HEP is a community-based participatory research Project. Partners Include:

- Brightmoor Community Center
- Community Partner At Large
- Detroit Department of Health and Wellness Promotion
- Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation
- Friends of Parkside
- Henry Ford Health System
- Warren Conner Development Coalition
- University of Michigan School of Public Health.

The Healthy Environments Partnership (HEP) Supports Equitable Access to Fresh Healthy Foods In Detroit Communities

**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Establish a statewide initiative that provides loans, grants, and incentives to fresh food retailers who locate in communities with limited access to healthy foods.**

Creating grocery and small food retail expansion and retention programs, attending to grocer capacity and workforce development needs, and designing innovations in retailing and community relations can improve access to fresh food and have a positive impact on Detroit’s economy.

**Improve state and local zoning laws to promote locally controlled agriculture efforts in Detroit.**

Zoning laws that facilitate urban agriculture can improve the supply of fresh healthy food in Detroit. Urban agriculture has: helped establish hundreds of backyard, community, school, and market gardens; engaged thousands of adults and youth in related activities; and supplied residents with several hundred tons of food per year.

**Allocate funds for food stamp abatement programs that increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables in Detroit.**

Programs like the Double Up Food Bucks Program, that match Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) spending at farmers’ markets dollar-for-dollar (up to $20 per card per day) make produce at farmers markets more affordable, increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables for low-income residents, and boost the income of local farmers.

**Support community-based participatory research efforts to track and analyze Detroit’s food system, and its impact on residents, neighborhoods, and community goals such as health, economic growth, and social justice.**

Conducting research that tracks challenges such as poverty and food insecurity as well as resources such as vacant land, schools, and existing investment, can positively effect food security and advance the development of a just and sustainable food system.

Last Updated August 2011
HEP Overview

Established in 2000, HEP is a community-based participatory research partnership that develops, implements, and evaluates interventions in Detroit, Michigan to reduce racial and socioeconomic disparities in cardiovascular disease (CVD). HEP is funded through the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities.

Background: Detroit neighborhoods have inequitable access to healthy foods, placing residents at increased risk of CVD and other diet-related chronic diseases.

♦ 1 in 3 American adults suffers from some form of CVD. In 2007, heart disease and stroke were the first and third leading causes of death in Detroit. ¹

♦ Fruit and vegetable consumption is inversely associated with CVD and total mortality in the general U.S. population. Consuming fruits and vegetables at least 3 times a day compared with less than once per day has been associated with 27% lower CVD mortality and 15% lower total mortality.

♦ The presence of food stores that sell fresh produce increases the likelihood of fruit and vegetable consumption. Having a grocery store in the neighborhood is associated with increased fruit and vegetable consumption in Detroit. ²

♦ Residents of some neighborhoods in Detroit have poor access to retail supermarkets, grocery stores, and specialty produce vendors that sell fresh fruits and vegetables and other nutritious foods. ³

1. Source: City of Detroit Department of Health and Wellness Promotion.

HEP Research: Detroit residents identify access to fresh healthy food as a public health priority.

Strategies identified by Detroit residents include:

♦ Increasing availability of affordable and nutritious foods at existing retail food stores.
♦ Establishing farmers’ markets and other farm-direct market venues.
♦ Reducing exposure to stores that sell primarily liquor, tobacco, or highly processed high-fat, high-sugar foods.
♦ Support local garden and community agriculture efforts.