



# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

# PROGRESS TOWARD FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

As 2021 comes to a close, we are reflecting on a year full of change and uncertainty, taking stock of what's important, and celebrating many milestones. Hands down, what's most important to everyone at Keep Growing Detroit (KGD) is our beloved community, who we've had the joy of reconnecting with this year, even if only for moments at classes, workdays, the farmer's market, or during curbside pick-ups at the KGD Farm. We are truly in awe of all you do, growing food for your families and communities and initiating positive change in so many ways across the city. We are honored to be a part of the incredible impact that gardeners and farmers are making in Detroit.

Together, we are crossing a major milestone this year growing beyond 2,000 gardens and farms in the Garden Resource Program (GRP) for the first time ever! [Research](#) published this spring substantiated what we all know to be true, that tending a garden with support from the GRP contributes a huge amount of fruits and vegetables to growers' diets and influences the eating habits of the whole household, including children. Interviews with members showed that many growers preserve their garden's produce, providing home-grown vegetables nearly year-round and the vast majority of growers reported saving money on fruits and vegetables. Finally, an impact that is so relevant during these tumultuous times, GRP growers shared how gardening has been an impactful part of improving their physical and mental health.

As you'll see in the upcoming pages, we're adapting and continuously improving our work in light of a changed world, but KGD's core programming including the Garden Resource Program remains an anchor, reliably providing a pipeline for Detroit residents nurturing self-reliance, working towards their personal goals for health and well-being, and becoming advocates for change for themselves and their surroundings. This is how we achieve a food sovereign city, together!

## A STUDY OF THE GARDEN RESOURCE PROGRAM FOUND THAT...

MOST GRP MEMBERS PRODUCED

**51% OR MORE**

OF THE PRODUCE THEY CONSUMED DURING THE GROWING SEASON

ACTIVE GRP MEMBERS CONSUME AN AVERAGE OF

**1.5 CUPS OF FRUIT + 2 CUPS OF VEGETABLES**

ON A DAILY BASIS

**89% OF GRP MEMBERS SAVE MONEY**

ON FRUITS AND VEGETABLES DUE TO GARDENING



# FOREVER HOME FOR KGD

Located in the heart of Detroit's Historic Eastern Market District along the Dequindre Cut Greenway, Keep Growing Detroit's 1.3-acre farm is the hub of all we do. In 2021, the KGD Farm hosted thousands of curbside garden resource distributions for GRP members, safely welcomed hundreds of Grown in Detroit growers and customers as they dropped off or picked up fresh produce, and provided learning opportunities for KGD youth leaders and hundreds of volunteers who were interested in learning about and contributing to Detroit's local food system. During the growing season, the KGD Farm also grew 6,524 pounds of fresh produce for KGD programming, Detroit-based market outlets, and donation partners.

Like many of the growers we serve, land insecurity has been one KGD's biggest challenges. The uncertainty of not owning the land we have tended for years makes it hard to plan for the future and justify spending money on infrastructure and other much needed improvements, even those critical to our long-term success and growth. So, this spring, when we had the opportunity to buy the KGD Farm we jumped at it! In March, we launched the For the Love of the Land campaign and with the help of over 500 individual donors we raised the funds needed to buy the KGD Farm. For the first time ever, in 2022, KGD will be starting a growing season with land security and it feels amazing!

Because land security for all Detroit growers is key to food sovereignty and equity, we continue our work with the Detroit Black Farmer Land Fund in collaboration with DBCFSN and Oakland Avenue Urban Farm. This year, the fund supported 14 new land purchases for Black farmers and 13 more are currently in process. In addition, together we raised over \$100K to award 40 more Black farmers with land purchases and infrastructure improvements in 2022 and beyond.

## OUR MISSION

KGD exists to cultivate a food sovereign city where the majority of fruits and vegetables consumed by Detroiters are grown by residents, within the city's limits.



## OUR VISION

KGD's vision is that there are places to grow food in every neighborhood in Detroit and that these places are scaled so they are integrated into the fabric of the surrounding area and help maximize community and economic development opportunities that benefit residents.



