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## Community Collaboration to Increase Access to Healthy Food Through Food Gardens

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*Abstract:* This presentation will describe application of the social-ecological model in improving access to healthy food. Because of rapidly rising rates of obesity and increased concerns about food safety and food security, communities are rediscovering the benefits of food gardening. Despite this increased interest, resources for supporting and creating garden programs are limited and exist as independent functions of various agencies.

Clark County Public Health, in collaboration with Clark County Food System Council, Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation, Clark WSU Extension and Clark County Sustainability and Solid Waste Departments, has been engaged in efforts to assess the need and support for gardening, to promote food garden programs and to assure implementation of community actions leading to increasing food gardening in homes, schools, neighborhoods, churches and businesses through collaborative approaches.

The social-ecological model has been widely accepted as a framework for development of public health interventions. Efforts are most effective when interventions and activities occur at multiple spheres of influence. CCPH staff will discuss the interventions and activities completed, the collaborations that are forming and future community actions that will lead to increased food gardening. Successes are occurring through interventions targeted at all levels of influence from individual garden demonstrations to changes in city and county policy, codes and zoning allowing community gardens in neighborhood parks. Efforts have already resulted in an increase in community garden sites, conversations about private-public partnerships and interest in development of new models of education and support.

### *Learner Objectives:*

After participating in this session participants will:

- Have an understanding of an effective approach to implement food gardening projects in a community through a combination of efforts focused at all levels of the social-ecological model; individual, interpersonal, organizational, community/society.
- Have information about how public health agencies can provide leadership to assess, promote and assure implementation of actions that promote access to healthy food through community collaborations.
- Have an understanding of how Food Policy Councils can be formed to support efforts to improve local food systems and increase access to healthy foods.