EXPERIMENTAL STATION

building a healthy local food culture
On Woodlawn and the South Side of Chicago, the 61st Street Farmers Market has been cultivating local food culture by providing fresh food access at the farmers market and enhancing food education programs for youth.

Across Illinois, Link Up Illinois continues to expand our Link Match program, a fresh food incentive that doubles the value of Link (SNAP) purchases. This program strengthens connections between Illinois farmers and low-income residents seeking greater access to healthy, affordable food.

This flyer is a brief version of our 2023 Increasing Food Access Report.

61st Street Farmers Market 2023 DATA HIGHLIGHTS

42.9% of customers surveyed eat a lot more fruits and vegetables as a result of coming to the Market

55.6% tried a new fruit or vegetable that they had not tried before

28.5% increase in Link Match purchases of fresh fruits and vegetables

“It [cooking class] exposes them to something different. It breaks up the day and provides them a reason to come to school on Thursdays. It provides a resource that other schools have, that we don’t.”

— Ms. Simental
Carnegie 5th grade teacher
More than a market
BUILDING LOCAL FOOD KNOWLEDGE
in partnership with Carnegie Elementary School, Jackson Park Terrace affordable housing complex, chefs and others.

243 Carnegie student participants
42 Summer gardening participants
8 Jackson Park Terrace Community gardening families

AFTER SCHOOL COOKING CLASSES
IN-SCHOOL GARDENING & HEALTHY EATING CLASSES
SUMMER GARDENING VISITS FOR YOUTH

1,500 LBS OF FREE PRODUCE TO JACKSON PARK TERRACE RESIDENTS
A HOOP HOUSE TEACHING GARDEN
COMMUNITY GARDENING SPACE AND INSTRUCTION

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Link Up Illinois achieved a remarkable milestone in 2023!

Over $1.24 million in Link Match redemption across our partners’ sites.

99 Farm Direct
Farmers Markets, Farm Stands, CSAs, Delivery Services

11 Brick and Mortar stores

“As a single mom, I am so grateful that I can earn extra cash/coupons [Link Match vouchers] to buy the healthy food I want for my family. Being a big supporter of our local farmers and being on a limited budget, I appreciate having access to getting more of their fresh produce, and it’s available seven days a week at the Co-op!”

— Link Match customer, Neighborhood Co-op

SNAP recipients get $1 in Link Match for every $1 spent with Link at participating locations.
Link Up Illinois
PROGRAM SURVEY RESULTS
The 2023 Link Match Program Evaluation by the Tulane School of Public Health & Tropical Medicine.

78.4% of survey respondents stated that their health has gotten better because of Link Match.

88.4% of survey respondents stated that Link Match was important or extremely important to their decision on how to spend their SNAP benefits.

91.6% of survey respondents rated their experience with Link Match as positive or very positive.

77.2% of respondents indicated that Link Match has increased the amount of fruits and vegetables they eat.