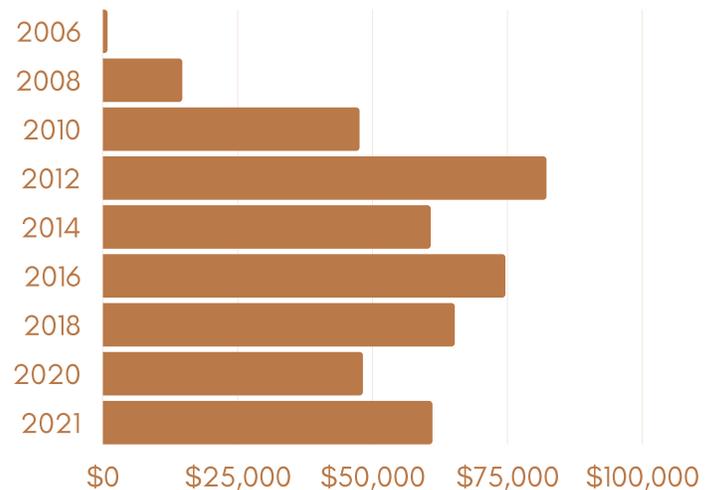
## GROWN IN DETROIT

At KGD we envision a thriving food system where all of Detroit's residents have access to the high quality, nutritious, and sustainably grown food that Grown in Detroit (GID) is known for. To this end, the GID program grew with intentionality in 2021 supporting 32 GID growers, 66% of which are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), to sell produce at three market outlets and collectively earn \$61,050. GID also expanded ways to increase access to this high quality produce accepting EBT, Pandemic-EBT, CashApp, and Double Up Food Bucks.

Following careful planning and safety protocols, the 2021 market season was filled with the 10-week GID Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, a Holiday CSA Share, a bustling Online Farm Store with weekly curbside pick-ups, and a much anticipated safe return to Eastern Market on Saturdays. The CSA provided over 4,500 lbs of produce to 50 members, including 30 Fair Share boxes provided to organizers and supporters of Black Lives Matter Detroit.

Additionally, all five of the value-added products found in this season's CSA boxes were from local BIPOC food entrepreneurs utilizing and highlighting seasonal GID produce. GID also doubled down on efforts to connect with donation partners, including 3 new Community Fridge locations, Make Food Not Waste, and Presbytery of Detroit, making sure that the 3,046 pounds of fresh and nutritious unsold produce made it to Detroit homes in need.

### GROWN IN DETROIT SALES 2006-2021



# SUPPORTING FUTURE FOOD LEADERS

Time flies when you are growing up with KGD! With over 50% of the gardens that participate in the GRP this year serving children and youth, 16,725 children were actively engaged in gardening and setting the foundation for healthy habits that will last a lifetime. We see children grow like weeds as they come along with their parents to pick up transplants year after year. Over the years, we have seen the impact that these formative experiences in the garden have, with young gardeners growing into engaged young adults with jobs and leadership roles across Detroit's food system.

This year, we celebrate crossing the milestone of 100 youth graduating from KGD's Youth Apprenticeship Program, including Akello Karamoko, KGD's recently promoted Farm Manager. In 2021, 32 youth Apprentices and leaders brought a vibrant energy to the farm as they jumped right in, spending 812 hours sowing, pricking out, tagging and learning the skills of transplant production and other farm skills. This farm work was complemented with 10 lessons on food justice, developing their own gardens, and an amazing weeklong campout to close out the season in the Upper Peninsula with our partners Detroit Outdoors.



**BETWEEN 2015-2021**

**100 YOUTH**

**PARTICIPATED IN KGD'S  
SUMMER APPRENTICESHIP**



## EARLY CHILDHOOD

In 2021 KGD is worked with a vast network of organizations serving families with young children, including 39 early childcare providers, to ensure that all of Detroit's children have experiences during critical early childhood years that will influence lifelong healthy habits. This summer we launched KGD's [Garden Based Learning Guide](#), which is full of practical and accessible tips to support caregivers and educators with the resources they need to successfully engage children in gardening and eating healthy.

