



RURAL GROCERY INITIATIVE
JUNE 2025

CASE STUDY

FARMACY MARKETPLACE



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Select photos throughout case study are courtesy of Farmacy Marketplace.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Her Shoes is a nonprofit organization that was established in 2017 to improve economic stability and quality of life in the Mississippi Delta. In 2018, In Her Shoes developed its hallmark farm-to-market initiative, the Farm Business Enhancement Program, which provides technical assistance and trainings to help beginner- and intermediate-level farmers integrate into new markets. In 2022, In Her Shoes established Farmacy Marketplace, a nonprofit grocery store, to create another opportunity for local farmers to market local products and improve their business sustainability.

This case study examines the role of technical assistance for agricultural producers in facilitating the expansion of local food offerings at retail outlets. By highlighting the interconnected programs of In Her Shoes, this case study aims to help other organizations and community leaders strengthen their local food system to expand local food availability in grocery stores.

OVERVIEW OF IN HER SHOES & FARMACY MARKETPLACE

LOCATION — Webb, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi

POPULATION — 747

OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE — 501(c)(3) nonprofit

YEAR ESTABLISHED — 2017 (store opened in 2022)

KEY PARTNERS — University of Georgia, Alcorn State University, Mississippi State University, USDA, Partnership for a Healthy America, But God Ministries

PROBLEM — Local producers have few retail outlets where they can sell products. In addition, they seek assistance with business planning and marketing.

SOLUTION — In Her Shoes developed the Farm Business Enhancement Program to help farmers gain access to new markets. In addition, the nonprofit established Farmacy Marketplace as another retail outlet for farmers while improving food access for the community.

KEY OPERATIONS — Retail sales at a brick-and-mortar store; delivery of healthy foods to nearby low-income and low-access communities using a refrigerated truck

INCOME SOURCES — Retail sales

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED

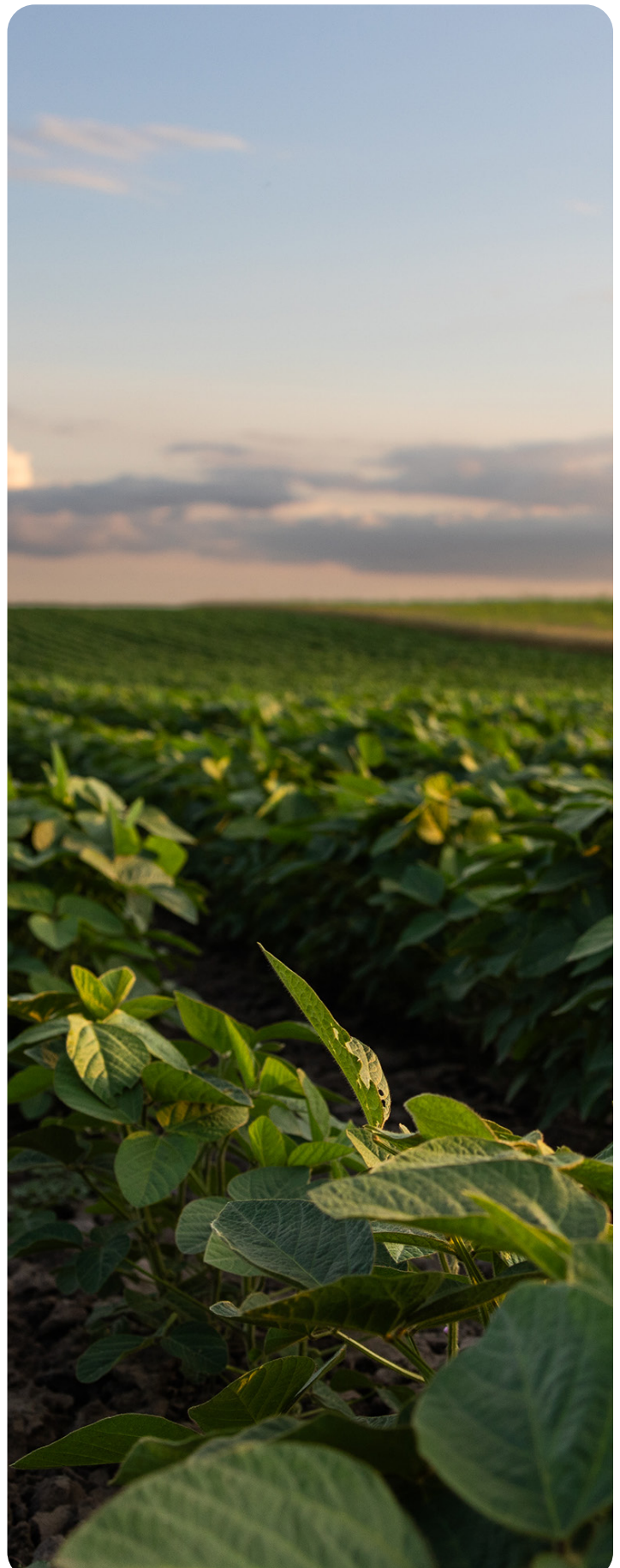
Business Model and Operations: The Farm Business Enhancement Program provides technical assistance and trainings to bolster farm businesses. Farmacy Marketplace is a nonprofit grocery store sourcing from local farms and serving the low-income, low access community of Webb, Mississippi. The two distinct programs, both managed by In Her Shoes, work in tandem to reinforce each other.

