Strategic Plan
2025-2028

ccua
COLUMBIA CENTER FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE

Approved by Board of Directors July 21, 2025

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

COLUMBIA CENTER FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE

VISION:
CCUA envisions a community transformed by good food for all – and people who have the skills to grow it.

MISSION:
CCUA works to enhance our community's health by connecting people to agriculture and the land through hands-on learning opportunities, from seed to plate.

EQUITY STATEMENT:
CCUA collaborates with marginalized communities to build a more equitable food system.

COMMUNITY GOALS

1 All community members can eat food that supports their health.

- 1.1 All community members can access food that is local, healthy, and culturally important.
- 1.2 All community members can access the information and tools they need to make nutritious meals.

2 Our food system is resilient and sustainable.

- 2.1 All farmers can be successful.
- 2.2 Our food system has strong collaboration across sectors.
- 2.3 Our food system supports the health of our environment.

3 All community members can grow their own food.

- 3.1 All community members can access land and supplies to grow food.
- 3.2 All community members can access information about growing food.

INTERNAL GOALS

4 CCUA's work is guided by our community.

- 4.1 CCUA proactively engages all of the community in our work.
- 4.2 CCUA is accountable to our community.

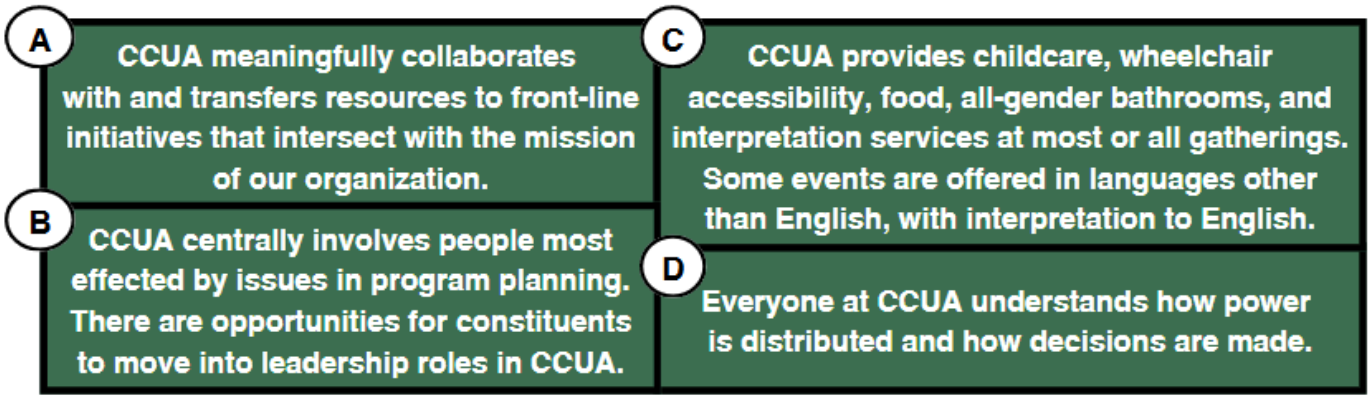
5 CCUA is a well-run organization.

- 5.1 CCUA has quality polices, procedures, and leadership.
- 5.2 CCUA is well-known and trusted in the community.
- 5.3 CCUA is financially sustainable.

6 CCUA is an excellent place to work.

- 6.1 Staff are well compensated.
- 6.2 Staff have resources and training to carry out CCUA's mission.
- 6.3 CCUA has a supportive and healthy work culture.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



1.1	Grow and donate food.	
	• Donate whole, raw produce grown at CCUA sites to local organizations. • Facilitate pop-up markets to distribute food directly. • Prepare healthy meals to donate/sell.	
	Outcomes *How Much?*	➔ Donate 50,000 pounds of raw produce annually. ➔ Facilitate 24 pop-up markets at the Truman VA hospital and other community sites annually. ➔ Create a plan for preparing healthy meals for donation/sale by spring 2027. ➔ Begin using the Welcome Center kitchen to prepare meals for donation/sale in 2027.
	Standards *How Well?*	➔ Food will be grown organically, without harsh chemicals or pesticides. ➔ Food will be donated fresh, soon after it is harvested. ➔ Food donated raw will be first-rate and blemish-free. ➔ Any blemished food will be cooked or prepared before it is donated. ➔ Food will reflect the needs and desires of community members. ➔ Food is stored effectively and clearly labeled at receiving locations.
	Beneficiaries *Who Benefits?*	Community members who experience food and/or nutrition insecurity.

