



# 2023 Data Report

## Farm to Plate CSA & Healthcare Community of Practice



# Introduction

The [Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund](#) was designated by the Vermont Legislature in 2009 to serve as the administrator of [Farm to Plate](#) with the aim of strengthening Vermont's food system over ten years. In 2019, the Legislature reauthorized another ten years of Farm to Plate. The organization's mission is to increase economic development and jobs in the farm and food sector, improve soils, water, and resiliency of the working landscape in the face of climate change, and improve access to healthy local foods for all Vermonters through the implementation of the [Agriculture and Food System Strategic Plan](#). This year, Farm to Plate released the [Vermont Food Security Roadmap to 2035](#), which outlines the tools, knowledge, and resources available to create food security for every Vermonter.

[The Farm to Plate Network](#) is responsible for collectively implementing the strategic plan, as well as advancing the organizational goals of members. Membership encompasses farms, food production businesses, specialty food producers, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, capital providers, and government. This approach develops strategic conversations and action across multiple sectors and perspectives to make the systemic change that no organization can accomplish alone.

In total, there are 20 distinct groups in the network including the [CSA and Healthcare Community of Practice](#), which was founded in 2021. CSAs have a unique role to play in the intersection of local food and health in Vermont. This model is one of the most mature farm + health care practice connections in the state, familiar to both local food organizations and health care professionals.

There are both well-established healthcare CSA programs and newer programs participating in the group. Given the broad range of development, there are many opportunities and benefits derived from peer-to-peer connections. These programs also have many points in common with evidence-based health programs outside of Vermont, creating a context for learning from national and regional groups.

We believe that a peer-based Community of Practice is a useful way to approach the big topic of food and health, which can be overwhelming without additional focus. With our collective experience in CSA-Healthcare connections, we can pinpoint specific gaps and areas for development to explore. This document serves as a tool for those looking to establish healthcare and CSA programs, as well as for group members seeking to better understand how individual programs fit into the broader picture of health and expand their work by demonstrating impact on a statewide level. The following document is not meant to serve as an exhaustive representation of CSA and healthcare work in the state.

# Healthcare CSA Programs in Vermont



## Farmacy: Food Is Medicine

This "Prescription CSA" or "Food is Medicine" program addresses three major needs in Addison County: diet-related illness, food insecurity, and local farm viability. These produce prescriptions are written by health care providers and provide free CSA shares supplied by three local farmers. Alongside shares, participants receive educational newsletters and recipe samples. **See page 7 for more information.**



## Farm Shares for Health

Farm Shares for Health is a partnership between local, organic farmers and health professionals who are passionate about providing Vermont communities with farm-fresh foods, information on healthy eating and cooking, and tips for healthy living. The mission of the Farm Shares for Health team is to support individuals and families in eating home-cooked meals together and cooking with fresh, local produce. **See page 8 for more information.**



## Northwest Farmacy CSA

The Northwest Farmacy CSA program is a partnership initiative between Healthy Roots Collaborative and the Northern Tier Center for Health (NOTCH), to support the health and wellbeing of community members experiencing diet-related health conditions and barriers to food access. Participants receive a free, weekly CSA share for 14 weeks provided by a local farm containing an assortment of fresh, nutritious, in-season produce. **See page 9 for more information.**

# Healthcare CSA Programs in Vermont



**Vermont Farmers  
Food Center**

## VFFC's Farmacy Project

VFFC's Farmacy Project emphasizes 2 core elements – fresh produce prescriptions for individuals as “medicine” for chronic diet-related health conditions and fresh produce provided to clients grown exclusively by new and emerging Rutland farmers. Since 2015, the Farmacy Project has successfully linked the underserved in Rutland County to the rich, robust healthy world of good food, community programming and education. **See page 10 or more information.**