Financial Strategy: In Her Shoes has been very successful in fundraising, especially through various federal and private grants, to support its programs. The organization's nonprofit grocery store, Farmacy Marketplace, utilized grants during its start-up phase but now largely sustains itself through sales.

Equipment, Technology, and Infrastructure: In Her Shoes recently started operating a mobile market, Farmacy Mobile, to bring healthy food to additional low access communities across the Mississippi Delta. The mobile market uses the same Point of Sale system as Farmacy Marketplace. The system enables customers to use the Double Up Food Bucks, part of the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program.

Product Offerings: Roughly 15% of store offerings at Farmacy Marketplace are sourced by local farmers within a 150-mile radius of Webb. The store offers the full range of products found in conventional grocery stores. Because some food items are unavailable locally, Farmacy Marketplace fills in the gap by purchasing from UNFI, a national distributor.

Partnerships and Community Engagement: In Her Shoes has been able to establish and solidify relationships with farmers through the Farm Business Enhancement Program. As the training program progresses, the organization hopes that more farmers will be able to sell larger volumes to Farmacy Marketplace on a consistent basis.



INTRODUCTION

Established in 2017, In Her Shoes is a nonprofit organization based in Webb, Mississippi, that implements various programs to improve quality of life and economic stability for low-income communities.

In 2018, In Her Shoes developed the Farm Business Enhancement program to help farmers build capacity and access new markets. Recognizing the need for more retail outlets where local farmers could expand their revenue streams, the organization established Farmacy Marketplace in 2022. By December 2024, In Her Shoes began operating Farmacy Mobile, a mobile market that brings fresh meat and produce to other communities in the Mississippi Delta.

In Her Shoes focuses on supporting beginner specialty crop producers because they often lack the experience and know-how to integrate into new retail outlets and scale their businesses.^{1,2} For communities lacking farm coalitions,³ education programs that address farming as both a profession and an identity provide invaluable opportunities for skill-building, participatory learning, and resource support.⁴

This case study explores how In Her Shoes developed Farmacy Marketplace as yet another program to help farmers succeed and grow, while at the same time improving food access and expanding the availability of local food in retail outlets. It provides an overview of how Farmacy Marketplace was established, how it evolved over time, key operations, challenges, and lessons learned along the way. By sharing this story, other communities will have a better understanding of how to build support systems that strengthen local food economies.



HISTORICAL, GEOGRAPHIC, AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

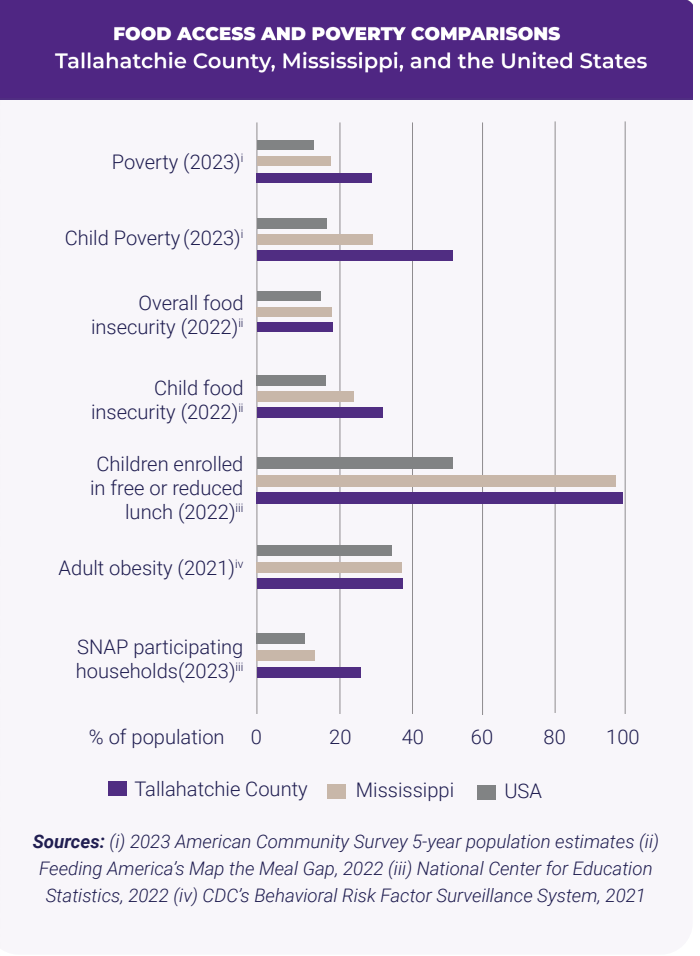
The town of Webb is located in Tallahatchie County, a remote and rural area with a population density of 18 people per square mile.⁵ The Webb community is a relatively homogenous, with 96.9% of residents identifying as Black or African American. In 2023, Webb's median household income was \$31,707.⁶