1.2 **3.2** **2.3** **2.2** **C**	Provide hands-on educational events for the general public.	
	• Host one-time specialized workshop events. • Host recurring workshop events. • Lead one-time tour events. • Lead recurring tour events.	

	Outcomes *How Much?*	➔ Host 10 one-time specialized workshops annually. ➔ Host 1 Farm Your Yard Field Day event annually. ➔ Host 1 Harvest Hootenanny annually. ➔ Host 32 drop-in garden time events annually ➔ Lead 20 technical tours annually. ➔ Lead 7 Food Forest tours annually.
	Standards *How Well?*	➔ Events will be low to no commitment to increase accessibility. ➔ Events will be open to all, with the majority of offerings available free of cost or with scholarship opportunities. ➔ Events will focus on teaching regenerative practices. ➔ Marketing for events will focus on low-resource communities to ensure that all can participate. ➔ When possible, childcare will be provided for participants. ➔ When possible, interpretation will be provided for participants.
	Beneficiaries *Who Benefits?*	Anyone with an interest to learn.

2.3 **3.2**	Maintain educational demonstration gardens.	
	● Planting for the Pantry Field and Soccer Field ● Food Forest. ● Backyard Demonstration Garden. ● Veterans Urban Farm Production Field and Warrior Garden ● Misc. Pocket Gardens and Outdoor Classroom. ● Kilgore's Community Garden	
	Outcomes *How Much?*	➔ Maintain 4 acres m/l of demonstration gardens at CCUA sites. ➔ Install 2-3 welcome/what is it signs to the Food Forest/Demo Garden areas by spring 2026. ➔ Install identifier signs by all representative trees and shrubs in Edible Landscaping areas by spring 2026.
	Standards *How Well?*	➔ Gardens will have educational signs. ➔ Gardens and signs will support teaching about regenerative practices, native species, conserving pollinators, and wildlife. ➔ Gardens will support public enjoyment.
	Beneficiaries *Who Benefits?*	All community members.

3.2 **2.3** **A**	Connect farmers and growers with capital and land.
	● Provide a scholarship for historically underserved farmers, as defined by the USDA. ● Cultivate farmland that can be used to incubate historically underserved farmers' businesses.

	● Connect retiring farmers who own land to farmers/growers who want land. ● Collaborate with local organizations to build and maintain garden/farm space for public use. ● Host land access and grant workshops for farmers/growers. ● Refer farmers/growers to relevant, available resources.	
	Outcomes *How Much?*	➔ Provide $9,000 in mini-grants to historically underserved farmers annually. ➔ Refer farmers to available resources 25 times annually. ➔ Develop a plan for land access and grant workshops by Summer 2026. ➔ Determine the feasibility of using the soccer field as an incubator farm by Fall 2026. ➔ Participate in Alspaugh Park planning at least through 2026. ➔ Develop a plan for the Shalom Garden property by 2026
	Standards *How Well?*	➔ Marketing for events will focus on low-resource communities to ensure that all can participate. ➔ When needed, interpretation will be provided for participants.
	Beneficiaries *Who Benefits?*	Primarily historically underserved farmers, as defined by the USDA. (Beginning; Socially Disadvantaged; Veterans; and Limited Resource.) https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/state-offices/colorado/beginning-farmerrancher-and-historically-underserved-communities-colorado

1.2 **3.2**	Facilitate agriculture and health education for children.	
	● Conduct in-school curriculum with partner schools. ● Lead field trip lessons. ● Offer farmers' market activities. ● Lead after-school garden club activities. ● Lead summer camp lessons. ● Lead hands-on lessons with community partners. ● Work with partners to maintain school gardens.	
	Outcomes *How Much?*	➔ Engage in 20,000 Youth Education Interactions annually. ➔ Expand to 3-4 new CPS elementary schools annually. ➔ Offer educational opportunities at 2 additional Boone County school Districts by the end of 2027. ➔ Deliver 304 garden maintenance visits to school gardens annually. ➔ Explore ways to engage youth of various ages beyond just 3rd graders by Summer 2026. ➔ Develop kitchen/cooking programming by 2027. ➔ Develop Youth Education SOPS by 2026.
	Standards *How Well?*	➔ Lessons complement students' curriculum and learning standards. ➔ Schools with the least resources receive greater support. ➔ Lessons complement other local nature-based educational programs. ➔ Educational opportunities will be available for students of all ages. ➔ All full-time youth education staff will be Life Lab Garden Educator Certified. ➔ The program's central principles and philosophy will guide lessons.

