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American Heart Association, Walmart Foundation strengthening food ecosystems to improve food access in Chicago

Six minority and/or women-led organizations receive funding from the American Heart Association's Bernard J. Tyson Impact Fund

CHICAGO, Monday, May 10, 2021 – To sustainably address food insecurity in Chicago, the American Heart Association, the world's leading nonprofit organization focused on heart and brain health for all, today announced that six local businesses and nonprofits will receive \$1 million from the Association's [Bernard J. Tyson Impact Fund](#).

Thanks to a \$5 million grant from the Walmart Foundation as part of its Center for Racial Equity, two separate rounds of funding will be available through the Bernard J. Tyson Impact Fund. The nationwide fund provides financial resources for evidence-based, community-driven entrepreneurial solutions that help remove the social and economic barriers to health equity. All of the first-round fund recipients are minority and/or women-led and are operating within under-resourced food insecure communities.

"The Walmart Foundation is helping to bring healthy, nutritious food to people in under-resourced communities in Chicago and Atlanta," said Nancy Brown, chief executive officer of the American Heart Association. "Through their generous support of the Bernard J. Tyson Impact Fund, together we are providing needed resources to organizations and social entrepreneurs who are making wide-reaching and lasting impact in communities across the nation."

According to [Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap Study](#), one in seven people in Cook County will experience food insecurity this year.

"Together with the Bernard J. Tyson Impact Fund, we are supporting community-based entrepreneurs in Chicago and Atlanta that are expanding access to affordable and healthy food," said Kirstie Sims, senior director of the Walmart.org Center for Racial Equity. "Improving access to fresh food in food insecure communities is a key part of our mission to address health disparities."

The first set of recipients are:

- Fresher Together is a Black-led, early-stage food hub and urban farm providing affordable produce for residents within Chicago's food deserts. Funds will support growth by increasing incomes for 40 BIPOC farmers.
- Multiple Harvest is a Kenyan immigrant-led early-stage urban farming business growing and selling popular African cultural staple produce on Chicago's South



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Side. Funds will support an early-stage, high potential farm, improving the supply of produce from minority farms in Chicago while increasing access to culturally appropriate food in the African immigrant community.

- OjaExpress is an early-stage tech startup that expands access to ethnic, cultural, and religious healthy grocery items in immigrant communities through an ethnic grocery delivery platform. Funds will increase access to culturally relevant food for over 1,500 customers in Chicago and generate over \$300,000 in sales for over 30 mom-and-pop ethnic grocers.
- Forty Acres Fresh Market is a Black woman-led start-up grocer and produce delivery service that was founded in response to the lack of fresh food options on Chicago's West Side. Funds will support the opening of a brick-and-mortar store that will close a food desert for 14,000 people and expand delivery operations to 1,000 produce boxes per week.
- Three longstanding pillars of Chicago's North Lawndale neighborhood, Stone Temple Church, Del Kar's Pharmacy, and the Greening Committee, are partnering to create a replicable local food ecosystem to improve the health and well-being of the community. Funds will support the distribution of more than 200,000 pounds of produce increasing access to healthy food for 52,000 people.
- Urban Growers Collective is a Black women-led nonprofit that seeks to address the inequities that exist on Chicago's South and West Sides by building economic opportunities for urban farmers and increasing access to affordable, nutrient-dense food through a mobile produce market. Funds will support the growth of 10 emerging minority urban farmers and distribution of 300,000 pounds of produce increasing access to affordable, nutrient dense food for 3,000 people.

Social entrepreneurs and nonprofits may submit expressions of interest for the remaining funding through June 4, 2021. A virtual informational "town hall" will connect community members and American Heart Association staff to discuss the challenges and opportunities of addressing food insecurity to help ensure funds are distributed to areas of greatest need and impact.

Chicago Tyson Impact Fund Town Hall

May 13, 2021

10:00 am CST / 11:00 am EST

Register [here](#)

Since its launch in June 2020, the Bernard J. Tyson Impact Fund has supported 15 social entrepreneurs and nonprofits in New York, San Francisco, Seattle/Puget Sound and Oakland, Calif. The fund honors the late Bernard J. Tyson, long-time American Heart Association volunteer and former Kaiser Permanente CEO. Tyson worked tirelessly to



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overcome structural and systemic barriers to support social justice and equitable health for all.

To learn more about the Bernard J. Tyson Impact Fund and future funding opportunities, visit heart.org/bernard-j-tyson-fund.

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About the American Heart Association

The American Heart Association is a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. We are dedicated to ensuring equitable health in all communities. Through collaboration with numerous organizations, and powered by millions of volunteers, we fund innovative research, advocate for the public's health and share lifesaving resources. The Dallas-based organization has been a leading source of health information for nearly a century. Connect with us on heart.org, [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or by calling 1-800-AHA-USA1.

About the Walmart.org Center for Racial Equity

The Walmart.org Center for Racial Equity was founded through a \$100 million commitment over five years to address the drivers of systemic racism in society and accelerate change. The center's initiatives will fund research, advocacy, innovation of practices and tools, stakeholder convening and non-profit capacity building with a focus on four systems: financial, health, education and criminal justice. The mission of the center is to complement and extend the societal impact of Walmart business initiatives to advance racial equity within these four systems, and our work extends the overarching philanthropic work of Walmart.org. To learn more, visit [Center for Racial Equity](#).

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heart.org and stroke.org