Webb is in the Mississippi Delta, a unique geographic region spanning 4.5 million acres and 18 counties in northwest Mississippi.⁷ Bounded by the Yazoo River to the east and the Mississippi River to the west, the area has fertile soils that accumulated over millennia as a result of flooding, making it a leader in agricultural productivity.⁸ Most crops in the state of Mississippi are grown in the Delta, with rice, cotton, soybean, and corn commodities driving the economy.⁹

Although the majority of residents in the Mississippi Delta identify as Black or African American, in 2022, only 14.28% of producers were Black.¹⁰ The Mississippi Delta is also one of the most impoverished areas of the United States, with roughly half of households living below the federal poverty line. A recent study found that only 4% of food outlets in the region were grocery stores, causing many residents to rely on dollar stores and gas stations that typically carry less nutritious food options.¹¹ These factors contribute to the Mississippi Delta having one of the lowest life expectancy rates in the country.¹²

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISONS of Webb, Tallahatchie county, and Mississippi			
VARIABLE	WEBB, MS	TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY	MISSISSIPPI
Population	747	12,363	2,951,438
Median household income (in 2023 inflation-adjusted \$)	\$31,707	\$37,383	\$54,915
Median age in years	34.6	38.4	38.4
% of population under 18, over 65	30.7, 12.0	20.2, 17.1	23.5, 16.8
% of population 25 and older who earned a bachelor's degree or higher	6.9	11.9	24.2
Race/ethnicity, as a percentage of the population:			
White	3.08	36.16	56.31
Black	96.92	62.10	37.00
Asian	0.0	0.04	0.98
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0.0	0.30	0.45
Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander	0.0	0.0	0.05
Two or more races	0	1.41	3.60
Some other race	0	0	1.70
Hispanic or Latino	0	0.50	3.60

Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates





ORIGINS OF FARMACY MARKETPLACE

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Tallahatchie County, located in the Mississippi Delta, is home to many small-scale farmers who grow a wide variety of produce, including watermelon, cantaloupe, tomatoes, okra, sweet potatoes, bell peppers, corn, and more. Despite this, food access remains a challenge in the community: for decades, there was only one grocery store in the entire 645-square-mile county, forcing many residents to drive over 20 miles to reach fresh food and grocery staples. The lack of retail outlets also meant local farmers had fewer marketing opportunities for their products. They instead primarily relied on informal exchange networks, such as roadside stands or word of mouth. These limitations hindered farmers' ability to sustain and grow their businesses over the long-term.

Marquitrice Mangham, a fourth-generation farmer who grew up in the area, saw how the livelihood of local farmers was inseparable from the community's overall wellbeing. She had a vision of simultaneously building the capacity and know-how of local farmers while establishing retail markets where they could sell products, expand their revenue streams, and become more financially sustainable. Doing so, she reasoned, would also improve the health and economic stability of the entire community.

To make this vision a reality, in 2017, Mangham launched In Her Shoes, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in the rural town of Webb, located in Tallahatchie County. Core to its mission is supporting local farmers and improving food access across the Mississippi Delta, with the ultimate goal of "creating economic stability, promoting self-sufficiency, and improving quality of life."¹³



Marquitrice Mangham grew up in Webb, Mississippi. After serving in the Army for eight years, she received degrees in public administration and law, and then settled in the Atlanta metro where she worked as a community planner for more than 20 years. Although she still lives in Georgia, Mangham makes the 400-mile commute back to Webb every other week to help manage her family's 200-acre farm.

