

# Regional Environmental Council

Of Central Massachusetts

Annual  
Report  
2018



**Regional Environmental Council of Central MA (REC)** is an environmental and food justice nonprofit organization incorporated in 1972 in Worcester, MA. Our mission is to bring people together to build healthy, sustainable and just communities in Worcester and beyond. The REC is driven by the belief that a vibrant, healthy community is one in which everyone has access to healthy and affordable food, clean air to breathe and water to drink, and safe places to live, work, learn and play. The REC's current programs include:

**YouthGROW (Youth Growing Organics in Worcester)** is a summer and afterschool youth development and employment program that provides jobs and opportunity for 35-40 low-income teens on two urban farms.

**UGROW (Urban Garden Resources of Worcester)** is a network of over 60 community and school gardens and urban farms involving more than 600 gardeners and urban farmers and 2,000 public school students.

**REC Community Farmers Markets** bring healthy, local food from dozens of area farms to thousands of families in Worcester's most food-insecure neighborhoods at 18 weekly locations via two full-season farmers markets and a mobile farmers market.

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# MEET THE TEAM



## INTERNS

Becca Silver  
Breann Powell  
Christina Martin  
Erin Dennehy  
Erin Walsh Dennely  
Hannah Solomons  
Hedwing Matuvo  
Jennifer DeJordy  
Liz St. Pierre  
Maddy Buchanan  
Madeline Killeen  
Marin Smith  
Paul McCormick  
Phuong Le  
Raina Nailor  
Sean Meenan  
Victoria Endow

## PERSONNEL

Steve Fischer	Executive Director
Grace Sliwoski	Director of Programs
Ajayi Harris	Development Director
Ashley Carter	Community Farmers Markets Coordinator
Steven Murphy	Administrative Director
Stacie Brimmage	YouthGROW Coordinator
Pat Barnosky	UGROW Program Manager & Earth Day Coordinator
Janet Carpenter	Grants Manager
Bettny Mazur	Farm Manager
Maya Paul	Farmers Market Manager
Hermes Baez	SNAP Outreach Champion
Mckenzie Moise	Farmers Market Manager
Amanda Velazquez	Farmers Market Manager
Eliza Lawrence	Garden Education AmeriCorps MA Promise Fellow
Ashley Jeznach	AmeriCorps Communications VISTA
Ariel Vaughan	AmeriCorps Development VISTA
Yeimi Ayala	YouthGROW Junior Staff
Fatimah Ali	YouthGROW Junior Staff
Magdalene Agyemang	YouthGROW Junior Staff
Annabel Boateng	YouthGROW Junior Staff


## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Eve Gilmore	President
Rubin Williams	Vice President
Ted Hudson	Treasurer
Stephanie Crist	Clerk
Zach Dyer	Director
Emily Linhares	Director
Alison Bryant Ludden	Director
Jennifer Madson	Director
Kiara Sanchez	Director
Ron Waddel	Director





# YOUTHGROW



In 2018, the Regional Environmental Council (REC) celebrated YouthGROW's (Youth Growing Organics in Worcester) 15<sup>th</sup> year providing youth development through urban agriculture in Worcester, MA. Since our first summer in 2003, YouthGROW has become a robust year-round youth leadership-development and employment program providing jobs and personal growth experiences each year to teens on two urban farm campuses in Worcester's Main South and Bell Hill neighborhoods. This year, we were proud to welcome our largest cohort to date with 39 youth participating. Youth participants earn an hourly wage for their work-growing food for the community- while they gain job and life skills through YouthGROW's "PLUS" curriculum---Professional development, Life skills, Urban agriculture, and Social justice.



# 2018 YOUTHGROW HIGHLIGHTS



*“I’ve received the most help from the REC. I call it my happy place. Sometimes other people don’t believe in me, sometimes I don’t believe in me, but I learned to believe in myself because of the support I have from this organization.”*

**-Yeimi Ayala, YouthGROW Junior Staff, age 16**

2018 was a year of continued community partnership and volunteer engagement at the YouthGROW farm! The College of the Holy Cross and Worcester Polytechnic Institute continued to provide space in their greenhouses and student volunteers to help YouthGROWers grow more than 5,000 organic seedlings. Through Holy Cross’s Student Programs for Urban Development (SPUD) 8 student volunteers provided additional weekly support on the YouthGROW farms during the fall semester. YouthGROW expanded its growing space by inviting Valeria Nyonkuru, a REC farmers market vendor, to cultivate unused pockets of the farm to grow crops such as jilo, bitter melon, and eggplant to sell at REC markets. The Worcester Tree Initiative helped YouthGROWers plant 10 new fruit trees and 5 berry bushes on the farms. YouthGROW also welcomed a new Program Coordinator, Stacie Brimmage, who has been with the REC as an AmeriCorps VISTA as well as our UGROW Coordinator. With her support this year, we were able to increase the frequency and rigor of our college access programming.