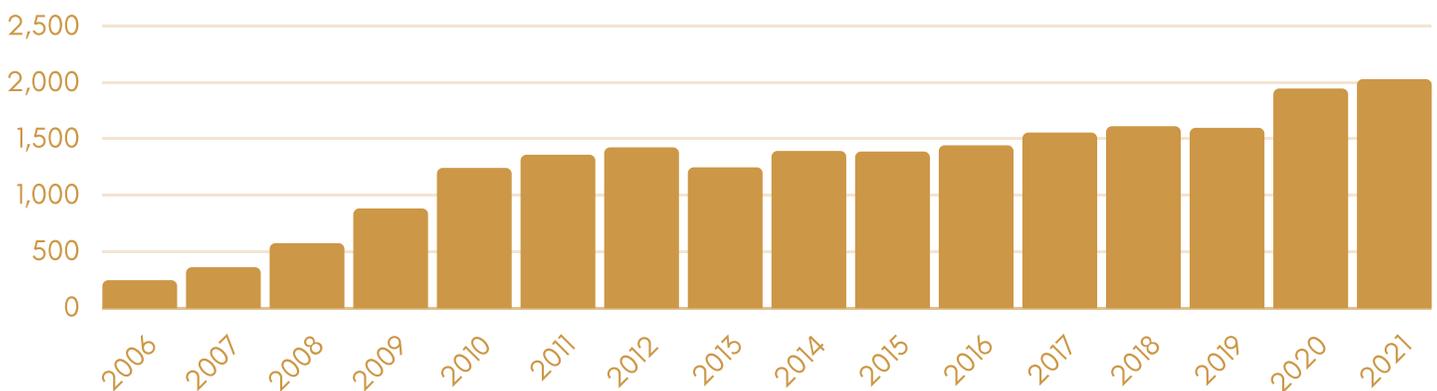


## GROWING NETWORK

The Garden Resource Program is 2,015 gardens strong and growing! Crossing a major milestone this year, the program continued to be an anchor, connecting over 23,974 Detroit residents to the support they needed to successfully grow vegetable gardens in the city. These 1,370 family, 429 community, 130 school and 86 market gardens were welcomed curbside at the KGD Farm in the sun, rain and snow during 4,940 curbside distribution slots to pick up 45,204 seed packs and 220,548 transplants. For those unable to make it out, home deliveries were coordinated with the support of generous GRP volunteers.

We were elated to resume garden development activities in 2021, knowing that these in-person connections are the heart of the GRP network. From our longitudinal study, we understand that gardens are more likely to return to the program when they receive this assistance. With over 664 new gardens joining the GRP for the first time in 2021, the demand soared for support. As soon as the weather broke, we connected with growers during 111 site visits, assisting with planning, site assessment and 211 soil tests.

**TOTAL GARDENS PARTICIPATING IN THE GRP 2006-2021**



# GARDEN DEVELOPMENT AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

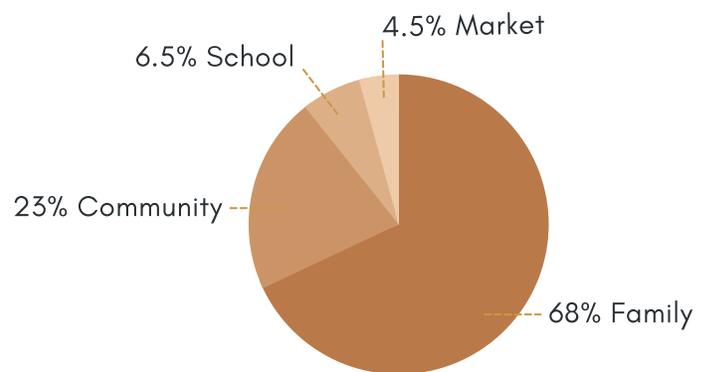
Not just your average vegetable gardeners, Detroit growers are adopting sustainable agriculture techniques that enhance the environment rather than deplete it. KGD helps mobilize resources to support the adoption of these techniques by connecting growers whenever possible with affordable and locally-sourced services and goods. For example, 3 GRP regional resource hubs hosted by community partners facilitated the distribution of mulch and 240 yards of compost, and provided access to tools for workdays. On top of that, growers picked up row cover and trellis net during GRP distribution days.

This year, we also assisted growers with resources to build key garden infrastructure, including 4 hightunnels and 6 irrigation stations for collecting and using rainwater. With growing demand for skilled labor for garden infrastructure projects, we also used these builds as training opportunities for community members.

Additionally, KGD helped 32 sites navigate the process for funding through the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, supporting efforts to incentivize the adoption of conservation practices. We also worked with our partners at the National Wildlife Foundation to host educational events promoting the creation of pollinator habitats, pairing educational classes with distributions of native plants grown at the KGD Farm.



## GRP GARDEN BREAKDOWN BY TYPE



# VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The GRP wouldn't be possible without our generous networks of volunteers who are down to help rain or shine, at home or at the farm. In order to keep our community safe, we decentralized our seed packing and tag writing operations this spring. Volunteers stepped up to pack seeds and write 59,100 plant tags remotely. By summer, we warmly (and safely) welcomed 1,012 eager volunteers back to the KGD Farm and they generously contributed 2,024 hours to assist the KGD staff and most importantly to bring back community to the KGD farm once again.



