



2025 ANNUAL REPORT



Emma



Ali



Courtney

A message from our Board Chair and Co-Executive Directors

This year Mill City Grows not only sustained, but expanded, our food access, education, and advocacy programming to impact thousands of Lowell residents. In spite of multiple external challenges and a leadership transition, our staff was able to meet the demand for local, culturally-connected specialty crops by significantly increasing purchasing from local growers while weaving food justice education throughout our programs.

We know our community values growing and preparing food together. Sharing food together can create a better quality of life and a deeper investment in our local environment. That's why MCG doubled down on our mission when uncertainty around food access benefits and non-profit funding hit hard in 2025.

We expanded our community engagement and education programming at no-cost. We provided public workshops such as beekeeping, square foot gardening, and fermentation. We facilitated cooking and gardening classes for the whole community and provided specialized classes for several youth and immigrant-serving organizations. We implemented significant changes to our farm share delivery programs, aligning our systems with changing regulations while continually bringing in clients. We opened our ninth and largest Community Garden and kicked off the first full-year of preparation at the Pawtucket Farm Wildlife Sanctuary location in Pawtucketville. We settled into our role as a community convener, bringing together non-profit organizations, community members, and policy makers at our Food Access Symposiums.

As circumstances around us changed, our staff showed up every day to keep people fed. Mill City Grows is here to support our community and grow alongside you.

In solidarity,

Emma, Ali, and Courtney

MEET OUR TEAM

2025 Staff

Ali Jacobs, *Co-Executive Director*
Courtney McSparron, *Co-Executive Director*
Enrique Vargas, *Associate Director*
Tess Clarkin, *Director of Food Access*
Solimar Berrios, *Head of Office Operations*
Kerri Keeler, *Development Manager*
Suzanne Cromwell, *Marketing & Publicity Coordinator*
Rebecca Ludvino, *Institutional Giving Manager*
Trang Dong, *Community Gardens Manager*
Chaya Sophon, *Operations Coordinator*

Ted Hamm, *Urban Farm Manager*
Grace McKay, *Mobile Market Manager*
Kay Cardenas, *Seasonal Market Operator*
Sam McDuffee, *Seasonal Farmhand*
Daphne Ekmanis, *School Education Manager*
Savannah Marshall, *School Education Coordinator*
James Tierney, *Food Is Medicine Manager*
Loubna Belamar, *Delivery Driver*
Javi Colon, *School Education Intern*
Kay Giroux, *School Education Intern*

2025 Board of Directors

Emma Campbell, *President*
John Wooding, *Vice President*
Sue Andrews, *Treasurer*
Elizabeth Campbell, *Clerk*
Ashley Peterson Cavalieri
Seila Chuop
Robert Boley
Amparo Hernandez-Folch
Diego Leonardo
Andrew McNaught
Jack Moynihan
Jen Myers

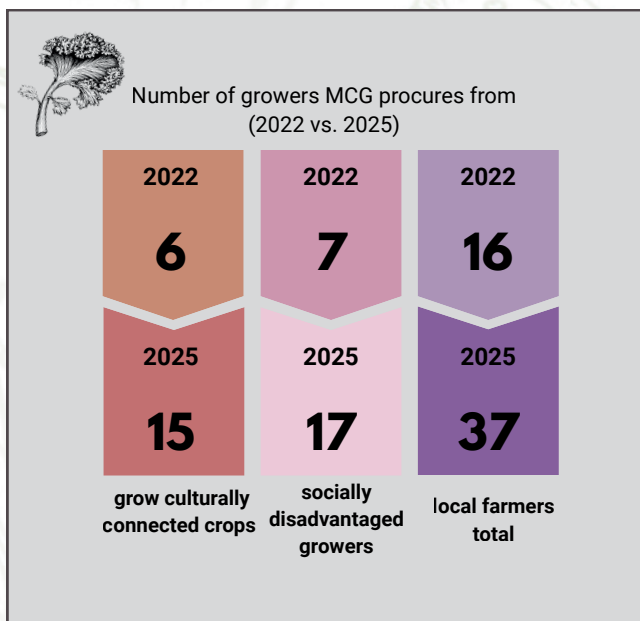


PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Merrimack Valley Growers Aid Community Gardens

MCG programs revolve around fresh, local produce. With 6 acres of growing space in Lowell, MCG's Farm Team ensures equitable access to land, resources, and markets for farmers. Today, MCG has a broad base of vendors to source from, including Merrimack Valley Growers Aid (MVGA) participants, and local farms within 30 miles of Lowell to help stock our Mobile Markets and fill Food Is Medicine Farm Shares. The MVGA farmers have improved food access for our diverse community since 2022.

