CREATING SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

EPA’S LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES PROGRAM IN FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA

EPA offers a range of technical assistance programs that support community revitalization. This fact sheet highlights how EPA’s Local Foods, Local Places program helped with an action plan to address health, economic, environmental and food access challenges in the Lincoln Park neighborhood in Fort Pierce, Florida.

BACKGROUND

Fort Pierce is a coastal community with a rich history in the creative arts. Once a thriving African American arts, business and residential district, the Lincoln Park neighborhood now struggles with poverty, blight and health-related issues. Lincoln Park is also a food desert, where residents do not have access to fresh produce and healthy food options. The local government is investing in neighborhood revitalization initiatives in Lincoln Park by supporting small businesses and job creation and training, and by improving business facades. Increasing access to healthy food options is another important part of revitalizing the neighborhood.

LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES

In 2018, EPA selected Fort Pierce to participate in the Local Foods, Local Places program. This technical assistance program engages local partners to develop community action plans that support neighborhood revitalization through investments in local food systems. EPA provides a consultant team to guide the process, which included a site tour, a community workshop and development of an action plan. In Fort Pierce, the locality formed a steering committee to identify community goals, opportunities and strategies. The committee included residents and representatives from community organizations, academia, and state and federal agencies. For more on EPA’s Local Foods, Local Places program, please visit https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/local-foods-local-places.

COMMUNITY GOALS

1. Create and strengthen healthy food education programs that increase outreach and community participation.
2. Explore place-based opportunities to increase food access such as community gardens, markets and healthy corner stores.
3. Create programs that provide fitness and wellness opportunities as well as health education.
4. Expand and improve job training and livable-wage economic opportunities by strengthening work readiness programs and connecting people with resources.
5. Enhance and beautify the neighborhood and improve water quality in Moore’s Creek.

BY THE NUMBERS

There are 15 organizations represented on the project’s steering committee and technical assistance team

The project’s first public workshop session had 55 people in attendance

Treasure Coast Food Bank in Fort Pierce prepares 3,000 daily meals during summer months
COMMUNITY TOUR
During the neighborhood tour, participants visited Treasure Coast Food Bank, an organization working to combat hunger in the area. The tour included a trolley ride through the commercial heart of Lincoln Park and past neighborhood landmarks and schools, with a stop at the United Against Poverty Center.

VISIONING WORKSHOP
In July and August 2019, the steering committee held two public sessions in Fort Pierce to identify the community’s core values and visions for economic recovery and increased food access in Fort Pierce. Participants also learned about similar projects in other communities, engaged in an interactive mapping exercise and brainstormed action items to help reach revitalization goals. About 50 people attended each day of the workshop.

OUTCOMES
With the information from the community during the visioning workshop, the team developed a Community Action Plan with five goals (see box on front) and supporting actions and stakeholders for each goal. The steering committee then held three stakeholder calls to provide updates. Other workshop outcomes include:

- A mapping program developed with the University of Florida.
- Funding for a food nutrition position from the Health Department.
- Community Champions for the Garden, Blue Tubes grant from Wells Fargo.
- A new co-chair for the Food Council.

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
Building on this foundation, EPA selected United Against Poverty and a dynamic group of local community-based and local government partners in 2020 to receive equitable development technical assistance through EPA’s Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities program. The program helps facilitate discussions about growth and building capacities for neighborhood revitalization. With support from EPA, Fort Pierce community leaders will host a series of workshops in spring 2021 to identify strategies to advance living-wage jobs, affordable housing and community health in the Lincoln Park neighborhood. The outcome will be an action plan to guide coordinated investments in these priority areas moving forward. The action plan is scheduled to come out in summer 2021.

For more information on EPA’s Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities program, please visit www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/building-blocks-sustainable-communities.
EPA REGION 4

EPA’s Local Foods, Local Places and Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities technical assistance programs have supported over 60 communities in Region 4.

Local Foods, Local Places Recipients

ALABAMA
1. Bessemer
2. Elba
3. Fayette County
4. Tuskegee
5. Bessemer
6. Mobile
7. Prichard
8. Montgomery
9. Selma
10. Birmingham

FLORIDA
11. Fort Pierce
12. Deerfield Beach
13. Daytona Beach
14. Wakulla County
15. Bowling Green
16. Fort Lauderdale
17. Lake Worth
18. Miami
19. Miami
20. Fort Pierce

GEORGIA
21. Dunwoody
22. Atlanta
23. Appalachian
24. Asheville
25. Onslow County

KENTUCKY
26. Murray
27. Columbus
28. Louisville
29. Frankfort
30. Hudson

MISSISSIPPI
31. Clarksdale
32. Itta Bena
33. Duck Hill
34. Vicksburg
35. Canton
36. Vicksburg

NORTH CAROLINA
37. Graham
38. Henderson
39. Barbourville
40. Asheboro
41. Asheville
42. Onslow County

SOUTH CAROLINA
43. North Charleston
44. Walterboro
45. Myrtle Beach
46. Myrtle Beach
47. North Charleston
48. Myrtle Beach
49. North Charleston
50. Myrtle Beach

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