

# Cass Clay Food Partners – Fostering Food Justice

## Public Value Statement

Extension provides leadership to the Cass Clay Food Partners in order to create a more healthful and equitable food system in Cass County, ND and Clay County MN.

## The Situation

The Cass Clay Food Partners (CCFP) was initially formed in 2010 through a partnership between North Dakota State University Extension, University of Minnesota Extension, Clay County Public Health, and Fargo Cass Public Health. Over the last 10 years, CCFP has taken on a range of approaches and strategies to improve all levels of our community food system to assure that residents have access to safe, nutritious, affordable and culturally based foods. During 2020, CCFP embraced a new level of work in order to address the changing needs of the community during COVID, particularly to help residents access food resources and have greater ability to grow, purchase, or otherwise procure local food.

## History of Cass Clay Food Partners

- 2010: Network first formed as the Cass Clay Food Systems Initiative
- 2013: Metropolitan Food Systems Plan completed by FM Metro COG
- 2015: Cass Clay Food Commission formed to address policy related to local food system
- 2017: New name and new three-pronged structure
- 2018: Launch of Cass Clay Food Action Network
- 2019: Network analysis conducted with NDSU
- 2020: Implementation of robust COVID-19 food response



## Policy Work

The Cass Clay Food Commission has created 20 policy documents in three categories:

- 1) **Urban Agriculture** – chicken keeping, composting, beekeeping, season extenders, community gardens, cottage food laws.
- 2) **Food Access** – farmers markets, federal nutrition programs, food waste, gleaning, healthy corner stores, hunger and food insecurity.
- 3) **Sustainability** – municipal composting, pesticides, pollinators, single use materials.

## Extension Response

During the COVID-19 pandemic, residents reported decreased food security and an increased desire for local food. We responded to these needs by **sharing information** such as a community food resource list, engaging the community regularly through Facebook (including a total of 45 Facebook live videos), and answering questions about gardening, urban agriculture, and food sovereignty. We also **activated our network** through weekly meetings between the steering committee and the Cass Clay Food Commission, and helped residents navigate the regulatory landscape of city codes and staff interpretations of those codes. Lastly, we helped the City of Fargo **change two policies** to temporarily allow boulevard gardening and keep up to six chickens (up from the previous limit of four).

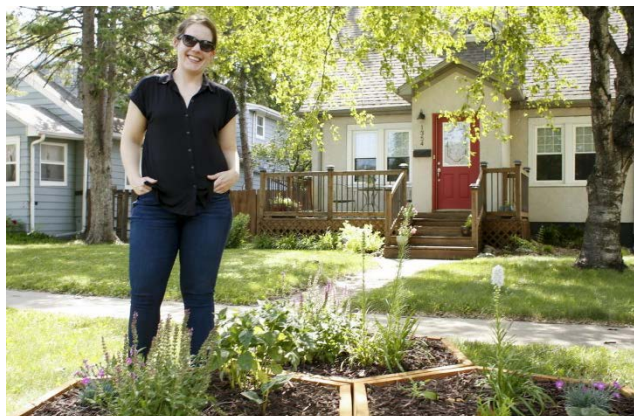
## Outcomes and Impacts in 2020

We strengthened our network's presence in the community:

- 72% increase in "likes" on CCFP Facebook Page
- 43 video briefings with over 12,000 views
- Five Stories in the Fargo Forum about CCFP's work during COVID
- Article submission to an academic journal about CCFP's work during COVID

We integrated our work more with the Cass Clay Food Action Network (aka Food of the North):

- Provided an update at every public event
- Co-organized a Food Justice of the North event
- Partnered on a series of Letters to the Editor published in the Fargo Forum informing and advocating for a stronger local food system



Source:  
<https://www.inforum.com/lifestyle/home-and-garden/6538088-Few-apply-for-boulevard-gardens-in-Fargo-but-those-who-do-hope-to-see-program-grow>

We advanced our policy work through deeper partnership with local government leaders:

- Two policy changes adopted in Fargo
- Collaboration on Frequently Asked Questions guide
- Presentation and partnership commitment from the City of Moorhead

## Primary Contact

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## Non-Extension Collaborators

Noelle Harden, U of M Extension  
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## Resource Link

Visit the Cass Clay Food Partners website to learn more [www.letseatlocal.org](http://www.letseatlocal.org)