**224 Worcester youth applied to be a part of YouthGROW in 2018.**

**Each and every individual was invited to interview.**





# REC COMMUNITY FARMERS MARKETS

2018 marked the 11<sup>th</sup> season of the REC Community Farmers Markets Program which provides the greater Worcester community with two full-season farmers markets and a mobile farmers market (aka “Veggie Mobile”). These markets brought healthy local food from 30 area farms to 10,000 unique customers in Worcester’s most food-insecure neighborhoods at 18 different locations, 6 days each week, from mi-June through the end of October and 4 locations from November through May. The REC’s Beaver Brook Market, located at 306 Chandler Street, operated Mondays and Fridays from 9:30am-1pm, and the University Park Farm Stand, located at 965 Main Street, operated Saturdays from 9:30am-1pm accept SNAP/EBT, WIC and Senior Coupons. 2018 marked the second year that the REC markets participated in the MA Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) which enables families enrolled in SNAP to receive \$40-\$80 of fruits and vegetables free of charge each month at participating farmers markets. In 2018, demand for this program continued to be high throughout Worcester.





# 2018 FARMERS MARKETS HIGHLIGHTS

The REC Community Farmers Markets were proud to welcome three YouthGROW alumni and two current YouthGROWers on to their staff team this year. With their help, total sales grew by 15% this year! Ashley Carter joined the team as the new Farmers Markets Program Coordinator and Hermes Baez was hired as our SNAP Outreach Champion. Hermes helped spread the word throughout Worcester about the new Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) that enables families enrolled in SNAP/EBT to receive \$40-\$80 of fruits and vegetables free of charge each month at participating farmers markets like the REC markets.



The REC Mobile Farmers Market sold 84,000 pounds of fresh, healthy, local and affordable produce this year!

*... "The mobile farmers market arrives every week bringing healthier food choices to the residents of our affordable housing community. It has meant people eat better and therefore feel better."*

**-Sandy Golden, Resident Coordinator at Seabury Heights Apartments (REC Mobile Farmers Market Site)**





# UGROW



In 2018, REC's Urban Garden Resources of Worcester (UGROW) supported a network of 62 community and school gardens and urban farms involving more than 700 gardeners and urban farmers and 2,000 public school students who are given resources and training to grow healthy food in the city. UGROW provides direct resources, technical support, volunteer placement and educational workshops to the network. Staff, youth and volunteers continue to grow more than 4,000 organic vegetable seedlings annually in the greenhouses at the College of the Holy Cross and WPI. These seedlings are distributed free of charge to all gardens in the network. In collaboration with the City of Worcester, UGROW organizes the annual delivery of compost at all gardens in the network. More than 100 yards of compost were distributed in 2019. In May, we hosted our 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Garden Festival & Plant Sale where we sold 10,000 seedlings.



# 2018 UGROW HIGHLIGHTS



*"The community gardens at Worcester Housing Authority have brought a sense of community among our gardeners. They get together and help each other grow beautiful vegetables and flowers. The opportunity for them to get out and grow something of their own not only provides healthy food for our residents, but the opportunity to engage with neighbors and get outdoors."*

**-Erin Wilson, Assistant Director of Resident Services, Worcester Housing Authority**

With generous support from Fallon Health, UGROW provided increased support and expansion in 2018 for three gardens serving area seniors at Worcester Housing Authority properties and the Worcester Senior Center. We also welcomed Burncoat High School as the newest member of the REC's School Gardens Network where REC Staff, volunteers and students built two raised beds. Amanda DeBrusk, a YouthGROW alumnus, became the first School Gardens Support Squad Coordinator this year. Amanda worked with a team of YouthGROWers to provide maintenance support over the summer to some of the school gardens in our network. UGROW also provided 29 workshops and in-classroom activities over the course of the year to school and community gardens, with over 300 participants.