## CAPACITY BUILDING

Though many have been shouting the message for years, the pandemic exposed many vulnerabilities within Detroit's Food System in a new way. With insight from growers, KGD prioritized developing new comprehensive education programs in three key areas, including seed saving, transplant production and plant-based medicine, beginning the work to expand our collective capacity to increase sustainability for the long-term. Highlights of these efforts included KGD farmers recording a six-part seed saving video series and the inaugural year of our "Growing a Medicine Garden" series, which aims to cultivate medicinal herb gardens in community spaces across the city. Within a week of application going live, 138 people had applied for the series and from that initial excitement we selected the top 40 participants to attend the 4-part series and receive tincture making supplies and native plant bundles grown right at the KGD Farm.

In 2021, KGD also resumed our other comprehensive education courses, including the Sweet on Detroit Beekeeping program and Urban Roots, a community gardener training program. While both programs were altered to online formats, staff creatively adapted activities, which included some in-person workdays, to ensure that we maintained the essential networking and leadership development components of these programs. Highlights for the 27 participants in Sweet on Detroit included learning about the importance and role of pollinators in our ecosystem and opportunities to get hands-on beehive inspection experience with socially distanced bee yard visits. For the 28 students in Urban Roots, the students dug in to transform two gardens during workdays where they honed their garden development skills, including building raised beds, planting native gardens and building two irrigation stations.

# EDUCATION

Every year Keep Growing Detroit aspires to curate our Urban Garden Education Series to challenge our local farming community to do things better, remind people of things they already know and inspire growers to try new things. In 2021, KGD hosted 41 classes, bringing new topics such as mushroom cultivation, the history of Black farmers in Detroit, and using biochar as a soil amendment, as well as time tested basics that ensure gardeners know how to plan, prep, plant, thin, prune, weed, harvest, cure, and cook! Our primarily online format of the classes provided a convenient way for participants to engage on the go while, for example, making dinner or working in their gardens. However, we were ecstatic to resume a handful of in-person classes, where we know gardeners take away so much more from the rich interactions between instructors, other gardeners and even the garden setting where classes are held. This year's highlights included an amazing Filipino Cooking class, Maintaining Perennial and Native Pollinator Habitat Gardens (with distribution of native plant packages), and a virtual tour with Old City Acres, a Black-owned small scale farm west of Detroit. In August, we also resumed the tradition of the Annual Tour of Detroit Farms and Garden with a self-driven tour for 120 guests highlighting 18 gardens across the city. Honoring the knowledge, experience and importance of BIPOC representation in our educational offerings, 61% of our classes were taught by people of color this season.



21,853  
TOTAL VIEWS  
ON KGD SOCIAL MEDIA  
CHANNELS



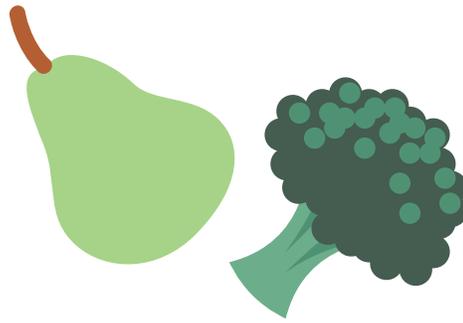
# POLICY

In 2021, KGD continued to engage in and prioritize policy work to get ahead of the curve as the City of Detroit inches toward more formalized requirements for gardeners. This year, we initiated a program to support gardens and farms complete Change of Use permits to ensure the protections of the Urban Agriculture Ordinance from blight and nuisance tickets. We are also currently supporting over 30 gardens with technical assistance and monetary support to get their gardens permitted.

