
2022 HOME GARDEN POST SURVEY REPORT



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CHICAGO GROWS FOOD

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Program Overview

In 2022, the Chicago Grows Food (CGF) team expanded their Grow Your Groceries program portfolio to include the home garden Program. The home garden program provides individuals with a larger garden set up at their home or in their community including a four foot by four foot raised bed, 12 fabric grow bags, or one 100 gallon grow bag; soil; seeds and seedlings; and an educational booklet with basic information about how to grow food. In 2022, 44 individuals participated in the program.

Survey Overview

The CGF team created pre-, mid-point, and post-surveys to obtain participant feedback and assess the outcomes of the home garden program. This report summarizes the findings of the post-survey. The post-survey was distributed to all participants via email. Participants received multiple email reminders about completing the survey and received a \$15 electronic gift card for completing the entire survey. The survey was available online in both English and Spanish. A total of 21 respondents completed the 2022 home garden post-program survey.

Respondent Characteristics

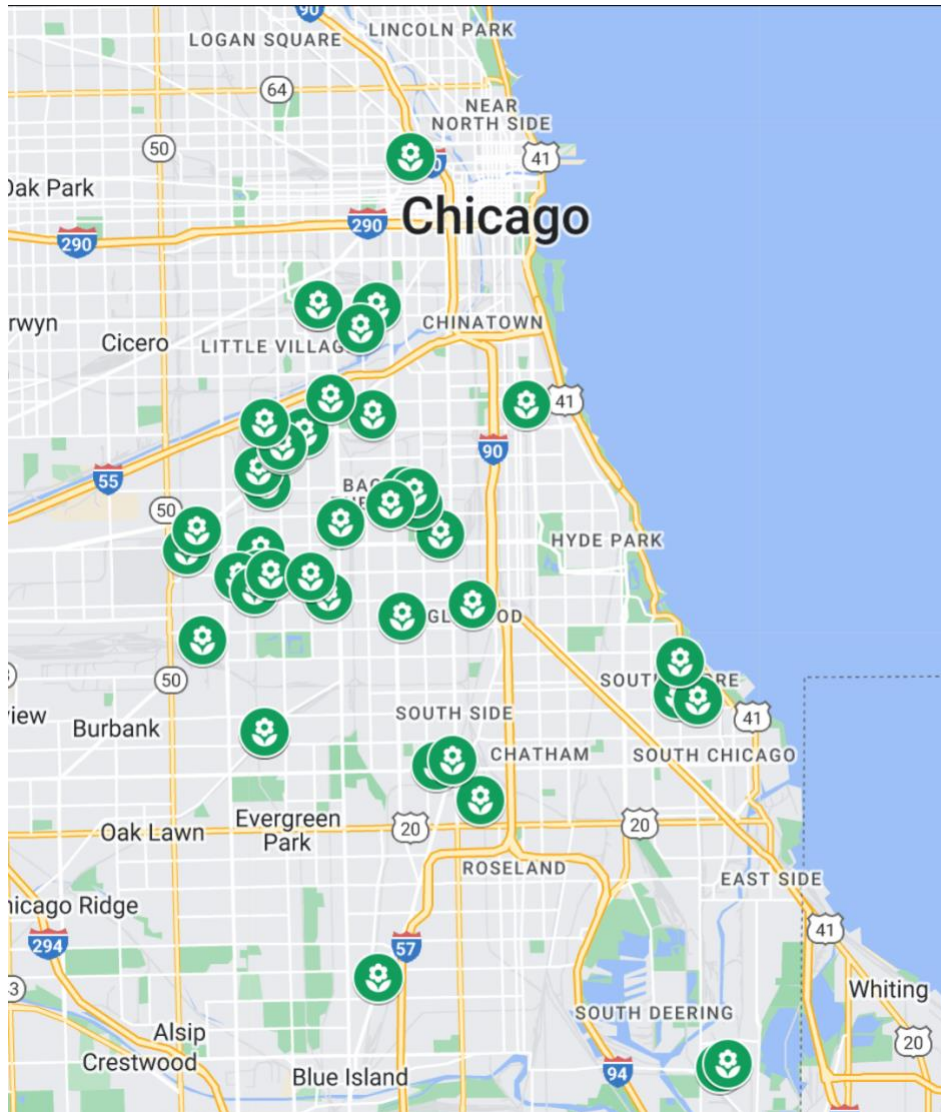
Overall, most respondents preferred Spanish language and were Hispanic or Latinx. Additionally, most respondents identified as female. When asked about growing experience, most participants had previously grown their own food. Of participants who had previously grown their own food, the majority had grown their own food for 1-3 years followed by 4-6 years.

