



2024 Data Report

CSA & Healthcare Community of Practice

farm^{to}*plate*



STRENGTHENING VERMONT'S FOOD SYSTEM

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](#). Last 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 for more information.**



**VERMONT
YOUTH
CONSERVATION
CORPS**

The VYCC Health Care Share

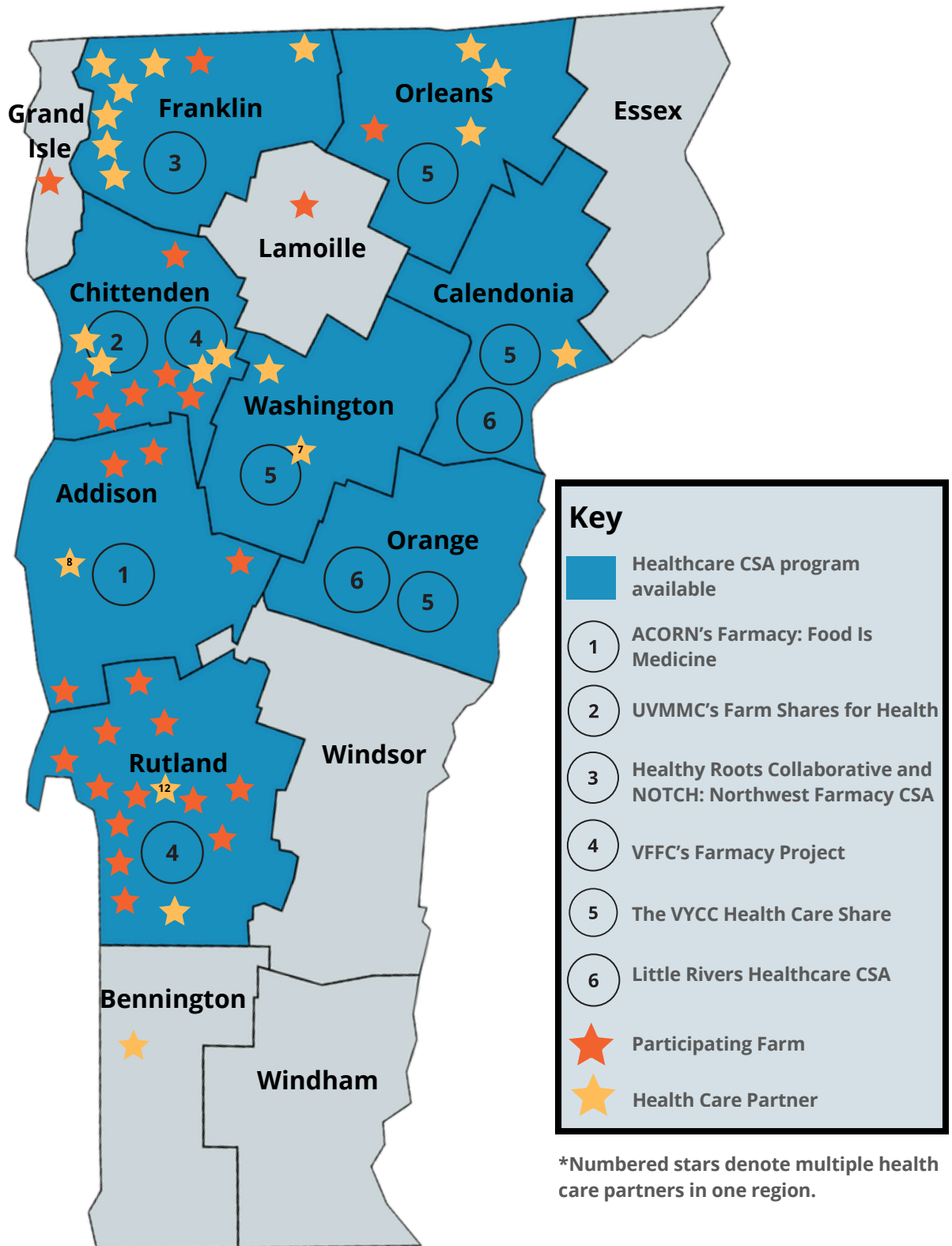
The Health Care Share (HCS) connects Vermont families with fresh, local food through their health care provider. HCS currently partners with 11 medical centers who identify patient families experiencing food insecurity, diet-related disease, or other distinct health risks and provide a referral to the 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.**



Little Rivers Food Farmacy

The Little Rivers Health Care (LRHC) Food Farmacy connects patients with nutritious, locally sourced foods to support the prevention and management of chronic health conditions. Designed around a comprehensive Food is Medicine model, the program serves patients who are food insecure and living with conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, or risk of cardiovascular disease, as well as those who are pregnant or have recently given birth. The program's vision is that all LRHC patients understand the role of nutrition in chronic disease and have equitable access to the foods needed to support their health. **See page 13 for more information.**

Healthcare CSA Programs in Vermont



Healthcare CSA Programs: Overview



50 Community Health Partners involved.

See page 12 for a list of participating organizations.