90% of MVGA participants identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC).



▼ In 2025, we continued to invest in and grow the MVGA cohort of 11 growers farming on 2.25 acres at our Big Urban Farm.



▲ Sprouts get a head start in the Rist Urban Agriculture Greenhouse, shared by MCG's Farm Team, MVGA growers, and UML's Office of Sustainability.

\$34,265 worth of produce purchased by MCG from MVGA farmers in 2025.



MCG began operating our largest and ninth Community Garden at Pawtucket Farm Wildlife Sanctuary after volunteer crews completed construction of 30 garden beds and onboarded 20 households in summer 2025. For a few weeks, water was trucked to the site in a 200 gallon tank for these hardy gardeners to get through their first season. Our Community Gardens Team and these Pawtucketville growers were all deeply relieved to have a frost-free hydrant installed at the end of the year.





PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Mobile Markets Food Is Medicine



▲ The local food policy council, Community Food Partnership of Lowell, advocate for policy and practices to increase food security.



▲ Thanks to our Mobile Markets, located at the Lowell Senior Center and UMass Lowell during the colder months, customers can purchase local fruits and vegetables year-round.

MCG's Food Is Medicine (FIM) program offers year-round access to fresh, local produce for adults and children in Lowell, many of whom have chronic illnesses. In 2025, 125 households participated in our FIM program as they desired access to fresh produce and education on eating for wellness. MCG staff delivered shares to homes, elder care facilities, shelters, and college students.



Mark, an older, disabled adult, returns to the farm share delivery program each season, because in his words *"[The farm share delivery] has been very needed as I rely on these frozen dinners and veg/fruits every day! At a time when we live under a hostile government, cutting services and health insurance for the most vulnerable Americans, the caring about others attitude has been displayed by every staff and volunteer worker at Mill City Grows!"*

Learn

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

School Education

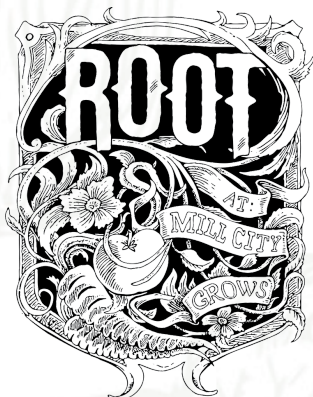
Community Education @ ROOT



School Education interns Kay (left) and Javi (right) added to MCG's greenhouse gardens with a kitchen garden built for, and with help from, Lowell High School's Culinary Arts program.



Chef Kelcy unlocked her passion for cooking professionally at Mill City Grows and shares seasonal, low-lift recipes and methods with the public at our no-cost cooking classes.



MCG's School Education Team works with youth of all ages to help them understand where their food comes from. In 2025, the Ed Team built new school gardens and planted, harvested, and shared nutritious food with **6,137 kids and grown-ups**, half of which were new to Mill City Grows. It was a banner year for students, families, and educators!

- MCG spent 300 hours with the Lowell community, including 118 hours outdoors as weather permitted
- **5 schools hosted 6 After School Mobile Markets where 337 students shopped for, and brought home, 2,528 pounds of veggies at no cost to them**
- 3,392 student helpers joined Planting Parties across 15 school gardens in Lowell
- **400 students visited MCG's Greenhouse and Big Urban Farm on field trips**
- 2 high school interns from Lowell Career Academy supported the MCG team
- **9 Farm to Table cooking classes were hosted especially for kids & families**



Thanks to an ARPA Cultural Organization Recovery grant administered by the City of Lowell, MCG was able to revitalize our ROOT Kitchen and Community Space with no-cost, public cooking classes, food and gardening workshops, and culturally rooted "Supper Clubs" led by local culinary enthusiasts. The space has become a key hub for MCG's educational programming and community engagement efforts.



Partner organizations—including the Abisi Adult Education Center (pictured), International Institute of New England, YouthBuild, the Lowell Plan, and the Community Food Partnership (CFP) of Lowell—have used ROOT to advance their missions around education, cultural exchange, and economic development.

MILL CITY GROWS SIGNATURE EVENTS
ANNUAL SEED SWAP | ANNUAL PLANT SALE

These springtime events unite our diverse community and provide knowledge & resources to help everyone grow their own food.



