



City of Everett
Office of the Mayor
Carlo DeMaria, Jr.
484 Broadway
EVERETT, MASSACHUSETTS 02149

PRESS RELEASE

Monday, February 6, 2017

EVERETT COMMUNITY GROWERS RECEIVES GRANT

Award supports healthy food equity research in Everett

Mayor Carlo DeMaria is proud to announce that the Everett Community Growers (ECG) have received a grant from the New England Grassroots Environmental Fund (NEGEF) that will enable Everett residents and organizations to lay the groundwork for a Community Food Assessment (CFA) that it plans to conduct this year.

The aim of the CFA will be to improve the community's food system and increase access to healthy food. ECG, with support of the City of Everett and other partners, will gather information about residents' perceptions of the Everett food environment and seek to better understand their current shopping behaviors.

A program of the Everett Community Health Partnership, ECG has been working since 2010 to improve health outcomes and increase civic engagement through community gardening and urban farming initiatives. In its seven years of operations, it has significantly expanded its efforts and leadership in its food justice initiatives, and now operates two community gardens with more than 30 plots, and as of 2016 also operates a ¼ acre community farm, at which it empowers youth in growing food for a local food bank.

The funds awarded by the New England Grassroots Environmental Fund will go help ECG in developing multi-lingual outreach and survey materials, and securing interpretation services, as part of ECG's efforts to engage Everett residents from a diversity of backgrounds in conversations about improving healthy food options in Everett. The award will enable ECG to build on and expand the organization's history of community engagement as the organization begins CFA research.

With so much racial and cultural diversity in Everett, being able to do outreach and research in multiple languages is imperative to ECG's inclusive approach toward assessing the Everett food environment. "I am so proud that the City of Everett was recently named the most diverse municipality in Massachusetts," says Mayor DeMaria. "These funds are critical to ensuring that all our residents are made aware of the availability of healthy, fresh, locally grown, produce and also to educate the public about how they can join or participate in our urban farm or our community gardens."

The inclusive outreach made possible by the NEGEF award will contribute to the eventual development of a community food action plan, for which ECG is currently seeking additional funding. Once funded, this plan will provide program and policy recommendations for addressing pressing and persistent food access and equity issues through a long-term, systems-focused approach.

Please contact Emily Nink with questions or volunteer inquiries: emilynink@gmail.com

About Everett Community Growers

Everett Community Growers (ECG) is a program of the Everett Community Health Partnership (ECHP), working to improve health outcomes and increase civic engagement among Everett residents through urban agriculture and other food justice initiatives. Membership is comprised of residents and local organizational leaders committed to food justice. ECG members work to create spaces for growing food in the city, as well as conduct workshops and other community engagement activities aimed at increasing residents' knowledge and understanding of health equity and food justice. ECG is also engaged in local policy and planning efforts as they relate to food justice in Everett. Our fiscal sponsor is La Comunidad, INC. Find us online at www.everettcommunitygrowers.wordpress.com.

About the New England Grassroots Environment Fund

The New England Grassroots Environment Fund energizes and nurtures long-term civic engagement in local initiatives that create and maintain healthy, just, safe and sustainable communities using stories, tools and dollars to fuel local activism and social change. Since 1996, the Grassroots Fund's core grant making program continues to fund nearly 150 grants annually, giving more than \$4 million in 20 years to more than 2,000 community groups and initiatives covering more than 60 percent of New England's cities and towns. For more information, please visit www.grassrootsfund.org or call 603-905-9915.

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