Table 1. Respondent characteristics

Characteristic	Number of respondents (%)
<i>Preferred language</i>	
English	6 (31.6)
Spanish	13 (68.4%)
<i>Gender</i>	
Female	18 (94.7)
Gender queer or gender non-conforming	1 (5.3)
<i>Race or ethnicity</i>	
Black or African American	3 (15.8)
Hispanic or Latinx	15 (78.9)
More than one race or ethnicity	1 (5.3)
<i>Experience growing</i>	
I had never grown my own food	4 (19)
I thought about growing my own food but never did	4 (19)
I have previously grown my own food	13 (61.9)
<i>Years growing food</i>	
Less than 1 year	2 (15.4)
1-3 years	5 (38.5)
4-6 years	3 (23.1)
7-9 years	1 (7.7)
10 or more years	2 (15.4)

Participants were generally concentrated on the south and west sides of Chicago, as depicted by Figure 1.

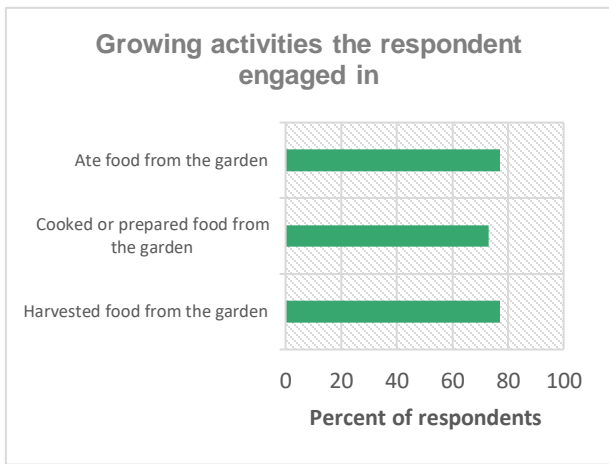
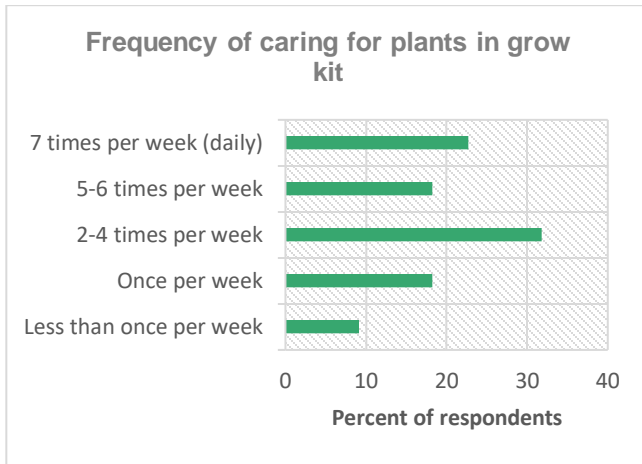
Figure 1. Map of the distribution of program participants