One day in 2016, Mangham saw a homeless girl on a train in the middle of winter and thought to herself, "I don't know what I would do if I or my daughter were in her shoes." Mangham's empathy catalyzed a desire to make a difference. The following year, she established In Her Shoes, a nonprofit dedicated to addressing various interconnected issues that shape community well-being. The organization started by providing shelter to people experiencing homelessness, stating that "economic stability starts with stable, livable shelter."¹⁴ Since 2018, over 300 people have been supported by the organization's transitional housing program.¹⁵ Today, the organization's core programming focuses on strengthening local food systems.

In Her Shoes has a presence in both the Mississippi Delta and West Georgia.



FIRST STEPS

In 2018, In Her Shoes developed its hallmark farm-to-market initiative, the Farm Business Enhancement Program, which helps beginner- and intermediate-level farmers build their farm business capacity and access new markets. The nine-month course is capped at 20-30 farmers, and participants must have fewer than 10 years of experience to join.

Throughout the program, farmers attend workshops and receive one-on-one technical assistance on a range of topics. Initially, the curriculum focused only on production methods; however, participant feedback revealed a need for business planning support, too. The course now includes workshops on business plan development, incorporating as a business, financial management, navigating USDA programs, marketing and promotion, and more. In Her Shoes even contracts with a graphic designer to make logos for students.

Helping farmers integrate into new markets is of critical importance. Partnering with the University of Georgia and Mississippi State University, the program offers trainings on food safety standards and GAP certification that may be required by retailers. Because many participating farmers only have experience selling direct-to-consumer, they also spend time discussing pricing strategies for different markets, including wholesale and retail.



The Farm Business Enhancement Program is currently supported by faculty at the University of Georgia and Alcorn State University. It is supported by two primary funding sources: (1) USDA-NIFA's Farm Management Educational Program for New, Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, and (2) USDA Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement's 2501 Program, which helps farmers, ranchers, foresters, and veterans who have historically experienced limited access to USDA programs and services. Since it began, more than 200 farmers have completed the program.¹⁵

"We are trying to get our farmers used to having a retail market to sell in, rather than sitting on the roadside or going to farmers markets in other counties, or going door to door and selling to their neighbors... So there's a whole lot of programming and building that we have to do to help them have the capacity to supply small retailers and wholesalers on a regular basis."

Marquitrice Mangham

Founder and Executive Director
of In Her Shoes

FARMER SPOTLIGHT:



James Burch is a retired military veteran-turned-farmer. He grows high-dollar products, such as organic melons, greens, okra, peppers, squash, cucumbers, tomatoes, and mushrooms. According to Burch, he was drawn to farming because the soil helps heal the soul:

"I spent 44 years in the military, so you can imagine the stuff that I've encountered or done during that time frame. I'm diagnosed with PTSD. My wife gave me a few dollars after we retired and said, 'Go buy some toys and play in the dirt.' And so, when I'm [farming], I don't worry about anything...Because when I'm out there, I'm in my own little world"

As he was just getting started, Burch participated in three In Her Shoes virtual trainings during COVID. He learned how to market his product, advanced his leadership skills, and networked with other producers, eventually bringing them together to share equipment.

Burch said he knows other Black farmers who tried selling into retail markets but lost trust when they were paid less than what they believed they deserved. This is yet another reason the Farm Business Enhancement Program's trainings on fair pricing and negotiation skills are so crucial.



GROWTH & EVOLUTION

In 2020, In Her Shoes purchased a 7,000-square-foot, 40-year-old foreclosed building on Webb's main street for \$11,000. The organization planned to eventually use the building for office space and as a farmer training center. However, community members had another idea in mind, often suggesting that In Her Shoes turn the building into a grocery store. Other than Dollar General – which did not carry fresh fruit, vegetables or meat – there was no food outlet within a 20-mile radius of Webb. Furthermore, creating a new grocery outlet directly connected to the goals of the Farm Business Enhancement Program, as it would create another opportunity for local farmers to market their products.

With the community's support and insistence, In Her Shoes decided to open a store: Farmacy Marketplace, with an 'F' to emphasize the importance of fresh produce in contributing to health and wellness.

*"We work with farmers through our farm training program, and **our mission is to help farmers be able to reach capacity to serve in retail and wholesale markets.** Farmacy Marketplace is one of those pilot markets."*

Marquitrice Mangham

Founder and Executive Director
of In Her Shoes

Renovations started in February 2022. Community members helped by cleaning out the building and replacing windows. In Her Shoes contracted with several local professionals to install new sheetrock, plumbing, and electrical systems. To pay for renovations, the organization took out a \$30,000 loan from a local bank. A USDA grants for \$78,000 helped pay for equipment.

