

Tulane joins national healthy food initiative

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New Orleans resident Linda Hughes buys greens from Sankofa Farmers Market vendor Jamal Elhayek at the market's former site in the Upper Ninth Ward. Sankofa is one of Tulane's eight community partners in the Center for Healthy Food Access.

Although New Orleans has seen a resurgence in supermarkets since Hurricane Katrina, some neighborhoods still lack healthy food options, and many are overwhelmed by an abundance of unhealthy choices. To address this issue, Tulane University has joined the newly launched [Center for Healthy Food Access](#), led by The Food Trust and supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, to support innovative approaches to providing healthy food options to more people.

For this national initiative, Tulane is bringing together eight New Orleans organizations to work across the food system, including growers, distributors, small stores, farmers markets and consumers. Their first meeting, held earlier this month, laid the foundation for fostering collaboration and providing support. The group identified areas of need, shared lessons learned, and brainstormed new ways to work together, such as having local growers provide produce to corner stores and introducing nutrition education programs at local farmers markets.

“We're excited to join The Food Trust in this innovative endeavor to promote new approaches and tackle common challenges together,” said Diego Rose, professor and head of the Nutrition Section at the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. The work is a partnership of the Nutrition Section and the [Tulane Prevention Research Center](#).

Tulane will also conduct a survey of organizations within various areas of the local food system and create a toolkit of best practices.

Participating local organizations and their contributions are:

- Agrowtopia: to promote healthy eating to youth and build a farm stand to sell produce
- Backyard Gardeners Network: to train youth interns to lead gardening programming
- Market Umbrella: to test the use of WIC cash-value vouchers at farmers markets
- Propeller: to pilot a healthy corner store initiative in three to five stores
- Sankofa: to enhance its SNAP match program and strengthen health clinic partnerships
- Second Harvest Food Bank: to expand its Cooking Matters program

- SPROUT NOLA: to build community gardener leadership and enhance its LatinX programming
- Top Box Foods: to expand the scope and frequency of its food deliveries

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