83% 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.



56% of participants were insured by Medicare, Medicaid, or Dr. Dynasaur.



Participants of all six programs reported increased fruit and vegetable consumption.

Healthcare CSA Programs: Key Metrics



1,922 people reached.

Across all 6 programs; based on household size.



\$405,430 in produce purchased.

162% increase from 2023.



***38,250 lbs of produce donated
by non-profit farms and
partners.***



***60% of participants have an
annual income less than 160% of
the Federal Poverty Line. (\$25,000)***



***Support from 36 for-profit farms
and 3 non-profit farms.***

See page 12 for a full list of participating farms.



***2,705 volunteer hours
contributed.*** *172% increase from 2023.*

Spotlight: ACORN's Farmacy: Food Is Medicine



Facts:

- In 2024, ACORN served 100 participants for 15 weeks, sourcing from three local, organic farms. This equated to almost \$60,000 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.

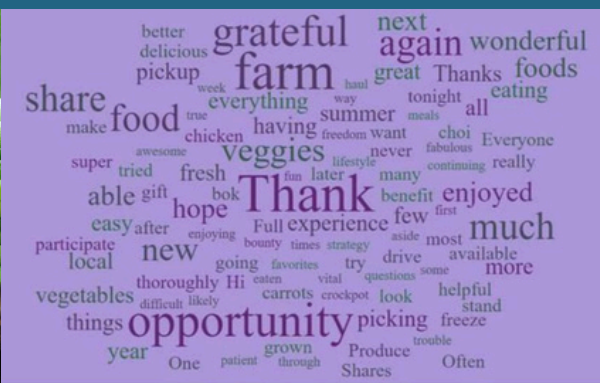
Impact:

- 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.

"Like many things that I have experienced in Vermont, this gift of a program, is magic! There is a sense of community, inclusion and almost a festive environment where it's not a handout, it's a sharing of the wonderful food that the land and the farmers supply to us."

Spotlight: UVMMC's Farm Shares for Health



Facts:

- During the growing season, FS4H partners with local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs to provide fresh, local produce via farm shares to individuals who identify as food insecure. 100% of the 45 patients enrolled in the program were screened as food insecure at the start.
- This program is a collaboration between UVMMC and the UVM Osher Center for Integrative Health.

Education:

- A program notebook included: information about the farms and vegetables included in the CSAs, meal preparation and planning guides, food storage tips, and more. A recipe deck had QR codes linking to Culinary Medicine's gardening and cooking video series titled *"What's That Food?"* that provides demos of growing and cooking fresh vegetables.
- Free Integrative Health and Wellness Coaching Trainees were available to work one-on-one with any participants who wanted additional support.

Impact:

- The CPP patients who have chronic pain that is exacerbated by long travel benefitted from choosing CSAs from farms that had a variety of pick-up locations closer to where they lived.
- Through listening sessions, participants reported that their CSAs made accessing fresh produce easy, that produce was of high quality, and that they were grateful for the CSA.

Image (right) courtesy of Lisa Hoare, UVMMC. Participant feedback word cloud. Used with permission.

"To have fresh local produce in my fridge makes every meal special. It's been fun trying new things and introducing my kids to a variety of farm fresh produce and allowing them to pick what they want and how we'll enjoy our food."

"I am loving my farm share. So many amazing veggies. I am so thankful for this experience."

Spotlight: Healthy Roots Collaborative & NOTCH: Northwest Farmacy CSA



Facts:

- 100% of participating patients screened "positive" for food insecurity vs 60% after the program.
- In 2024, patients with cardiovascular risk factors were enrolled in a 14-week CSA program that offered CSA pick-ups at several NOTCH locations and delivery options for participants with transportation barriers.

Education: Weekly newsletter provided with CSA shares featuring nutrition education and recipes and summer/fall SNAP-Ed cooking class opportunities offered through NOTCH (the American Heart Association's Healthy for Life® program).

Impact:

- There was a 39% increase of participants who reported eating more vegetables now compared to before the CSA program.
- 93.3% of participants reported that the program benefited their health.

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

"I'm so thankful my provider asked me about the program to sign up and I get excited every time."

"The Northwest Farmacy CSA showed me that there is other foods that I like that I would have never tried."

**NORTHWEST
FARMACY CSA** 

Spotlight: VFFC's Farmacy Project



Facts:

- 229 shares, with 520 participants, including family or double-sized shares.
- Since 2015, 3,672 Rutland County residents have been reached by the program.
- In 2024 Farmacy had pick-up sites all 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:

- Nearly 50% of participants say that they regularly eat vegetables daily or almost daily.
- 79.4% say they intend to continue to eat vegetables regularly. 74.1% rely on Farmacy for foods they wouldn't be able to afford.