While renovations were underway, Farmacy Marketplace established relationships with distributors. They first sought out farmers in Webb, Tallahatchie County, and the broader Mississippi Delta region. To supplement this, they developed contracts with United Natural Foods, Inc. (UNFI), a national distributor. The store also buys from Scariano Wholesale Foods, a regional distributor specializing in meat.

Farmacy Marketplace held its grand opening on October 14, 2022, becoming the first store in decades to offer fresh meat and produce in Webb. Today, the store has two full-time and five part-time employees. In 2024, the store grossed \$309,000 with locally sourced food accounting for roughly 12% of produce sold. Six local farmers who completed the Farm Business Enhancement Program have now started supplying produce to Farmacy Marketplace on a regular basis. The organization continues to provide technical assistance, hoping that in the next three years, twelve local farmers will have the capacity to consistently supply fresh fruits and vegetables to the grocery store.

Throughout its first years in operation, leaders and stakeholders from nearby towns often visited the store and asked how they, too, could improve food access. Seeing the need while recognizing that a full-service brick-and-mortar grocery store may not be feasible in all communities, In Her Shoes looked for alternative solutions. In April 2024, the organization received a \$125,000 grant from the American Heart Association's Social Impact Funds, spread over two years, which was partially used to establish a mobile market.¹⁶ That same year, the nonprofit received a \$300,000 reimbursement grant through USDA's Local Food Promotion Program to further these efforts.¹⁷ In December 2024, Farmacy Mobile – a refrigerated truck carrying fresh produce and meat, including some locally sourced options – started visiting three low-income, low-access communities in the Mississippi Delta on different days of the week: Jonestown, Coffeeville and Mound Bayou.

Next, In Her Shoes seeks to establish a network of small brick-and-mortar grocery stores under the nonprofit's umbrella, which would create additional marketing channels for local producers and improve fresh food access. Borrowing strategies from the chain grocery model, these stores could share services, pool resources, and increase purchasing power – thereby enhancing their long-term sustainability. To pilot this idea, In Her Shoes is collaborating with the Chamber of Commerce in Oakland, located 30 miles east of Webb in the neighboring county, to launch a Farmacy Marketplace there. A building has been acquired, and the organization is now working on fundraising, community outreach, renovation, and design. The store is set to open in 2025.

The organization is also in the process of equipping a centralized aggregation facility, located in Lambert, MS, to include produce processing equipment. Doing so would allow locally sourced produce to be aggregated, processed, and distributed in house and at a larger volume.

TIMELINE OF

Farmacy Marketplace

APRIL 2017

In Her Shoes, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Webb, MS, is formed to address interconnected issues that shape community well-being in the Mississippi Delta.

SEPTEMBER 2018

In Her Shoes establishes its hallmark farm-to-market initiative, the Farm Business Enhancement Program. The nine-month course has an emphasis on helping farmers integrate into new retail markets.

JUNE 2020

In Her Shoes purchases a building in downtown Webb.

FEBRUARY 2022

In Her Shoes begins the process of establishing a nonprofit grocery store. With funding from a USDA grants, a local bank loan, and other private investments, the organization starts building renovations, purchases equipment, and establishes relationships with distributors.

OCTOBER 2022

Farmacy Marketplace opens, becoming the first store in decades to offer fresh meat and produce in Webb. The store serves as another outlet for local farmers to market their product.

DECEMBER 2024

Using funds from the American Heart Association and USDA's Local Food Promotion Program, In Her Shoes establishes Farmacy Mobile, an extension of Farmacy Marketplace that brings fresh food to low income, low access areas in the Mississippi Delta.



OPERATIONS

MANAGING DAY-TO-DAY RETAIL ACTIVITIES AT FARMACY MARKETPLACE

On a typical day, Farmacy Marketplace employees engage in standard retail duties, such as working the register, helping customers, receiving deliveries from distributors and vendors, restocking, cleaning, and managing the meat counter display. Several staff have worked at the store since it opened, so they are very familiar with daily systems and procedures. One employee previously owned a grocery store, and that individual now manages the meat department. Community members also volunteer their time by cleaning the store, cutting the grass, picking up litter in the parking lot, and completing other tasks to support general upkeep. While overseeing other In Her Shoes programs, Mangham manages the store's purchasing, payroll, budgets, taxes, and other administrative paperwork.

