

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Franklin County Receives National Recognition for Efforts to Confront Food Security for Low-Income, At-Risk Families

Recognizing the efforts of Franklin County's public and non-profit partners at confronting food security -- and the smart investment of federal funds to expand opportunities for growing, purchasing, and consuming more fresh, healthier foods -- Franklin County has been awarded the 2013 Audrey Nelson Community Development Achievement honor from the National Community Development Association.

This national award is given to organizations for exemplary use of federal dollars through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, HOME Investment Partnerships program, or the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP). It also recognizes partnerships forged between local governments and non-profit organizations to assist low-income and moderate-income residents.

Over the past several years, the lack of access to healthy, nutritious foods by many Franklin County residents living in lower-income neighborhoods has been a target of concern for County Commissioners.

To address the problem, Franklin County's Economic Development and Planning Department last year strategically invested \$95,000 of federal CDBG dollars -- matched by \$153,113 of private and other dollars -- in three key community partnership efforts:

Community Garden Grants: (\$40,000) grants to local agencies and churches for new community gardens leading to the creation of 20 gardens in fringe urban areas.

Project OpenHand: (\$30,000) nutritionally-enriched meals, pantry items, nutritional supplements, nutritional assessments and counseling are home-delivered to men, women, and children living with HIV/AIDS in Central Ohio.

Healthy Corner Stores: (\$25,000) partnering with the United Way of Central Ohio, local convenience stores in low-income neighborhoods on Columbus' west side and in Franklinton were provided technical assistance to make it financially feasible for them to provide increased access to fresh, healthy food choices.

Through these efforts, more than 2,100 Franklin County residents benefited directly from nutritious meals and fresh produce, including 3,788 pounds of fruits and vegetables harvested in gardens, 22,448 home-delivered meals, and 10,600 bags of fresh groceries.

"Food security -- knowing where and when your next meal will come from -- is vital at any age and in every neighborhood," said Franklin County Commissioner President John O'Grady. "These community-based food security initiatives are direct investment in the health and well-being of our families and in building community and economic opportunities for our future."

"Our partnerships are the key to this success, allowing us to leverage nearly twice as much in funding," said County Commissioner Paula Brooks. "Disadvantaged families are benefitting from fresh foods either harvested from community gardens or purchased at their local market, and people living with AIDS/HIV as

well as cancer are maintaining their health status through the delivery of fresh and prepared foods to their homes.”

“People often think it’s too expensive or too difficult to obtain and prepare healthy foods for their family, but that’s not true,” said Commissioner Marilyn Brown. “These efforts are showing our residents that it’s just as easy to eat healthy as it is to choose processed foods that are high in fat and sugar and that can lead to diabetes, hypertension, obesity and cancer.”

Franklin County is among an elite group of ten peer communities receiving the Audrey Nelson Community Development Achievement this year.

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Audrey Nelson: Audrey Nelson was the first Deputy Secretary of NCDA. She grew up in an inner city Chicago neighborhood which was a target area for the local Model Cities Program. Her intense commitment to her neighborhood, her local program efforts, and her drive to serve low-income people was cut short by death from cancer at the age of 29.

NCDA: The National Community Development Association is a non-partisan national non-profit membership organization that represents local government departments across the country that administer federally-supported community and economic development and affordable housing programs.

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