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

"My overall sense of wellbeing has increased knowing that there will be a bag of healthy treats waiting for me every week."

"Knowing I was going to receive healthy food and the anxiety of cost w/o the program would increase having to eat healthy."



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 63% 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:

- There was a 24% increase in the number of participants who reported cooking a meal from scratch.
- Participants reported they had cooked with fresh produce more often after participating in HCS.
- The number of participants who screened positive for food insecurity dropped by 20% after receiving the Health Care Share
- 92% of participants said they would definitely want to participate again if it was an option

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!"

Spotlight: Little Rivers Food Farmacy



Facts:

- The Little Rivers Health Care (LRHC) Food Farmacy serves patients across ten Vermont towns, Bradford, Corinth, Fairlee, Groton, Newbury, Wells River, Ryegate, Thetford, and Topsham—and neighboring New Hampshire communities including Bath, Haverhill, Monroe, North Haverhill, Orford, Piermont, and Woodsville. The program operates through all four LRHC clinics in Wells River, Bradford, Newbury, and Corinth, and collaborates with partners such as NOTCH, Lamoille Health, Dartmouth College, and the Vermont Department of Health. LRHC is also an active member of regional Food Security Networks.

Partners:

Produce for the Food Farmacy is sourced from local farms including Root 5 Farm and Pierson Farm. LRHC also works extensively with Willing Hands, a food recovery and distribution organization.

Impact:

- In 2024, the Food Farmacy provided 1,404 bags of healthy food, supporting approximately 300 patients and investing \$6,300 in local food systems, reaching an estimated 35,000 residents across its service area.



Participating Farms

Boardman Hill Farm (West Rutland)
Darby Farm (Alburgh)
Dubs Farms (Berkshire)
Evening Song (Shrewsbury)
Familia Farm (West Pawlet)
Finn & Roots Farm (Bakersfield)
Full Moon Farm (Hinesburg)
Hackett's Orchard (South Hero)
Happy Bird Poultry Farm (Isle La Motte)
Hunger Moon Farm (Enosburg Falls)
Jericho Settlers' Farm (Jericho)
JK Markle Potatoes (St Albans)

Last Resort Farm (Monkton)
New Leaf Organics (Bristol)
Northeast Vine Supply
Old Road Farm (Granville)
Pete's Greens (Craftsbury)
Pierson Farm (Bradford)
Pomykala Farm (Grand Isle)
Quill Hill Farm (Poultney)
River Berry Farm (Fairfax)
Rocky Hill Farm (Westford)
Root 5 Farm (Fairlee)
Sandy Bottom Farm (Isle La Motte)

Stevens Farmstead (Sudbury)
Singing Cedars Farmstead (Orwell)
Smokey House Center (Danby)
Spring Lake Ranch (Cuttingsville)
Stone's Throw Farmstead (Shrewsbury)
SVT Farm (Wells)
Tell a Tale Farm (West Rutland)
The Farm at VYCC (Richmond)
West Farm (Jeffersonville)
Yoder Farm (Danby)

Participating Community Health Partners

Abenaki Helping Abenaki
All Dimensions Primary Care
Associates in Primary Care
Blue Cross Blue Shield
Central Vermont Medical Center
Community Health Centers of the Rutland Region
Convenient Care Rutland
CVOEO
Enosburg Health Center (NOTCH)
Fairfax Health Center (NOTCH)
First Step Pregnancy
Forensic Consultation and Counseling
Georgia Health Center (NOTCH)
Green Mountain Family Practice
Hogenkamp & Hogenkamp
HOPE
Integrated Family Medicine Montpelier
Middlebury Family Health
Neshobe Family Medicine
North Country Hospital
Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital
NOTCH Primary Care
People's Health and Wellness Barre
Porter Pediatrics

Porter Primary Care
Porter Women's Health Program
Richford Health Center (NOTCH)
Richmond Family Medicine
Riverside Avenue Community Health Centers
Rutland County Free Clinic
Rutland Mental Health
Rutland Regional Medical Center
SASH: Barre Housing Authority
Second Spring LLC
Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging
St. Albans Health Center (NOTCH)
Swanton Health Center (NOTCH)
The Health Center, Plainfield
Thrive Center of the Green Mountains
UVM Medical Center
Veterans Affairs (2 clinics)
Vermont Department of Health, WIC
Vermont Department of Health, YouFirst
Village Health
Vocational Rehab
Waterbury Family Health
Willing Hands
Winooski Family Health

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

ACORN's Farmacy: Food Is Medicine

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