

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS & IMPACTS

1,072

Shareholders and families who weekly purchase produce through the year-round Farm Share program in 2014

32

New York State farmers and artisans who aggregate their produce and value-added items to sell through Corbin Hill's markets in 2014

3,578

Individuals from vulnerable populations provided fresh food each week thus far in 2014

\$770,000

Initial equity contributed for purchasing Corbin Hill Farm and providing start-up costs

\$400,000

Projected value of food purchased by CHFP and produced by farmers in this fiscal year

\$360,000

Support for CHFP from New York State and Community Development Block Grant Funding

\$100,000

Grant from Farm Credit East and CoBank as a match for new development

Profile: Corbin Hill Food Project

New York State



It is hard to imagine in a city dubbed the “Big Apple,” with street vendors on almost every corner, that neighborhood residents would struggle to access healthy fruits and vegetables. However, many New York City and nearby residents have long been plagued by a disconnected food system—one that is unable to address the health and economic needs of many local community members. In urban centers, residents in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color often face limited access to healthy food. At the same time, many rural farmers in the state face barriers to entry into wholesale and commercial markets serving New York City residents.

The [Corbin Hill Food Project](#) (CHFP) is working to bridge this gap between farm communities growing local produce and city communities that want and need healthy food. By building upon food hub and community supported agriculture (CSA) retail models, CHFP connects family-owned farms upstate to black, Latino, and immigrant residents in neighborhoods such as Harlem, Washington Heights, the South Bronx, and areas in Brooklyn and Queens.

In line with the organization’s food justice mission that incorporates healthy food advocacy and community-based programming, CHFP has created a Farm Share program that seeks to attract urban populations that are traditionally not members of CSAs. New York City consumers pay in advance for designated amounts of produce. In this manner, consumers operate as “shareholders” and have an equal stake in the direction and success of the endeavor. To ensure that healthy food reaches individuals who need it most, CHFP also distributes food through a Community Healthy Partners program. The program employs a wholesale strategy to distribute food to



institutions that work with vulnerable populations. The program defines vulnerable populations as families earning less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Thus far in 2014 the program has served 3,578 individuals each week. This represents a 19 percent increase over 2013.

The Corbin Hill Food Project grew organically following a series of meetings in 2009 attended by long-time colleagues of Dennis Derryck, who were passionate about improving New York's regional food system. Soon after these meetings 11 investors collaboratively raised \$770,000 in equity to purchase a 95-acre farm in Schoharie County and proposed cultivating agricultural lands in rural upstate New York to serve as a production and aggregation point for upstate farmers to supply neighborhoods downstate with sustainably farmed, local produce. Of the equity raised, 71 percent came from people of color and 51 percent from women. This upstate location is known as Corbin Hill Road Farm. In addition to producing select limited amounts of produce, the farm also hosts on-site educational programming and community building for CHFP shareholders focused on sustainable agricultural practices and the role of farms in improving the state's local food systems.

As the project grew, Corbin Hill partnered with New York City community organizations, such as Urban Health Plan, New Settlement Housing, Riverside Church, Urban Garden Center, Brother Sister Sol, and Bronx Lebanon Hospital to ensure participation in its various programming and to advance aligned missions. Many of these organizations serve as distribution locations for residents to pick up their produce. At these distribution points, and others throughout the city, CHFP staff and partners facilitate cooking demonstrations and share information and recipes on how to store and prepare their produce. CHFP aggregates and sells cultural and community-appropriate produce to New York City residents, such as collard greens, cilantro, and callaloo. Success has been due to residents' involvement in CHFP's food hub model, which includes partnerships with farms ranging in size from two acres to 250 acres in Schoharie County and Mohawk Valley, an area approximately 160 miles north of New York City, as well as other farms in the state. Many of Corbin Hill's affiliates are family-owned enterprises that have been farming for several generations. These farms are projected to sell over \$400,000 in produce and value-added items such as eggs and herbs to CHFP for its Farm Share program in 2014.

In just five years after launching, the Corbin Hill Food Project has emerged as an innovative model for connecting upstate farmers with New York City's vulnerable communities. CHFP's projected income for 2014 is \$775,000. Additionally, CHFP recently received its 501(C)(3) nonprofit status to support the operations, community building, education, and advocacy work in the neighborhoods it serves. CHFP also recently received \$100,000 from a Farm Credit East and CoBank grant, and \$360,000 in New York State and community development grant funding towards improving its aggregation facility in Schoharie County. These investments from community development funders and other donors will help to ensure the continued expansion and development of CHFP complemented by the continued support of upstate farmers and New York City consumers, who remain at the helm of the project by providing the supply and demand for fresh farm produce. For Derryck and the communities, the importance of collective ownership is clear:

"We started because community residents didn't have a voice around food. Others were talking about what food should be in our community, but people themselves were not speaking...things that are going to be sustainable in our community have to be owned by the community."

-Dennis Derryck, Founder and President of Corbin Hill Food Project