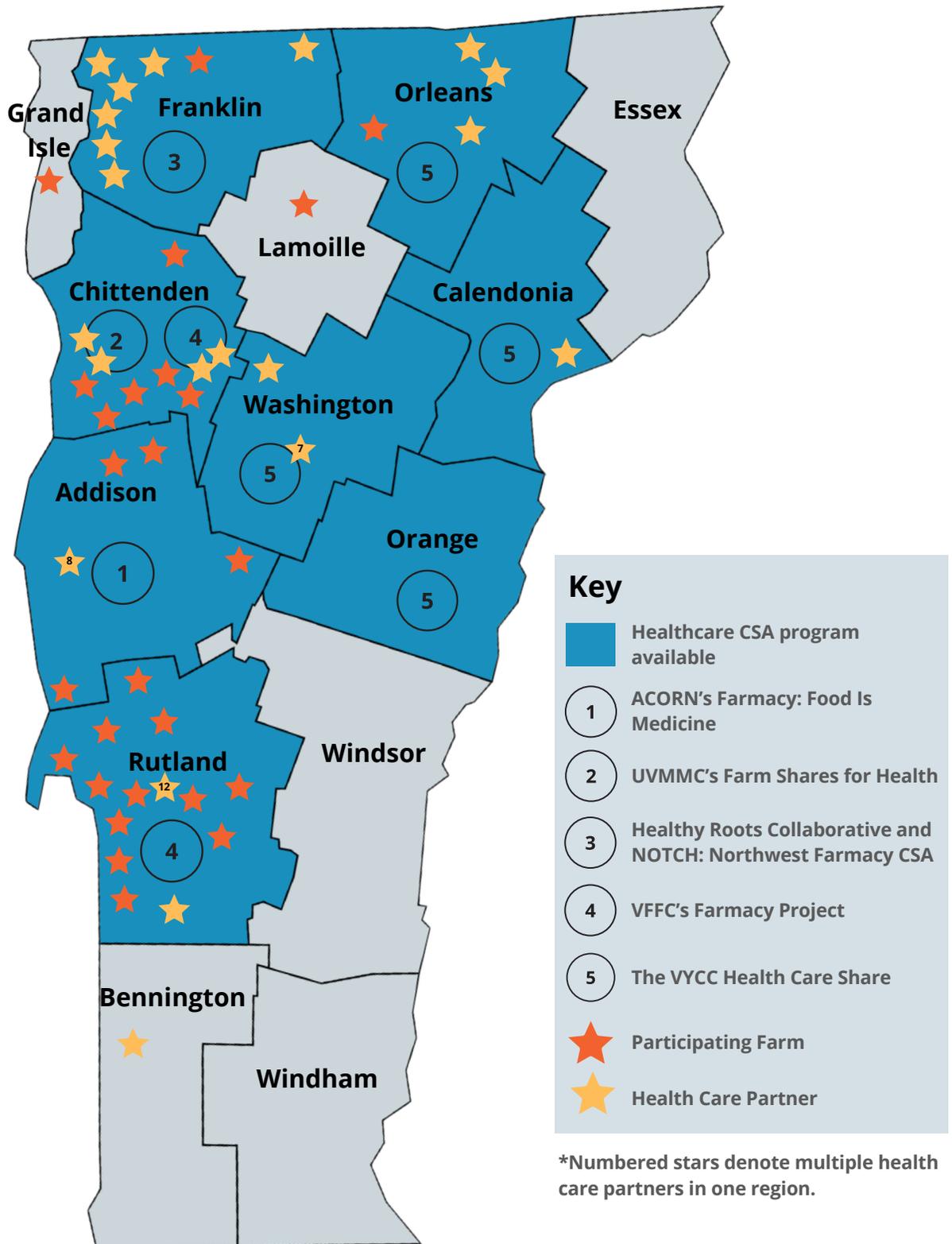


**VERMONT  
YOUTH  
CONSERVATION  
CORPS**

## The VYCC Health Care Share

The Health Care Share (HCS) connects Vermont families with fresh, local food through their health care provider. HCS currently partners with 11 medical centers who identify patient families experiencing food insecurity, diet-related disease, or other distinct health risks and provide a referral to the program to provide fresh, local produce so patient families can access a more nutritious diet. The program lasts between 12 and 17 weeks, depending on the partner. **See page 11 for more information.**

# Healthcare CSA Programs in Vermont



# Healthcare CSA Programs: Overview



**51 Community Health Partners involved.**

*See page 12 for a list of participating organizations.*



**74% of participants screened positive for food insecurity.**

*Participants screened using a validated screening tool such as the USDA Housing Screening Tool Survey or Hunger Vital Signs™.*



