARMS

UFI is building a Local Area Food Network in its role as a leader of the urban farming movement in Boston. For UFI, the goal is to provide community members with access to delicious food, education on healthy eating, and the ability to transform neglected land in their neighborhoods, creating the capacity to contribute to economic and environmental resilience by localizing the food system.

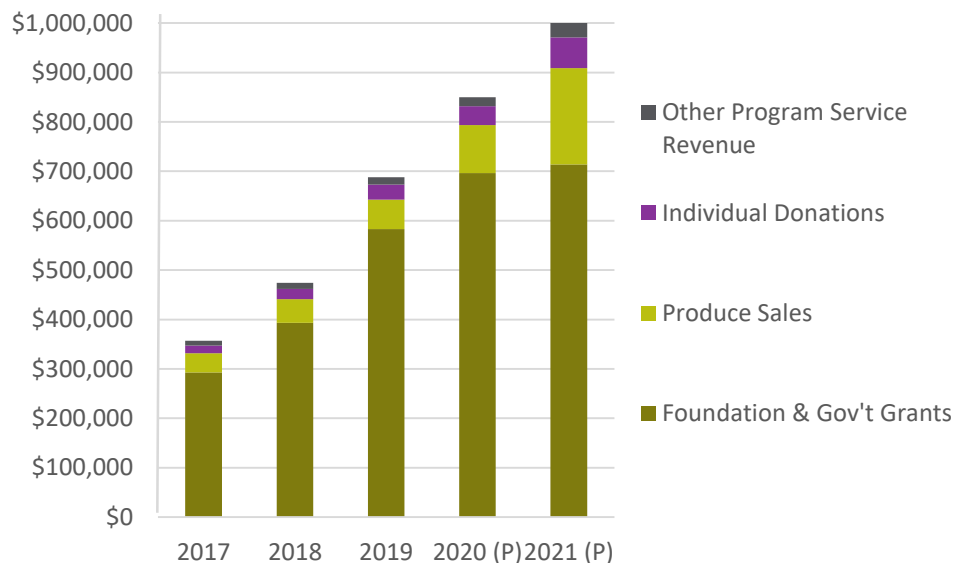
Current Locations:

- **Fowler Clark Epstein Farm: Norfolk Street, Mattapan.** This historic property was redeveloped by Historic Boston Inc. in partnership with The Trust for Public Land to be UFI's headquarters, training farm, and farming center.
- **Astoria Quarter Acre Farm: Flint Street, Mattapan.** While funds are being raised for permanent development, UFI drew more than 30 volunteers to build a temporary farm of sixteen raised bed boxes one Saturday in spring 2017.
- **Garrison-Trotter Farm: Harold Street, Dorchester.** The first farm created after the passage of Article 89, a zoning amendment, eased the way for commercial farms. 2019 is its fifth season.
- **Glenway: Bradshaw Street, Dorchester.** One of the City of Boston's pilot projects to test the viability of urban farming. This farm is now five years old and was transferred into the UFI CLT in 2018.
- **Sportsmen's: Blue Hill Avenue, Dorchester.** UFI's oldest farm is about 12,000 square feet hiding in plain sight behind the Sportsmen's Tennis Club and Enrichment Center.
- **Tommy's Rock: Akron Street, Roxbury.** This farm is scheduled to open UFI's very first greenhouse in 2020.
- **Woodrow Avenue Compact Farms.** Woodrow Avenue, Dorchester. UFI manages the growing on two bundled farm sites via 16 raised beds.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

UFI is funded largely through foundation and government grants with contributions from corporate and individual donors. In order for UFI to expand its presence and influence in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan, the organization seeks to increase and diversify its revenue streams in the upcoming years with a focus on produce sales, workshops, and farm rentals.

Revenue by Source





Success Story: Chris Mables

In 2013, UFI Farm Trainer Bobby Walker invited his high school friend, Chris Mables, to come out to the farm and get his hands in the dirt and volunteer.

The next year, Chris joined the Farmer Training Program and became known as the Nightshade King due to his love of growing heirloom tomatoes. After graduating, he received an amazing opportunity to work for a food based business at CommonWealth Kitchen, where he still works today.

He lost over 100 pounds because of the emphasis the program places on diet and nutrition. According to Chris, this job saved his life.



PROGRAM PERFORMANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Below is a summary of the key measures that Urban Farming Institute will track to demonstrate progress, create internal accountability, incorporate lessons learned, and adjust strategy as necessary to not only sustain but also grow the organization.

	FY 2019	FY 2020 (P)	FY 2021 (P)
PROGRAM PERFORMANCE			
Farmers trained	34	45	66
Workshops offered	30	45	60
Workshop participants	300	360	440
Volunteers	747	800	825
Farm visitors	700	900	1,100
ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH/CAPACITY-BUILDING			
Full-time equivalent employees	8	10	13
Board members	9	11	13
Total revenue	\$688,000	\$850,000	\$1,000,000

SOCIAL IMPACT

UFI teaches people how to grow and distribute food locally which leads to healthier residents, neighborhoods, and economies. In six short years, UFI has graduated six cohorts of urban farmers, developed the first as-of-right urban farm under Boston's new zoning amendment, and founded and co-sponsored six statewide urban farming conferences.

To date, an overwhelming majority of the graduates of UFI's training program work in farm- and food-related businesses in the region, two farm sites currently are in development with a third expected shortly, and the most recent two-day urban farming conference attracted more than four hundred participants each day.

UFI is doing amazing environmental justice work in the most vulnerable communities in Boston by taking the lead on food justice, which is squarely at the nexus of economic, social, and environmental issues in the communities of Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan. UFI is not just creating farms that allow it to grow more food. UFI is growing people, which allows it to strengthen communities via increased awareness, employment, and health.

Below is the summary of the social impact that Urban Farming Institute aspires to have on the communities of Boston in the next two years.

INDICATOR	2019 - 2021
Farmer Trainees who work in farm or food industry	80 to 85 %
Pounds of food grown	16,125 to 17,500
Number of farm sites	7 to 9