**700 community members gardened at REC Community Gardens across the city.**





# ANNUAL REC EARTH DAY CLEANUPS



In 2018, the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual REC Earth Day Cleanups brought together more than 1,200 volunteers who worked together as neighbors, coworkers, family and friends to clean up 100 tons of trash from 80 sites across Worcester.



# FY 2018 FINANCIAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2018 was a year of passage for REC. Actions were taken geared towards increasing the organization's resiliency and sustainability as a force for food justice in Worcester. The Board was expanded and strengthened. We added staff to resource a more ambitious revenue enhancement effort, to firm up our key programs, and solidify our day-to-day operations. Financially it was a good year and the resultant positive cash position, \$455,855, has allowed us to continue our transition into FY 2019.

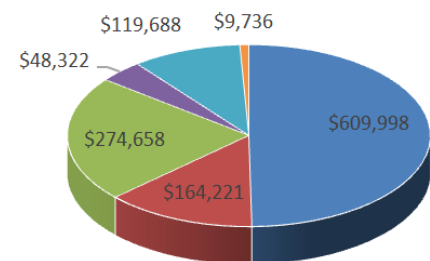
Revenue in FY 2018, at \$1,226,623, exceeded our budget target. Especially strong were contributions and program revenue, specifically, mobile market sales. Our annual Plant Sale fund raiser also exceeded expectations (thank you to all who took part). Although personnel expenses came in a bit below what was budgeted, our total spending for the year exceeded revenue by about \$30,000, or approximately 2.5%.

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

### SUPPORT & REVENUE

Contributions and Grants	\$ 609,998	49.7%
Government Grants and Contracts	\$ 164,221	13.4%
Program Income	\$ 274,658	22.4%
Special Events	\$ 48,322	4.0%
Donated Goods & Services	\$ 119,688	9.8%
Other Income	\$ 9,736	0.8%

**Total Support & Revenue**                      **\$ 1,226,623**      **100%**

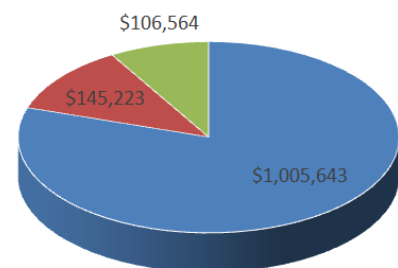


■ Contributions and Grants                      ■ Government Grants and Contracts  
 ■ Program Income                                      ■ Special Events  
 ■ Donated Goods & Services                      ■ Other Income

### EXPENSES

Program Support Services	\$ 1,005,643	80.0%
Management and General	\$ 145,223	11.5%
Fundraising	\$ 106,564	8.5%

**Total Expenses**                                      **\$ 1,257,430**      **100%**



■ Program Support Services                      ■ Management and General                      ■ Fundraising

**Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets**                      **\$ (30,807)**

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

### ASSETS

#### CURRENT ASSETS

Cash	\$ 455,855
Contributions & Grants Receivable	\$ 119,333
Prepaid Expenses	\$ 10,381



# FY 2018 FINANCIAL REPORT (CONT.)

**Total Current Assets** \$ 585,569

**Fixed Assets - Net** \$ 42,331

## OTHER ASSETS

Restricted Cash \$ 5,000

Investments \$ 1,462

**TOTAL ASSETS** \$ 634,362

## LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

### CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable \$ 24,685

Accrued Expenses \$ 46,665

**Total Current Liabilities** \$ 71,350

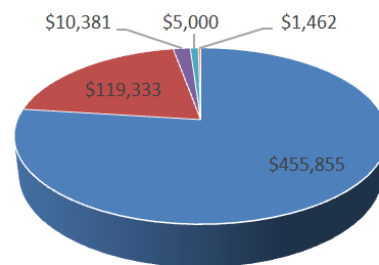
### NET ASSETS

Unrestricted Net Assets \$ 390,866

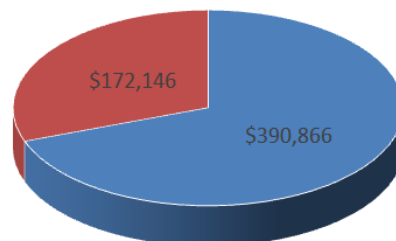
Restricted Net Assets \$ 172,146

**TOTAL NET ASSETS** \$ 563,012

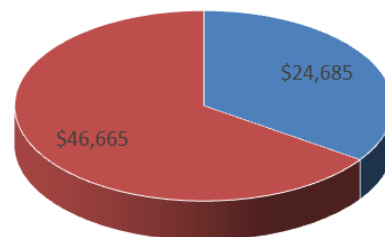
**TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS** \$ 634,362