# LOOK WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED TOGETHER!

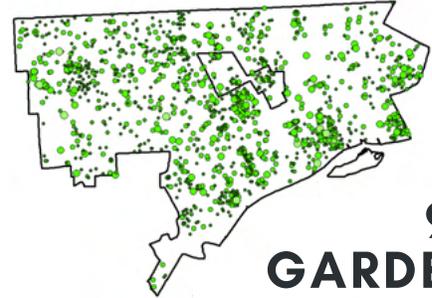
## KEEP GROWING DETROIT, 2021

SUPPORTED  
23,974  
DETROITERS



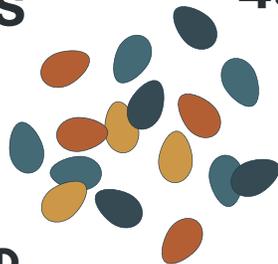
GROWING FOOD IN  
2,015 GARDENS &  
FARMS

664 GARDENS  
JOINED THE GRP  
FOR THE FIRST TIME



931  
GARDENS  
HAVE PARTICIPATED  
FOR +3 YEARS

HOSTED  
4,940 CURBSIDE  
RESOURCE  
PICK-UPS



DISTRIBUTED  
220,548  
TRANSPLANTS

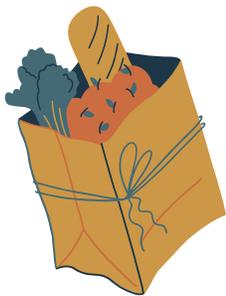
DISTRIBUTED  
45,204 PACKS  
OF SEEDS



HOSTED 60 ONLINE EVENTS  
ENGAGING  
1,854 TOTAL  
PEOPLE



& 108 IN-PERSON EVENTS  
ENGAGING  
1,159 TOTAL PEOPLE



SUPPORTED  
32 GROWN  
IN DETROIT  
GROWERS

THAT PROVIDED PRODUCE TO  
4,633 CUSTOMERS  
AT 3 MARKET OUTLETS

53% OF GRP GARDENS  
ENGAGED YOUTH AGES 0-18

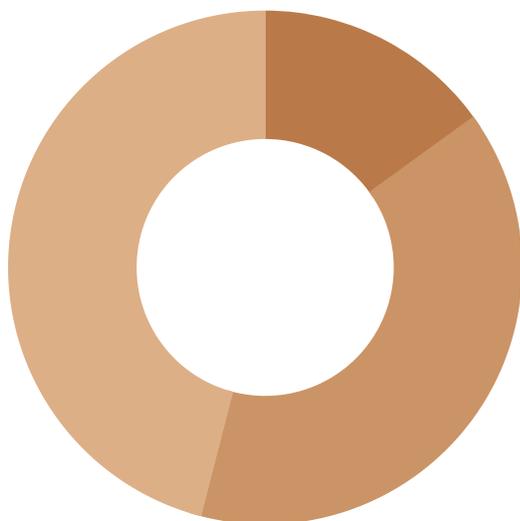
32 YOUTH  
APPRENTICES  
COMPLETED  
812 HOURS  
IN FARM TRAINING



# FINANCIAL REPORT, 2020

## 2020 Revenue

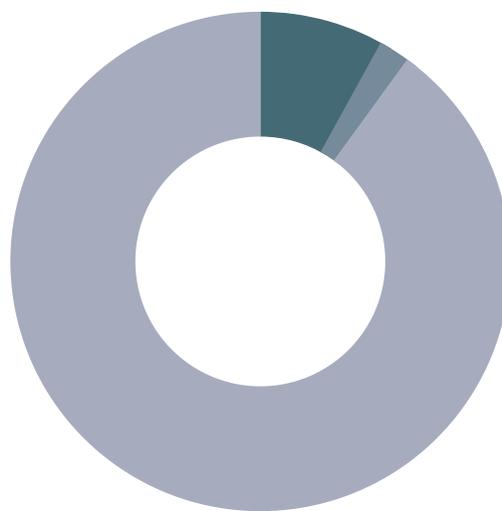
\$774,092



- 15% Mission Related Earned Income
- 39% Contributions
- 46% Grants

## 2020 Expenses

\$774,300



- 7% Management
- 3% Fundraising
- 90% Direct Programming

Financial data is based on an accrual basis and audited financial statements.

## STAFF & BOARD

### STAFF

Ashley Atkinson, Co-Director  
Danielle Daguio, Development & Engagement Coordinator  
Lola Gibson-Berg, Farm Activation Coordinator  
Molly Hubbell, Market Manager  
Akello Karamoko, Farm Manager  
Kido Pielack, Education Manager  
Lindsay Pielack, Co-Director  
Tepfirah Rushdan, Co-Director  
Romondo Woods, Garden Development Coordinator

### BOARD

Asenath Andrews  
Josh Budiongan  
Chet Dunbar, Treasurer  
Naim Edwards, Co-Chair  
Emily Ferstle  
Bekah Galang, Co-Chair  
Elois Moore  
Wynona Thomas



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