**Cardiovascular risk factors were cited as the top conditions for program referral.**

*Common patient diagnoses include: hypertension, diabetes, pre-diabetes, obesity, and high cholesterol.*



**Average age of participants: 54.**

*Age range across programs of 1 to 94 years old.*



**62% of participants were insured by Medicare, Medicaid, or Dr. Dynasaur.**



**Participants of all five programs reported increased fruit and vegetable consumption.**

# Healthcare CSA Programs: Key Metrics



**1,916 people reached.**

*Across all 5 programs; based on household size.*



**\$154,893 in produce purchased.**

*29% increase from 2022.*



**72,326 lbs of produce donated  
by non-profit farms and  
partners.**



**31% of participants have an  
annual income below the Federal  
Poverty Level for an individual.**



**Support from 22 for-profit farms  
and 4 non-profit farms.**

*See page 12 for a full list of participating farms.*



**994 volunteer hours contributed.**

*48% increase from 2022.*

# Spotlight: ACORN's Farmacy: Food Is Medicine



## Facts:

- In 2023, ACORN served 100 participants for 15 weeks, sourcing from three local, organic farms. This equated to almost \$50,000 in local purchasing.
- With a gorgeous crop list featuring 30 different fruits and vegetables for participants to enjoy, 65% of participants tried a new fruit, vegetable, or recipe during the program.

**Education:** Member handbooks; weekly newsletters featuring recipes, community resources, and easy eating tips; recipe cards, food samples, opportunity for connection with community partners; and free enrollment in the Middlebury Co-op's Food For All program which offers discounted groceries and cooking classes.

## Impact:

- 85% of participants increased vegetable consumption through the program.
- 95% of participants reported that the program benefited their health.
- 78% of participants saw their confidence in cooking increase.
- 73% of participants noticed improved emotional well-being during the program.

Images courtesy of Lilah Krugman, ACORN. Used with permission.

*“[we received] more and better quality vegetables with more variety than we would have otherwise had. That led to more imaginative meals and we felt cared for and enjoyed the weekly connection and using food that was from local farmers and a gift to us. It was special.”*



# Spotlight: Healthy Roots Collaborative & NOTCH: Northwest Farmacy CSA



## Facts:

- 100% of participating patients screened "positive" for food insecurity.
- In 2023, 28 patients with cardiovascular risk factors were enrolled in a 14-week CSA program that offered CSA pick-ups at 7 NOTCH locations and delivery options for participants with transportation barriers.

**Education:** Weekly newsletter provided with CSA shares featuring nutrition education and recipes, summer/fall SNAP-Ed cooking class opportunities offered through NOTCH (the American Heart Association's Healthy for Life® program), and a gardenside nutrition education summer event with Dubs Farms in Berkshire, Vermont.

## Impact:

- 50% increase in participants reporting trying to eat more vegetables now compared to before the CSA program.
- 49% increase in participants reporting trying to eat more fruit now compared to before the program.

Images courtesy of Peter Jenkins, Healthy Roots Collaborative, and Miranda Henry, Northern Tier Center for Health. Used with permission.

*"I am grateful for this program. I was able to pay more bills!"*

*"The CSA program helped me put veggies into my diet."*

**NORTHWEST  
FARMACY CSA** 

# Spotlight: VFFC's Farmacy Project



## Facts:

- 225 Shares, including 25 family or double-sized shares. 63% of participants had someone aged 65 or over in their household, and 44% had children under the age of 18 in their household.
- Since 2015, 3,672 Rutland County residents have been reached by the program.
- In 2023 Farmacy had eight pick-up sites around the county, including all Community Health Centers of the Rutland Region.

**Education:** Newsletter with recipes and educational cooking tips, free educational workshops (canning, preserving, fermentation, and utilizing the harvest), samples and taste tests, and space for socializing for members.

## Impact:

- Only 16% of Farmacy participants labeled their health as “very good” or “excellent” before beginning the program, post-program this doubled to 32%.
- 94% said they gained more knowledge about the importance of eating vegetables and fruits for their health.
- Only 21% of participants could confidently say that most of the food they consumed before the program was locally grown. During the program, this increased to 68%.

