

Farm Next Door

We chose to focus on a more urban setting. Therefore, we cannot rely on a large area of farmland. In addition, we assume the location is in Illinois and the food has to be provided year round. Our chosen path involved working with the preexisting structure to facilitate development of the community.

Stores like Aldi and Walmart left the south side of Chicago due to being for profit grocers. Therefore, we thought we would make a non profit whose goal would be to be as low cost as possible but still make enough profit to pay employees and maintain the store. That would be the minimum for allowing people to get hired and earn an income and gain experience to move onto an outside business to bring more money into the community to help build it up and eventually bring in more agricultural and food related businesses to the area. Observing the existing non profit charity operations that exist are reliant on charity and are insufficient long term solutions and do not interact with the underlying issues. Aiming to hit the root of the issue we wanted a place for people to not only buy groceries, but get jobs and earn incomes which would be conducive to stimulate the area's economy and bring more people into the local food system. It might start with volunteers or workers from outside the area but the goal would be to transition to mostly local employees.

Our solution is a vertical integration of the farm to table system. We settled on greenhouses as the production center for the food. They can be built in the communities in need using pre-existing buildings in disuse. The facilities can be renovated and brought up to food safety standards using funds from grants, local organizations' support, and fundraising. The produce from the facility would be mostly staple greens, lettuce, root vegetables, fruits like strawberry, tomatoes, and cucumbers. The goal of the facility is to be run by local residents that, when hired, are trained to manage the facility. In addition to the business stimulating the economy, the employees gain experience and knowledge that may be useful later on should they wish to change careers, which may stimulate the local economy further by bringing in more business, and therefore money flow, from in and around the area. The produce grown will be sold for profit in a storefront attached to the facility, and in convenience stores and gas stations through collaboration with existing local businesses. The profits are used for paying the employees. Additional profits may be used to facilitate community education in agriculture through outreach programs which make individuals in the communities more comfortable with including fresh food into their diets by familiarizing them. By growing the food close by within the community, the cost of the produce can be reduced by removing transportation costs. The food can also stay fresh and nutritious. Should this be successful, we want to build taller greenhouses, switching over to vertical farming for higher production.

[Why Aldi Is so Cheap \(businessinsider.com\)](https://www.businessinsider.com/why-aldi-is-so-cheap-2019-10)

[Walmart plan to shut 4 stores by Sunday leaves customers perplexed: 'You came in and filled a void — now you're taking it away' - Chicago Sun-Times \(suntimes.com\)](https://www.suntimes.com/story/news/local/2019/08/20/walmart-shut-4-stores-sunday-leaves-customers-perplexed/5448444002/)

[Chicago's exodus of grocers offering healthy variety on South Side, West Side paint bleak picture of food access for some - Chicago Sun-Times \(suntimes.com\)](https://www.suntimes.com/story/news/local/2019/08/20/chicago-exodus-grocers-offering-healthy-variety-on-south-side-west-side-paint-bleak-picture-of-food-access-for-some/5448444002/)

[Activists and farmers tackle food deserts on Chicago's South Side — 'Food is a tool of resistance' \(chicagotribune.com\)](https://www.chicagotribune.com/story/news/local/2019/08/20/activists-and-farmers-tackle-food-deserts-on-chicago-s-south-side-food-is-a-tool-of-resistance/5448444002/)

<https://www.edengreen.com/blog-collection/what-is-vertical-farming>

<https://civileats.com/2019/08/20/study-finds-farm-level-food-waste-is-much-worse-than-we-thought/>

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<https://www.fb.org/market-intel/analyzing-farm-inputs-the-cost-to-farm-keeps-rising>

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<https://finmodelslab.com/blogs/startup-costs/food-distribution-startup-costs>

<https://ncbaclusa.coop/resources/what-is-a-co-op/>