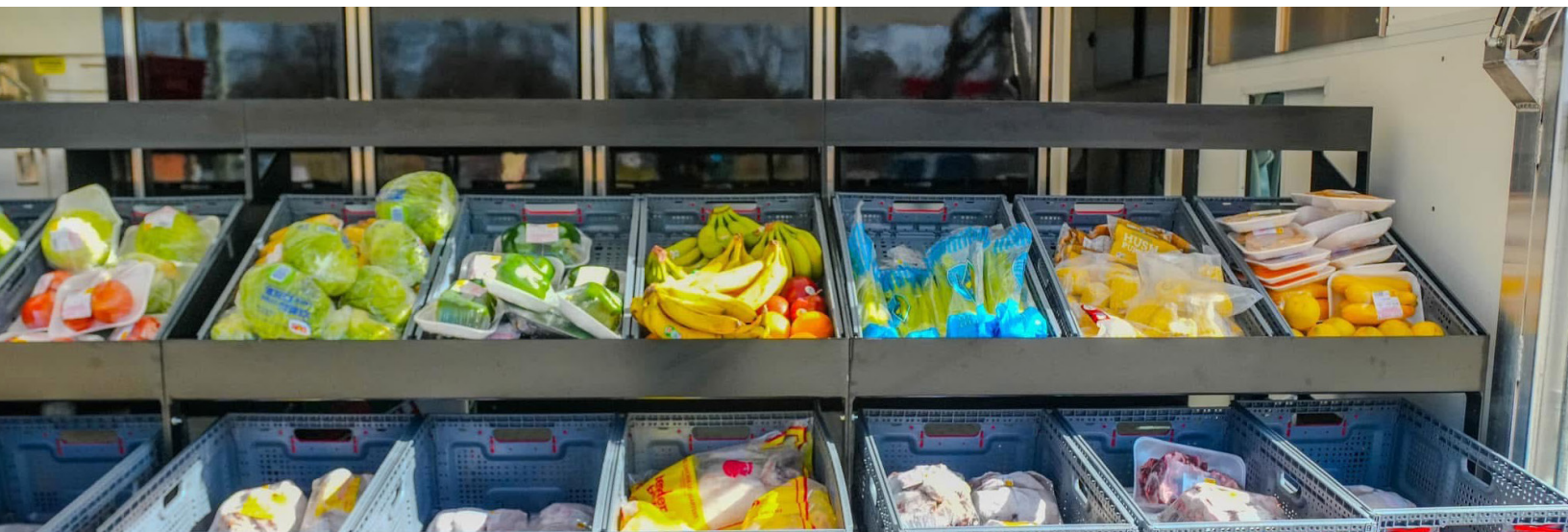
BUYING FROM LOCAL FARMERS

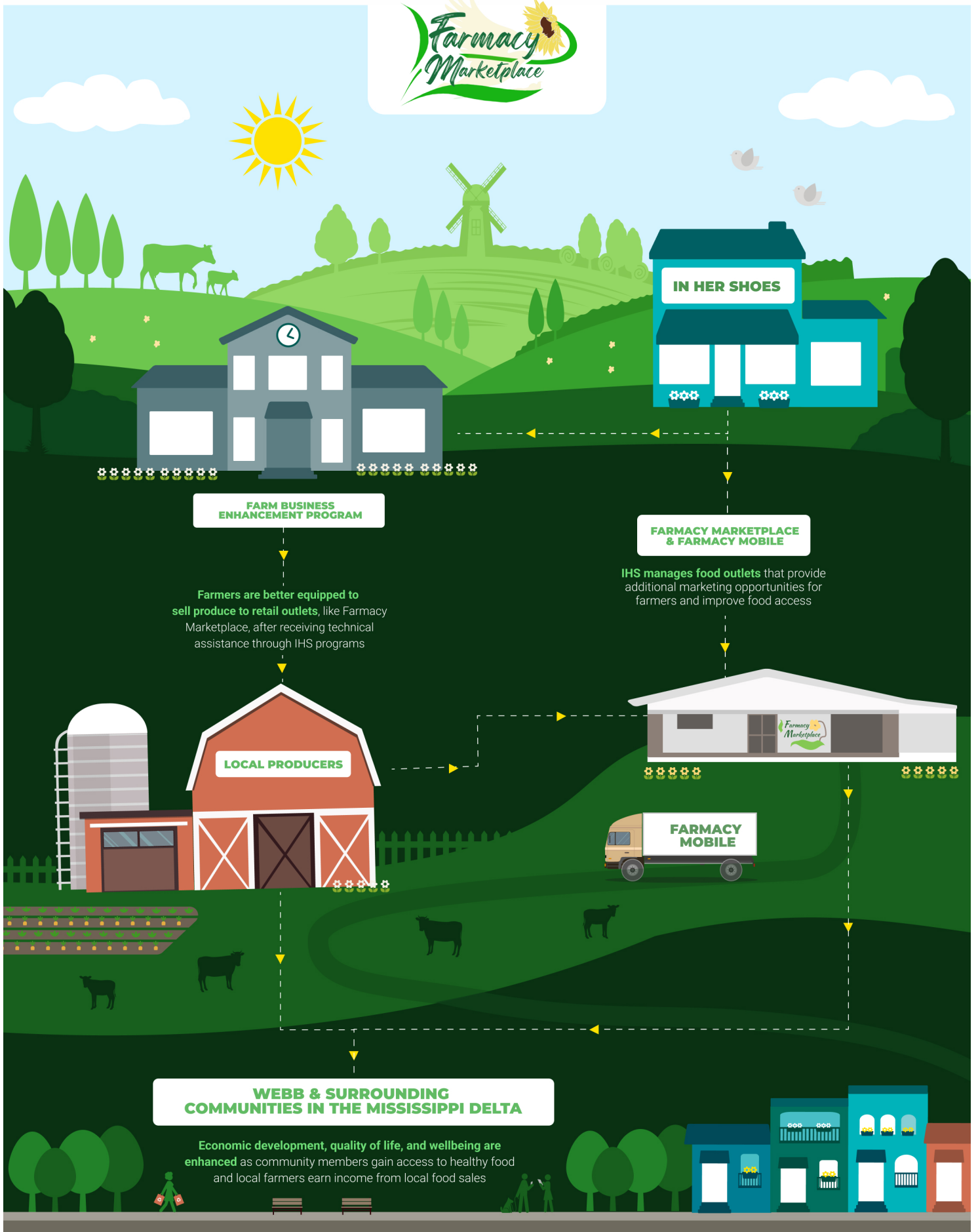
Because its mission is to build the skills and capacity of farmers who have little experience selling to retail outlets, Farmacy Marketplace takes a hands-on approach when buying from local vendors and strives to make the process user-friendly. The store understands that small farmers may not be able to supply product year-round or in large volumes, so they encourage farmers to "come as you are, and bring what you have." Currently, there are 12 producers within a 150-mile radius of Webb supplying to Farmacy Marketplace.