	Beneficiaries *Who Benefits?*	Children in Boone County, especially low-income children. 3rd graders.

2.3 3.1 A	Connect farmers, growers, cooks, and eaters with materials, supplies, and equipment.	
	● Run tomato bucket giveaway events. ● Provide rentable equipment in the resource library. ● Offer a seed library in the Welcome Center. ● Offer rental of the Welcome Center's commercial kitchen. ● Offer straw, compost, topsoil, amendments, and other materials for sale. ● Deliver free garden installations and materials through Opportunity Gardens.	
	Outcomes *How Much?*	➔ Distribute 200-500 "Tomato Bucket Gardens" annually. ➔ Make equipment rental available by the end of 2027. ➔ Begin kitchen programming in 2027. ➔ Make kitchen rental available to CFM Farmers by 2027. ➔ Deliver a minimum of 158 billable gardens through Opportunity Gardens annually. ➔ Expand Opportunity Gardens to serve 200 households annually by the end of 2028. ➔ Offer at least 1 compost pick-up day to Opportunity Gardens families annually. ➔ Formalize ways to engage/support Opportunity Garden graduates by 2026. ➔ Dedicate 1 truck to the Opportunity Gardens program by 2027. ➔ Determine the feasibility of a paid version of Opportunity Gardens by 2026. ➔ Develop earned income streams for kitchen programs by 2026.
	Standards *How Well?*	➔ Tools, materials, and supplies provided, rented, and sold will be suitable for regenerative practices. ➔ Supplies provided through the Opportunity Gardens program will be equally accessible to all participants. ➔ When possible, the tools provided will be adaptive to individuals with different types of mobility. ➔ Tools and equipment will be accompanied by training for safe use. ➔ Tool trainings will be interpreted using universal design for communication so non-English speakers have equal access and safety. ➔ Materials, supplies, and equipment are provided at a sliding scale.
	Beneficiaries *Who Benefits?*	Primarily historically underserved farmers and growers.

	Provide farmer & grower training.	
	● Train new and beginning farmers through the Market Garden Apprenticeship Program. ● Train Veteran farmers/growers through the Veteran Apprenticeship Program. ● Train low-income farmers/growers through the Opportunity Gardens Program.	

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	Outcomes *How Much?*	➔ Train 15 new and beginning farmers through the Market Garden Apprenticeship annually. ➔ Train 5 apprentices on farm business practices each year. ➔ Deliver a minimum of 521 mentor visits through Opportunity Gardens annually. ➔ Train a minimum of 170 households through Opportunity Gardens annually. ➔ Train 3-6 Veterans through the Veteran Apprenticeship Program annually. ➔ Draft a growing guide using pictorial instructions to bypass language barriers by 2027. ➔ Finalize a growing guide using pictorial instructions to bypass language barriers by 2028.
	Standards *How Well?*	➔ Training will focus on teaching regenerative practices. ➔ Training will be individualized based on their needs and goals of participants. ➔ Need-based stipends will be offered to apprentices ➔ When needed, interpretation will be provided for participants.
	Beneficiaries *Who Benefits?*	Primarily limited resource farmers and growers.

3.1 **2.2**	Provide therapeutic gardening opportunities.	
	● Provide wrap-around therapeutic gardening service to VA Transitional Work Program Participants. ● Provide wrap-around therapeutic gardening service through the Veteran Apprentice Program. ● Partner with the Truman VA Rec Therapy program. ● Partner with the Truman VA Art Therapy program. ● Partner with the DoD Skillbridge program. ● Partner with the Truman VA Work Study program. ● Partner with the Veterans Treatment Court program. ● Partner with the Truman VA Whole Health Programs. ● Host Veteran Volunteers. ● Lead therapeutic youth education opportunities.	
	Outcomes *How Much?*	➔ Provide wrap-around therapeutic gardening to 15 Veterans annually through the Transitional Work and Veteran Apprentice Programs. ➔ Connect 175 Veterans with therapeutic gardening experiences annually by 2028. ➔ Develop or adapt a Therapeutic Youth Garden Activity guide by 2027. ➔ Lead therapeutic garden activities for 90 youth annually starting in 2027. ➔ Provide therapeutic gardening for CPS RISE high school classes before 2027.
	Standards *How Well?*	➔ Opportunities support the overall health of participants. ➔ Opportunities will be developed and administered in collaboration with other health organizations. ➔ Wrap-around opportunities help Veterans to navigate life circumstances caused by or exacerbating their mental health issues (housing and employment). ➔ Work with VA to evaluate the health impacts of VUF's programming (EHR, support sending out questionnaires)