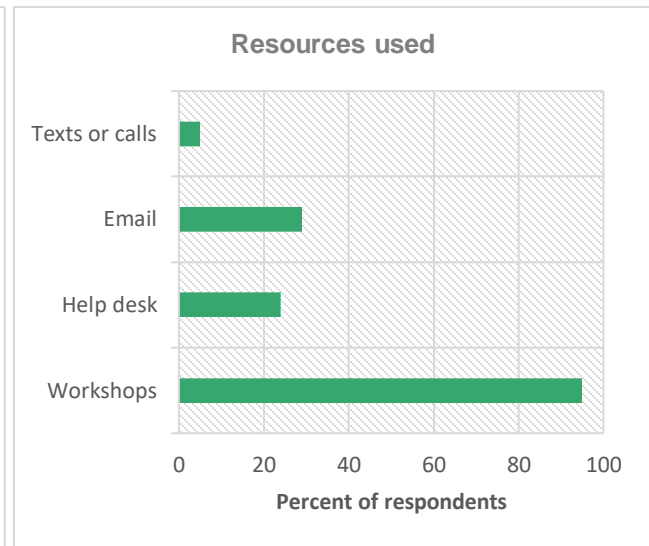
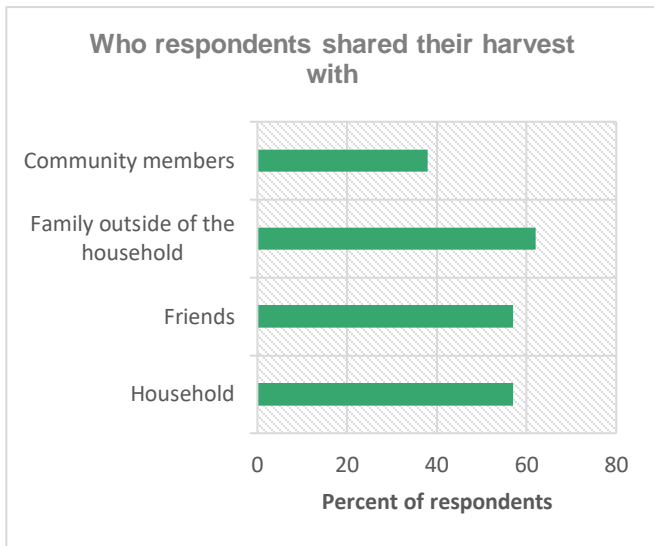
Main Findings

1. Participants were highly engaged in the program.

Overall, most participants were deeply engaged in program activities including tending to, harvesting from, and preparing and eating food from their garden. Of participants, the greatest percent cared for the plants in their garden 2-4 times per week followed by daily. Additionally, over 75% of all respondents reported harvesting, cooking or preparing, and eating food from their garden.