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



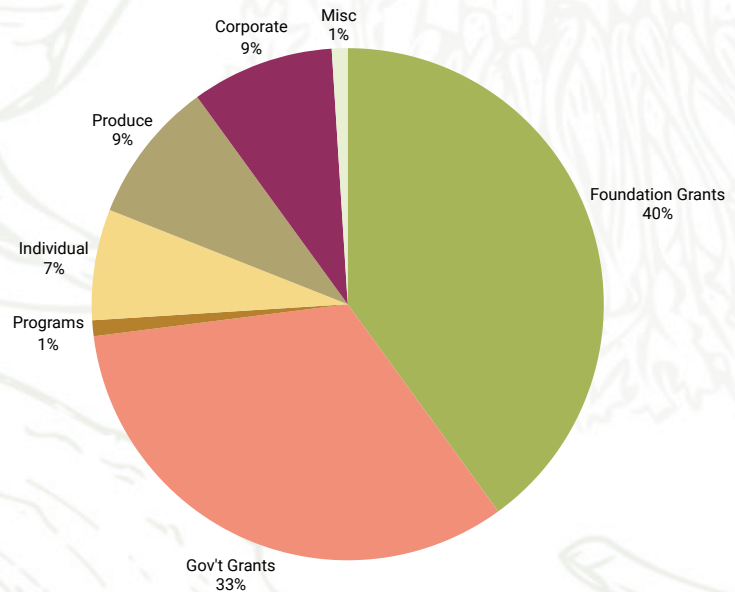
Mill City Grows is a 501(c)3 non-profit, as recognized by the IRS. The following figures are taken from audited financial statements from calendar year 2025.

Please visit MillCityGrows.org/supporters to learn more about the businesses and organizations that sponsor and fund our work.

A happy shopper at the Lowell Community Justice Support Center Mobile Market.

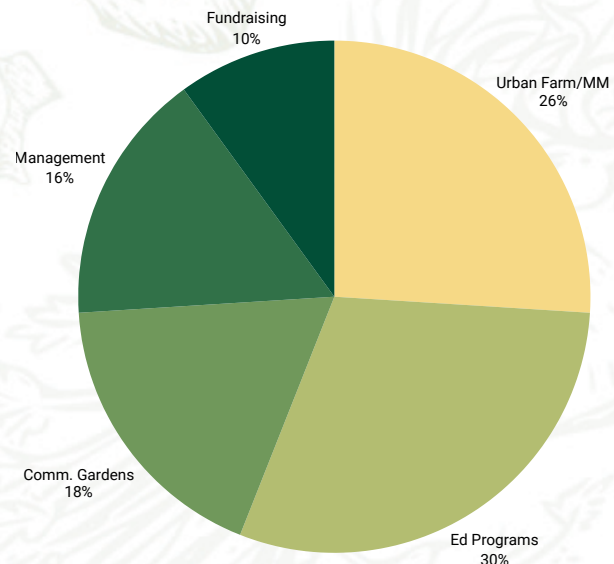
REVENUE

Foundation Grants	\$623,092
Government Grants	\$525,988
Program Revenue	\$21,903
Individual Contributions	\$109,100
Produce Sales	\$113,855
Corporate Contributions	\$144,500
In-kind/Misc	\$27,807
Total Revenue	\$1,566,245



EXPENSES

Urban Farm / Mobile Market	\$419,826
Education Programs	\$488,388
Community Gardens	\$288,181
Management & General	\$256,189
Fundraising	\$152,624
Total Expenses	\$1,605,208



UKG employees at their annual volunteer day on
MCG's Big Urban Farm.



THANK YOU, MCG VOLUNTEERS!

In 2025, we hosted a total of 205 volunteers who completed 594 community service hours across our programs. Mill City Grows welcomes both individuals and groups to volunteer alongside our staff, and we match skills-based volunteers with upcoming and ongoing projects that directly support our work.

Special thanks to our 2025 Corporate Volunteers

**Team members from these corporations
provided the muscle to bolster their company's
sponsorship of Mill City Grows.**

Assured Partners/Fred C. Church Insurance Company
Grassi Advisors
Heritage Properties
IBM
Jeanne D'Arc Credit Union
Massachusetts Office of Aging & Independence
The Mission Continues
Princeton Properties
The Starbucks Foundation
UKG
UMass Lowell Dining Services



▲ Families came together to help start seeds at the Rist Urban Agriculture Greenhouse managed by MCG on UML's East Campus.



Support our work!

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MillCityGrows.org | 978-455-2620