Images courtesy of Emma Hileman, VFFC. Used with permission.

*“Emotionally, being poverty stricken, but given really fresh, local, healthy food makes one feel valued as a human being. My health was benefitted because with more fiber it helped regulate me, which is connected to every part of my health.”*



# Spotlight: VYCC Health Care Share



## Facts:

- VYCC's Health Care Share program provides over 400 shares throughout Northern Vermont.
- Produce is provided from our non-profit farm located at VYCC's campus in Richmond. Through our Food & Farm program, young folks ages 15 and up get paid opportunities to engage in farming on our historic 400-acre campus in Richmond Vermont. We grow 11 acres of organic vegetables and raise chickens on pasture for meat and eggs.
- VYCC operates in 6 counties in Vermont with 11 partners. Patients enrolled in the program vary widely in age and family size, with over 70% identifying as having diet-related illness and over 50% screening positive for food insecurity.

**Education:** weekly newsletter with recipes, information to demystify unfamiliar vegetables, as well as techniques to preserve and keep produce longer. Weekly cooking class featuring that week's share and taught by a registered dietician.

## Impact:

- 85% of participants reported increased vegetable consumption.
- 87% of participants reported they had greater confidence in their ability to cook and eat healthy foods.
- 82% of participants reported they had cooked with fresh produce more often after participating in HCS.

Images courtesy of Lily Bradburn, VYCC. Used with permission.

*"I love Health Care Share, cause my kids go through fruits and veggies like the world is going to end...I actually got my son to try some new vegetables – I was absolutely surprised. I didn't think that would ever happen. It was really nice having the kids try new and different veggies, they loved it!"*

# Participating Farms

Blue Heron Farm (Grand Isle)	New Leaf Organics (Bristol)	Stevens Farmstead (Sudbury)
Boardman Hill Farm (West Rutland)	Old Road Farm (Granville)	Stone's Throw Farmstead (Shrewsbury)
Dubs Farms (Berkshire)	Otter Point Farm (West Haven)	SVT Farm (Wells)
Evening Song (Shrewsbury)	Owl's Head Blueberry Farm	Tell a Tale Farm (West Rutland)
Familia Farm (West Pawlet)	Pete's Greens	The Farm at VYCC (Richmond)
Farm and Wilderness (Plymouth)	Quill Hill Farm (Poultney)	West Farm (Jeffersonville)
Full Moon Farm (Hinesburg)	Singing Cedars Farmstead* (Orwell)	Yate's Orchard (Hinesburg)
Jericho Settlers' Farm (Jericho)	Smokey House Center (Danby)	Yoder Farm (Danby)
Last Resort Farm (Monkton)	Spring Lake Ranch (Cuttingsville)	*Participated in two programs.

# Participating Community Health Partners

Abenaki Helping Abenaki	Porter Primary Care
All Dimensions Primary Care	Porter Women's Health Program
Associates in Primary Care	Richford Health Center (NOTCH)
Blue Cross Blue Shield	Richmond Family Medicine
Central Vermont Medical Center	Riverside Avenue Community Health Centers
Community Health Centers of the Rutland Region	Rutland County Free Clinic
Convenient Care Rutland	Rutland Mental Health
CVOEO	Rutland Regional Medical Center
Enosburg Health Center (NOTCH)	SASH: Barre Housing Authority
Fairfax Health Center (NOTCH)	Second Spring LLC
First Step Pregnancy	Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging
Forensic Consultation and Counseling	St. Albans Health Center (NOTCH)
Georgia Health Center (NOTCH)	Swanton Health Center (NOTCH)
Green Mountain Family Practice	The Health Center, Plainfield
Hogenkamp & Hogenkamp	Thrive Center of the Green Mountains
HOPE	UVM Medical Center
Integrated Family Medicine Montpelier	Veterans Affairs (2 clinics)
Middlebury Family Health	Vermont Department of Health, WIC
Neshobe Family Medicine	Vermont Department of Health, YouFirst
North Country Hospital	Village Health
Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital	Vocational Rehab
NOTCH Primary Care	Waterbury Family Health
People's Health and Wellness Barre	Winooski Family Health
Porter Pediatrics	

# Report compiled by the Farm to Plate CSA & Healthcare Community of Practice

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