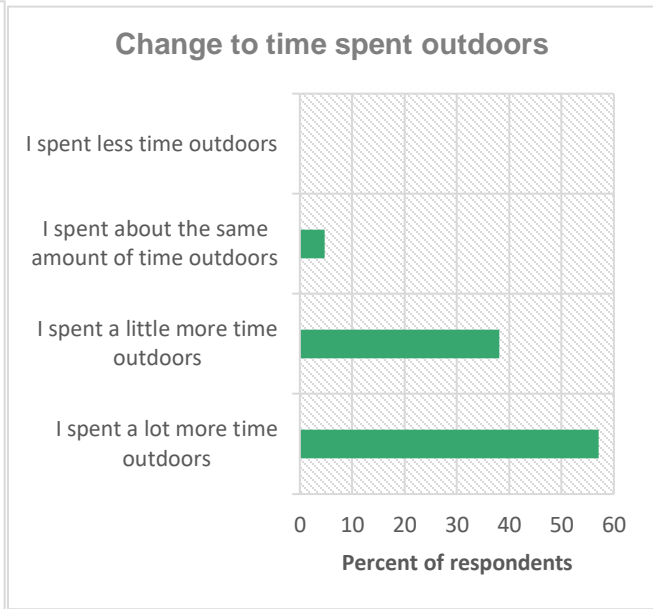
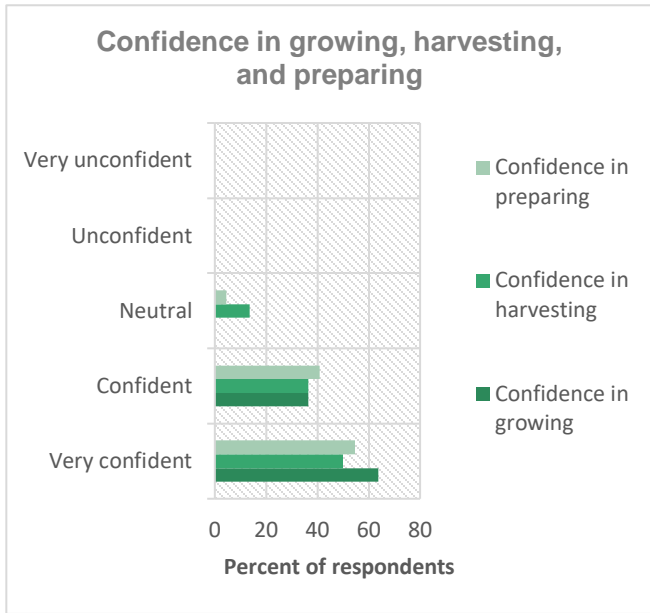
Many participants also engaged their social networks in the program by growing with them or sharing their harvest. Of respondents, 100% reported using their garden with members of their household; of them, 80% used their garden with other adults and children in their household. Additionally, over 80% of respondents reported using their garden with members of their community. Many respondents also shared their harvest with members of their community; 62% of respondents shared their harvest with family outside of their household while 57% of respondents shared their harvest with friends and members of their household.



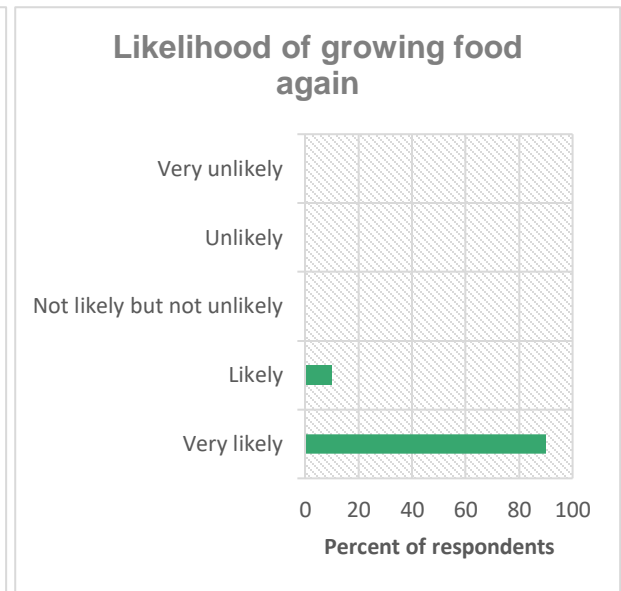
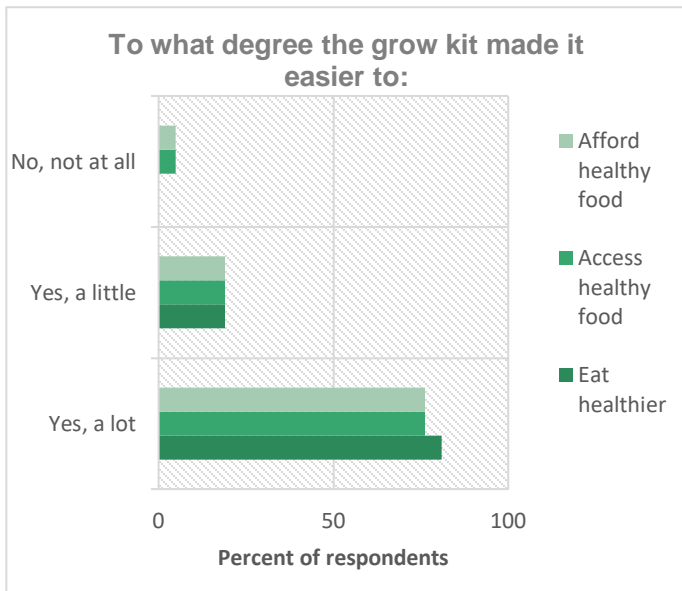
Participants also utilized the education and support resources provided by CGF. Of respondents, 95% participated in a workshop, 29% sent emails to ask questions or request help, and 24% utilized the help desk where participants were able to bring their questions to CGF members to get answers and support.

