



Mendocino Coast Hospitality Center

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"...shelter the homeless, feed the hungry, and provide a path to personal self sufficiency..."

The "Giving Garden" – Vocational Services Program funded by CDBG – Final Report

Report Date: 12/22/2017

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The Giving Garden Program ran from June 2015 through October 2017. The CDBG Giving Garden was operated at three of the Mendocino Coast Hospitality Center (MCHC) locations over the term of the grant: Transitional Housing, Hospitality House and Hospitality Center. The project at the Hospitality House was terminated after several months because it was logistically difficult to maintain the garden at that location while continuing to provide the normal everyday services that happen at the Hospitality House. However, the gardens at the other two locations ran smoothly and MCHC now has functional organic gardens at those locations, which continue to provide fresh produce and offer our clients the opportunity to take advantage of the educational and therapeutic value of gardening.

The three locations became operational in planned phases. Phase 1 saw the raised beds become fully functional at Hospitality Center, providing regular baskets of vegetables to the Hospitality House kitchen. Phase 2 was the planting in the raised beds at the Hospitality House. Phase 3 focused on Transitional Housing, where ten raised beds were constructed as well as a greenhouse for producing starts.

The Giving Garden program included horticultural classes provided by Noyo Food Forest, and of equal importance, vocational classes. A full binder of the MCHC vocational class materials is maintained on site. Before Noyo Food Forest started teaching, work was done to prepare the locations and to build the raised beds that were recommended by Noyo Food Forest. MCHC vocational classes are taught by the MCHC Vocational Services Coordinator, who has previous experience as a Job Coach and through running her own business in the private sector.

Noyo Food Forest provided the horticultural management of the Giving Garden while MCHC predominantly provided the vocational aspects.

The CDBG total budget for thirty months was around \$186,000 = an average of \$6,200 per month.

The initial months of this grant utilized expensing against administrative staff costs as the Giving Garden was developed and established. Substantial amount of administrative & staff time was spent developing the large binder of materials for the evidence-based vocational training classes. These classes are a fundamental element of the program as the Giving Garden seeks to provide entry level job skills useful to anyone, not solely within the horticultural field. As the program got into full swing, the administrative costs diminished. During the winter months, the utilities expensing was higher than average as the vocational classes were taught indoors.



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Expenses:

- Garden installation: \$9,543
- Garden maintenance: \$8,500
- Noyo Food Forest staff: \$20,458
- MCHC staff: \$116,557
- Office supplies and marketing: \$6,365
- Client stipends: \$8,620
- Utilities: \$9,357
- Operations (Telephone, Internet, Insurance, Etc.): \$6,600

The City of Fort Bragg's CDBG-funded Giving Garden program provided an opportunity to improve mood and social functioning, while being outdoors involved with nature -which has an evidence base as being beneficial for mental health - as well as providing soft-skills jobs training and horticultural classes. Therapists and Care Managers working in MCHC's Specialty Mental Health Clinic were able to involve some of their eligible clients in the program in conjunction with the client's care plan, and the results were favorable.

Over the course of the program, nine people left the Giving Garden program into employment. The program is a soft skill, basic-level vocational program for people with many additional needs related to homelessness and mental illness, rather than a direct job re-entry program, so it is extra exciting when participants gain full time employment. Participants have told the MCHC Vocational Services Coordinator that they used techniques and skills that were learned in Giving Garden Vocational Training classes at their interviews, which helped promote their own success.



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Client Stats

Unduplicated Clients Served:	88
Females:	38
Males:	50
Elderly:	5
Chronically Homeless:	28
Clients Left to Employment:	11

Program Stats

Approximate Produce Harvested:	698 lbs.
Total Vocational Classes Attended:	485