

AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FOR NEIGHBORHOODS

Mobile van increases food security and healthy food choices for low income residents

Public Health Problem

- Obesity and overweight are more common among people with low income.
- Substituting fruits and vegetables for higher energy-density foods, such as those high in fat and added sugars, is a useful weight management strategy.
- People who live in neighborhoods where a long bus trip is the only way to get to the nearest grocery store often don't include fruits and vegetables in their daily diets.
- Increasing access to fruits and vegetables is a strategy supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Program for states.

Program

- Capital District Community Gardens, with funding provided by a grant from the New York State Department of Health Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Program launched a mobile market project in a box truck with refrigerators and shelves displaying fruits and vegetables for sale. Additional funds are being raised from donors throughout the region served by this project.
- The *Veggie Mobile* makes regularly-scheduled, one hour stops to sell nutritious fruits and vegetables at assisted living centers, public housing projects and other densely-populated locations in Albany, Schenectady, and Troy, in underserved neighborhoods.
- Once a week the Taste & Take program provides hundreds of residents from public housing a taste of a different fruit or vegetable and a free share of selected fresh produce.
- Volunteers perform a variety of tasks necessary to keep this mobile market running smoothly.

Impact

- The Veggie Mobile provides greater food security and fills a critical gap in area cities - a lack of grocery stores selling affordable fresh produce.
- Making fruits and vegetables more affordable and accessible to low-income city residents helps achieve several state and federal health objectives:
 - a Healthy People 2010 health objective for the nation on eating more fruits & vegetables
 - an objective of the New York State Strategic Plan for Overweight and Obesity Prevention to increase fruit and vegetable consumption and increase food security among state households
 - a goal of the Hunger Prevention & Nutrition Assistance Program to increase access to safe and nutritious food and related resources
- Eating generous amounts of fruits and vegetables as part of a healthful diet is also likely to reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.

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