

HARVESTING FOOD, SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES, & CULTIVATING COLLABORATION

Removing Barriers to Local Farming and Food Access



CHALLENGE

Farmers and community gardeners are often left out of decisions that directly impact their work. As a result, many face confusing, costly, and time-consuming processes to access City resources and navigate zoning rules that do not reflect the needs of community gardens and urban farms working to improve food access.



KEY DATA

25%

of people in the Greater Chicagoland area are facing food insecurity.

48%

more household visits to local food pantries and free grocery programs in FY25 compared to FY20.

Food insecurity is up. Barriers to growing food are too.

Urban growers are fined \$600 for ‘weeds,’ with some growers fined multiple times a week.



TABLE MEMBERS

Co-Gov Pilot Co-leads

- Advocates for Urban Agriculture
- Office of the Mayor, Business & Neighborhood Development
- City of Chicago Business Affairs & Consumer Protection



Voting members

- Urban growers
- Farmers
- Community Gardens
- Small business owners and operators
- Community-based organizations



DELIVERABLES

Develop **2026-2027 policy priorities** and **implementation plan** for the Food Equity Council Urban Agriculture Subcommittee.



“ *This pilot is an opportunity to align governance with the expertise of farmers and with long-term neighborhood investment.* ”
-Co-gov Pilot Co-leads



“ *We are setting a precedent for equity-driven decision-making in Chicago towards greater local, nutrient-dense food access, and climate crisis mitigation.* ”
-Co-gov Pilot Co-leads

Learn more at chi.gov/co-governance

