



# GIVING GARDENS

## Your employees' bountiful backyard

Iowa is 50th in the nation—dead last—in fruit and vegetable consumption. We eat less than any other state.

Food insecurity is on the rise in central Iowa with thousands more people visiting food pantries every year.

And employees are increasingly looking for new and better ways to engage with their companies—to connect with co-workers, take a break from their desks, and give back to the community all at once.

All three of these problems have one remedy: Corporate Giving Gardens.

### On-Site Employee Engagement

A corporate giving garden is located on land set aside in the green space surrounding a company's offices, where employees use volunteer time to grow fruits and vegetables that are donated to local organizations that serve the food-insecure in central Iowa.

Gardens range in size and complexity. Even a small garden growing a few kinds of vegetables can be effective.

Benefits for the company:

- Employee engagement and improved morale
- Increased physical activity and well-being
- Team building and connection across departments
- A reputation for being environmentally friendly and caring about the community

Benefits for the community:

- Increased access to nutritious foods for individuals and families in need
- Access to fresh, locally produced food
- Partnerships between community organizations and local companies

### Next Steps

By joining the United Way Giving Garden network, you'll receive advice and resources for establishing a garden, recruiting volunteers, and keeping those volunteers engaged. We'll also connect you with established giving gardens at other companies for guidance and tours. And we'll help you develop a partnership with one of four nonprofits where you can donate your produce.

To learn more about starting a giving Giving Garden, contact Shirley Burgess, Volunteer Engagement Officer, at [sburgess@unitedwaydm.org](mailto:sburgess@unitedwaydm.org).

*"It's a great on-site volunteer opportunity. I get to do something that's helping others in the community while also getting a little fresh air and exercise."*

*Sharon Spoden,  
Farm Bureau  
Financial Services  
volunteer*

*"To really understand the importance of fresh produce to low-income families, you have to imagine yourself in a world in which your only access to fruits and vegetables is canned peas and corn. That's the world most low-income families live in. When you actually give them green peppers or a bright red apple, in that moment it's the most exciting thing they've ever seen."*

*Rev. Sarai  
Schnucker Rice,  
Executive Director,  
Des Moines Area  
Religious Council  
(DMARC)*

### FOODforTHOUGHT

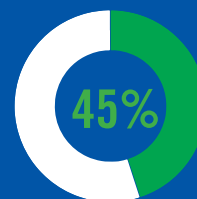
65,000

central Iowans don't know where their next meal is coming from

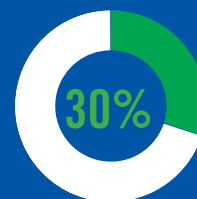
1 in 5 children in Iowa struggle with hunger



1/3 to 1/2 lb. of garden produce equals 1 serving of nutritious food for a hungry family



46 percent of central Iowans don't consume the recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables



Nearly 30 percent of central Iowans are obese

### A 'GROWING' EFFORT

What worked in 2016:

6 corporate giving gardens in the United Way network, with more committed to 2017

8,064 pounds of fresh produce donated

3,226 people provided with one day's worth of fresh produce (five servings)

293 volunteers

1,356 hours of volunteer time

Celebrating 100 Years



of Central Iowa



*UNITED WAY OF CENTRAL IOWA'S*

# CORPORATE GIVING GARDENS

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