2. The program benefited participants in a variety of ways

After participating in the program, most participants reported a high level of confidence in growing their own food, harvesting food from their garden, and cooking and preparing the food they harvested. Additionally, most participants reported spending more time outside because of participating in the program.

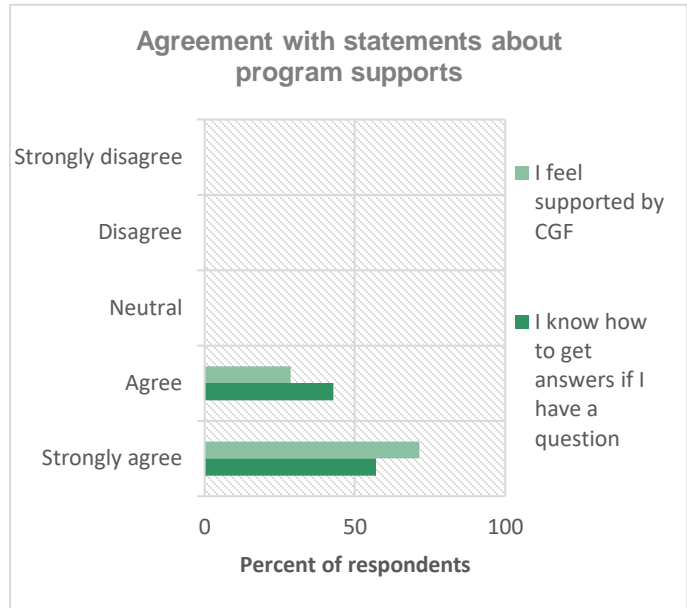


After participating in the program, most participants reported that the program helped them to eat healthier food, have easier access to healthy food, and afford healthier food “a lot”. Finally, most participants reported that they were “very likely” to grow their own food again in the future.