For a farmer wanting to supply Farmacy Marketplace, a Program Manager with the Farm Business Enhancement Program will first visit the farm and make sure proper food safety procedures are being followed. Farmers are also required to obtain farm business training on pricing, marketing, and financial management, which are offered through the Farm Business Enhancement Program. From there, Farmacy Marketplace coordinates orders and deliveries by phone. Supplier products are collected at an aggregation and processing facility owned by In Her Shoes, where they are sorted and distributed to Farmacy Marketplace outlets.

Some farmers who sell to Farmacy Marketplace have gone through the Farm Business Enhancement Program, but not all. For a farmer who is new to the network, employees will first visit the farm. From there, Farmacy Marketplace coordinates orders and deliveries by phone. Farmers bring products to the store, where they are checked in and weighed. After considering similar items on the market, the store and farmers settle on a price. Then, Farmacy Marketplace fills out a receipt and pays farmers on the spot.

As local farmers scale their businesses, Farmacy Marketplace would like to establish contracts, as this would give both the store and farmers more consistency week to week. For now, the organization continues to provide training through the Farm Business Enhancement Program to work toward this goal.





2024 IMPACT SUMMARY



8 FARMERS

COMPLETED THE FARM BUSINESS
ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM



12 PRODUCERS

SUPPLYING TO FARMACY
MARKETPLACE



\$22,000

IN LOCAL FOOD PURCHASES



\$309,000

IN GROSS SALES AT FARMACY
MARKETPLACE



\$34,000

IN LOCAL FOOD SALES AT FARMACY
MARKETPLACE



105

DAILY SHOPPERS
ON AVERAGE, AT FARMACY
MARKETPLACE



5 PART-TIME **2** FULL-TIME
STAFF EMPLOYED AT
FARMACY MARKETPLACE



7 PART-TIME **2** FULL-TIME
STAFF EMPLOYED
AT IN HER SHOES

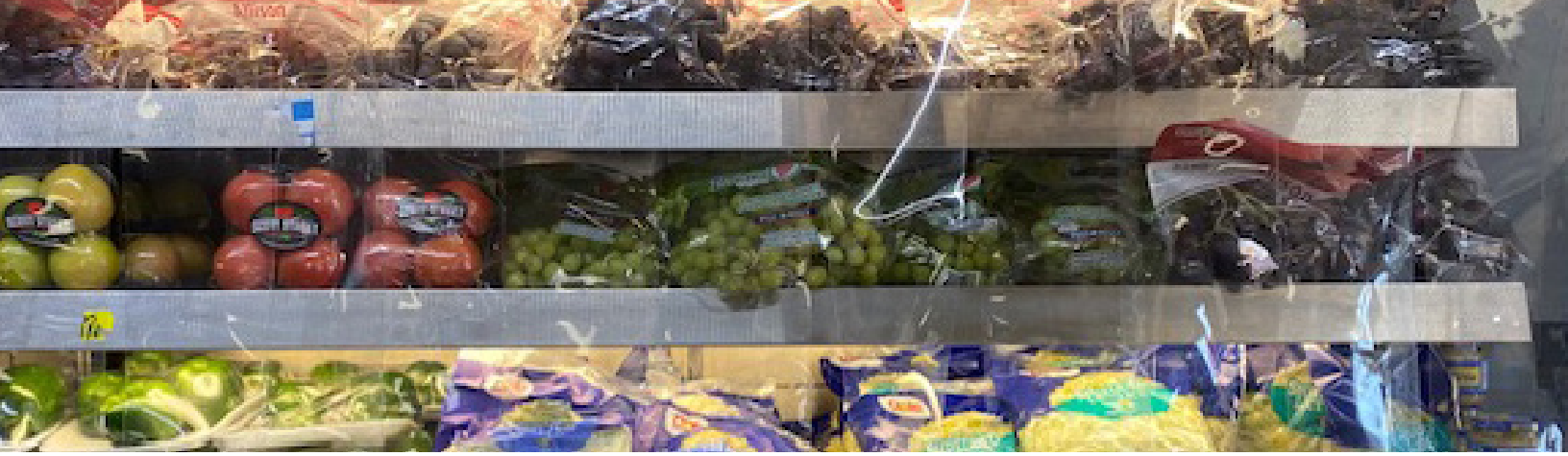
OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

While Farmacy Marketplace strives to source from local farmers as much as possible, many grocery staples are not available locally or may only be available during certain seasons. So that store patrons could purchase everything in one stop, Farmacy Marketplace needed to find a wholesaler that would be willing to cater to a small-scale store. This was a challenge, as many wholesalers require stores to purchase \$10,000-15,000 of product per week. This is simply not feasible for Farmacy Marketplace due to the size of the community it serves. Eventually, the store was able to establish a relationship with UNFI and negotiate for smaller weekly orders. Still, Farmacy Marketplace is unable to take advantage of volume discounts that larger stores can access. This is one reason In Her Shoes is interested in establishing numerous small-scale stores under the nonprofit's umbrella: doing so would allow the stores to collectively increase their volume, access discounts, and therefore reduce prices for customers. According to Mangham, "We're small, but I think we'll be mighty in numbers. That's why we need to grow in numbers, to stay in place and continue to get distributors."