- Cash
- Contributions & Grants Receivable
- Other Receivables
- Prepaid Expenses
- Restricted Cash
- Investments



- Unrestricted Net Assets
- Restricted Net Assets



- Accounts Payable
- Accrued Expenses
- Deferred Revenue
- Current Portion of Notes Payable



# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

*Too numerous to name, we'd like to thank the over 500 individual donors and members who make our mission possible throughout Worcester and Central Massachusetts. Thank you! In addition, we'd like to thank the foundations, government agencies, and businesses listed below that also provide essential support.*

## **Our Funders**

Alice Willard Dorr Foundation, Blue Piano Fund, City of Worcester, Clif Bar Family Foundation, Corporation for National and Community Service, DCU for Kids, E4TheFuture, Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center, Fallon Health, First Unitarian Church of Worcester, Fletcher Foundation, Francis & Jacquelyn Harrington Foundation, Fred Harris Daniels Foundation, French Foundation, George F. & Sybil H. Fuller Foundation, George I. Alden Trust, Greater Worcester Community Foundation, Green Leaf Foundation, Hanover Insurance Group Foundation, Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare Foundation, Health Foundation of Central MA, Hoche-Schofield Foundation, Bank of America, N.A. Trustee, J. Irving England & Jane L. England Charitable Trust, J and J Fund of the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, Massachusetts YouthWorks Program of the Worcester Community Action Council, Melvin S. Cutler Charitable Foundation, Merck Family Fund, National Grid, People's United Community Foundation, Plourde Family Charitable Trust, Project Bread, Reliant Foundation, Schwartz Charitable Foundation, South High Community School Youth Philanthropy Council, Stoddard Charitable Trust, Sudbury Foundation, UMass Memorial Health Care, Unitarian Universalist Church of Worcester, United Way of Central Massachusetts, US Dept. of Agriculture, US Environmental Protection Agency, Webster Five Foundation, Worcester County Food Bank Fund to End Hunger of the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, Worcester Garden Club

## **REC Annual Earth Day Cleanups Sponsors**

A.J. Letourneau, Inc., AbbVie Bioresearch Center, Allegro Microsystems, Inc., Assumption College, Blue Hive, CCR Wealth Management, City of Worcester, Corporate Environmental Advisors, Davis Publications, E. L. Harvey & Sons, EcoTec, Inc., LEC Environmental Consultants, Mass Audubon- Broad Meadow Brook, Mechanics Bliss, Mill Street Motors, National Grid, Standard Auto Wrecking Co, Inc., Superior Waste & Recycling, Tighe & Bond, UMass Medical School, Webster Square Tire & Auto, Worcester Common Ground

## **REC Community Farmers Markets Sponsors**

Clark University, Cornerstone Bank, Country Bank, Guild of St. Agnes, Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare Foundation, Organic Valley, People's United Bank, Project Bread, Seabury Heights Semillas da Vida, Seven Hills Foundation, UniBank, United Way of Central Massachusetts, Wegmans Food Markets, Inc.

## **REC Spring Garden Festival & Plant Sale Sponsors**

Baystate Savings Bank, City of Worcester Endless Energy, Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare, Mass Cultural Council, Reliant Medical Group, Whole Foods, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

## **REC Fall Harvest Party - Celebration on the Farm**

College of the Holy Cross, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, Miller Fence, Newbury Investment Partners, Raymond James Financial Services, Worcester County Food Bank





REC is a grassroots environmental and food justice organization located in Worcester, Massachusetts, New England's second largest city. Incorporated in 1972, REC has been dedicated to building healthy, sustainable and just communities in Worcester and beyond for more than 45 years.

Our members, staff, board and volunteers work together to accomplish this mission by:

- Developing and coordinating programs that bring community members together to address environmental and food justice issues in our neighborhoods
- Organizing neighborhood residents, including youth, and training community leaders to tackle environmental and food justice issues in our neighborhoods
- Providing events and forums for environmental and food justice education, networking, visioning and problem-solving in Worcester and beyond
- Advocating at local, state and national levels for public policies that foster environmental, food and social justice, ensure ecological sustainability and equitable access to clean air and water, open space, local, organic and nutritious food, clean energy, green jobs, and healthy homes, schools, workplaces and neighborhoods