	Beneficiaries *Who Benefits?*	Primarily Veterans and youth

1.2 **3.2** **2.3** **2.2**	Make educational resources available to the general public.	
	● Publish social media and blog posts. ● Publish educational YouTube videos. ● Provide educational literature through the resource library. ● Publish and link to free resources on the website. ● Table with educational materials at community events. ● Provide materials for self-guided tours.	
	Outcomes *How Much?*	➔ Post on social media at least 2 times every week. ➔ Publish blog posts 1 time every month. ➔ Publish 10 YouTube videos each year. ➔ Table at 20 events annually by the end of 2026. ➔ Establish procedure for posting all educational materials to the website by 2026. ➔ Establish translation standards for educational materials in the resource library by 2027. ➔ Develop SOP for resource library by 2027 ➔ Provide a self-guided tour of the Agriculture Park available online by 2026
	Standards *How Well?*	➔ Blog posts will be developed with staff to diversify the topics covered. ➔ YouTube videos will be tutorials and instructions for gardening. ➔ Resources will be easy to find and understand. ➔ Materials available in the resource library will be easily translatable using on-hand translation tools/apps. ➔ Newsletter development will be informed by opening rates and best practices. ➔ Resources will be marketed toward underserved communities.
	Beneficiaries *Who Benefits?*	Underserved communities, the public, local community, beginning gardeners, community educators, and other non-profits.

5.1 **6.2**	Provide staff with training and development resources.	
	● Provide a professional development program. ● Facilitate required trainings for all staff and each department. ● Offer quarterly all-staff development trainings. ● Provide a central library of trainings and resources for staff.	
	Outcomes *How Much?*	➔ Develop a training schedule by 2027. ➔ Create a required training list for all staff and each department by 2027. ➔ Make a central library of all training documents and development resources by 2026. ➔ Assign each department a professional development budget by 2026. ➔ Review and update the Professional Development section of the handbook by 2026.

	Standards *How Well?*	➔ Trainings will respond to staff needs, interests, and weaknesses identified by staff feedback surveys. ➔ Training and development resources will be provided in a variety of formats, including recorded meetings, in-person meetings, webinars, and written guides. ➔ Management and policies will encourage the use of the professional development program. ➔ Management will prioritize training and development opportunities that help staff make CCUA more accessible to the public, including working with people who have different abilities and needs.
	Beneficiaries *Who Benefits?*	Staff, VISTAs, new employees, board, program participants, and the community**.**

	Facilitate proactive and transparent information channels.	
	● Release a program output dashboard. ● Release a budget report. ● Publish a newsletter for staff. ● Administer staff, volunteer, participant, and partner feedback surveys. ● Administer participant feedback and outcome surveys for each program. ● Organize advisory committees of community members. ● Publish a newsletter for the public. ● Publish annual reports. ● Provide information through CCUA's website. ● Provide information at request through the welcome center front desk, phone, and email. ● Maintain accountability to strategic plan.	
4.1 **4.2** **6.3** **5.2** **B** **C** **D**	**Outcomes** *How Much?*	● Release a program outcome dashboard to staff and board monthly. ● Release a budget report to staff and board monthly. ● Administer staff feedback survey twice a year. ● Publish a newsletter for staff monthly ● Publish a newsletter for the public monthly ● Administer participant feedback and outcome surveys for each program at least once a year. ● Administer partner and volunteer feedback surveys annually. ● Develop a framework for advisory committees by the end of 2025. ● Recruit community members to serve on advisory committees by the end of 2026. ● Lead advisory committees for all programs by the end of 2026. ● Publish an annual report once a year. ● Maintain the Candid platinum seal of transparency for the website annually. ● Develop a procedure for working with non-English speakers by 2027. ● Keep translators on retainer for the 3 most common languages besides English by 2027. ● Update the style guide with information on creating pictorial instructions by 2028. ● Create a data management plan and adopt data standards by 2027.

		● Release strategic plan progress reports to staff and board members twice per year.
	Standards *How Well?*	● Information for the public is accurate and updated routinely. ● When staff policies are added or changed, staff are updated on the policy. ● Staff members are updated when new board members are onboarded. ● Board members are updated when new staff are onboarded. ● Advisory committees will be made up of program participants and experts in the relevant field. ● Staff will seek feedback from advisory committees when making changes to programming or troubleshooting issues. ● Translate key information for non-English speakers.
	Beneficiaries *Who Benefits?*	Staff members, board members, the public, and CCUA partners.