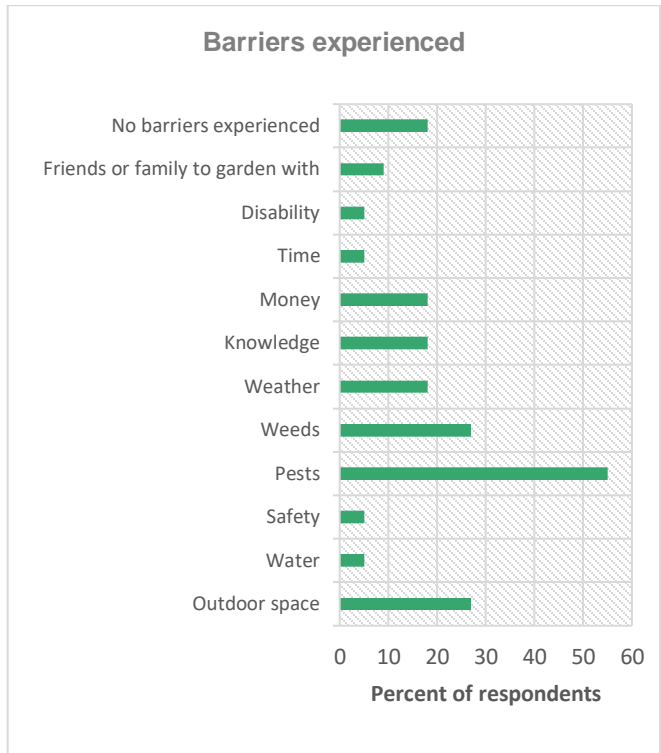
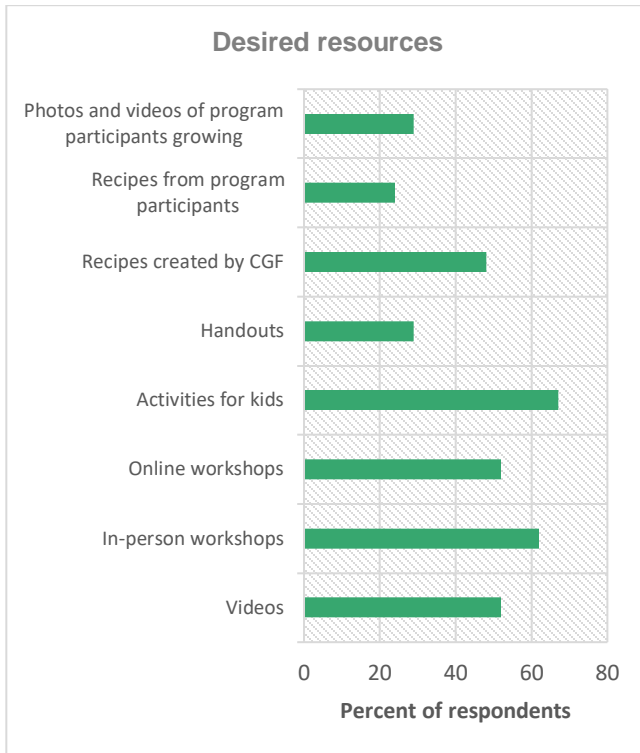
3. Most participants felt the program provided sufficient support

All program participants agreed or strongly agreed that they felt supported by CGF and knew how to get answers when they had a question. In open ended survey responses 10 participants shared feedback that they liked aspects of the educational components offered to program participants. In Spanish, one participant shared “they give me very good advice on how to take care of my vegetable garden”. Four participants also expressed that the provision of physical program materials was an important support provided as part of the program.



4. Participants provided a variety of recommendations for how to improve the program and provide them with support next year

Participants provided feedback about the barriers they experienced and the formats of support they desired. When asked to select from a list of supports, the greatest number of participants selected, activities for kids followed by in-person workshops. Participants also provided information about the barriers they experienced, which could indicate areas where additional support is needed. Over 50% of respondents experienced challenges with insect or animal pests, followed by just under 30% of respondents who experienced challenges with weeds and access to outdoor space.



Participants also provided constructive feedback about how the program could be improved. When responding to open ended questions five participants provided feedback on the physical program resources and educational supports including suggestions that the plants be provided earlier and that recipes are provided to help individuals use the food they grow.

For the next growing season, nine program participants mentioned desiring new or continued educational support. One participant shared in Spanish, “Please do not stop supporting us with your knowledge since this year was very helpful for me and my family”. Additionally, nine participants mentioned that they would like new or continued material support for the next growing season. Specifically, many participants desired seeds and soil.

Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, the home garden program was supportive, engaging, and beneficial to program participants. Based on data collected from program participants, the following recommendations are provided to Chicago Grows Food to continue to tailor the program to meet participants’ needs:

1. Provide education resources to address the most common barriers (pests, weeds, access to outdoor space) in the most desired formats (activities for kids, workshops, videos)
2. Maintain the same supports that were provided during the 2022 program cycle including the provision of material and educational supports
3. Provide additional material supports during future program cycles including soil, seeds, and seedlings to help participants continue to use their existing program materials