2.1 **2.2** **2.3** **4.1** **5.2** **D**	Build connections with the community.	
	● Participate in boards/committees (governmental & non-governmental) that impact CCUA's mission. ● Partner with community organizations to connect them to the food system. ● Host events where community members can connect directly with local organizations. ● Participate in community events. ● Connect community members with CCUA programs and partners at the Welcome Center front desk. ● Market the use of public spaces at the Agriculture Park to increase traffic to the park.	
	Outcomes *How Much?*	➔ Participate in 10 boards/committees of mission-aligned organizations and community partners by 2028. ➔ Host 10 community and tabling events annually. ➔ Participate in 75 community and tabling events annually. ➔ Develop a working relationship with Osage and other Indigenous Nations whose Ancestral Lands include central Missouri by 2028 ➔ Develop parameters for accepting partners into the resource center by 2027. ➔ Operate a resource center that is open to the public by 2027 ➔ Create a master partnership spreadsheet by 2025. Update annually. ➔ Update the style guide to include standards on engaging with the community by 2026. ➔ Create outreach/accessibility training guide by 2026 ➔ Host 700 volunteers, totaling 12,000 hours of service annually.
	Standards *How Well?*	➔ Leadership will actively seek and pursue opportunities to connect with the community. ➔ Leadership will advocate for an equitable food system and the health of our environment. ➔ Outreach will focus on connecting with communities that are not already widely engaged with or aware of our programs. ➔ Volunteer opportunities will be flexible and accessible for members of our community to learn, participate, and contribute to the organization.

	Beneficiaries *Who Benefits?*	All members of our food system.

5.3	Maintain Financial Health	
	● Operate a robust spring Sponsor a Row campaign. ● Operate a robust December / CoMo Gives end-of-year campaign. ● Aggressively seek diverse grant awards with a renewed focus on private foundations. ● Closely monitor progress with monthly budget reports. ● Develop a sponsorship program for Hootenanny and other events. ● Develop a new giving program for the $5,000 - $20,000 range. ● Convert capital campaign donors to the annual campaign. ● Increase earned income. ● Pursue Medicaid and insurance reimbursement for program expansion and new projects.	
	Outcomes *How Much?*	➔ Cultivate annual campaign (operations) gifts in the following proportions: ◆ $0 - $100 = 3% of the budget. ◆ $101 - $1200 = 10% of the budget. ◆ $1201 - $5,000 = 17% of the budget. ◆ $5,001 - $20,000 = 20% of the budget. ◆ $20,001 - $100,000 = $25% of the budget. ◆ $100,000+ = 25% of the budget. ➔ Pay off the Welcome Center loan by 2028. ➔ Develop a plan to increase earned income using new facilities by 2027. ➔ Begin working with volunteers to engage donors who give less than $100 annually and lapsed donors by 2025.
	Standards *How Well?*	➔ CCUA's fundraising activities are ethical and transparent. ➔ Federal funding will primarily fund one-time projects.
	Beneficiaries *Who Benefits?*	All who benefit from CCUA's programs benefit when our funding is stable.

6.1 **6.3** **B**	Invest in quality personnel policies.	
	● Assess current salary ranges and benefits, compare to similar organizations, and adjust ranges if needed. ● Identify best practices for personnel policies, compare current policies to best practices, and adjust policies if needed.	
	Outcomes *How Much?*	➔ Research and set goals for future salary and benefit ranges by the end of 2026. ➔ Work with a consultant to review and update the employee handbook by the end of 2026. ➔ Determine the feasibility of childcare stipends for staff by the end of 2026. ➔ Convert critical VISTAs positions to paid staff by 2028. ➔ Develop an outreach plan for recruiting new employees by the end of 2026. ➔ Develop SOPs for staff and board recognition by 2027.

		➔ Develop new volunteer opportunities for activities which take place in the new Community Welcome Center by the end of 2026. ➔ Maintain an employee (non-VISTA) turnover rate of less than 10% annually. ➔ Maintain overall staff satisfaction ratings of 4-5 stars annually.
	Standards *How Well?*	➔ New policies and updated procedures are developed with the input of staff and experts.
	Beneficiaries *Who Benefits?*	Staff and all who benefit from CCUA's programs benefit when our staff receive quality compensation and benefits.