Another challenge for Farmacy Marketplace involves labor. While employees are able to manage the day-to-day retail activities smoothly on their own, the store would ideally have another person managing the back end and administrative tasks that are currently overseen by Mangham. This would free up her time to support food access initiatives in other communities. However, because of the small labor pool, it has been difficult to find someone who has the skills and experience to do this work.

Because Webb and surrounding communities have lacked fresh food access for decades, Farmacy Marketplace has also seen a need for more educational programming to show customers how they can incorporate fresh foods into their daily diets. To boost fresh food consumption and sales, they have considered offering tastings or partnering with Mississippi State Extension to host nutrition classes in the store. They have already implemented Double Up Food Bucks so that SNAP recipients have more funds to purchase fruits and vegetables.





KEY FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED

BUSINESS MODEL AND OPERATIONS

In Her Shoes created mutually beneficial programs to advance the mission of improving economic stability and quality of life in the Mississippi Delta. Local producers in the Farm Business Enhancement Program benefit from Farmacy Marketplace by having another marketing outlet. At the same time, because the program expands the capacity and skill of local producers, Farmacy Marketplace can access a greater supply of local food offerings. While these In Her Shoes initiatives are very distinct, they are clearly very interconnected.

As an initiative of In Her Shoes, Farmacy Marketplace answers to a seven-member board of directors that makes long-term strategic decisions for the organization. While board members actively volunteer at the store and understand what the work entails, they are confident in leaving day-to-day decision-making up to Mangham and store employees. This has allowed the store to remain nimble and act quickly.

The nonprofit model has allowed Farmacy Marketplace to access grants, which provided startup capital and supplemented revenue until the store could become financially self-sustaining. After two years in operation, the store has been able to reduce its reliance on external funding. This leads In Her Shoes to believe that this is a replicable model for other low income, low access communities in the Mississippi Delta – especially if stores can share costs and

meet distribution requirements together. According to Mangham, “We’re using Farmacy Marketplace as a model under In Her Shoes to establish other small community grocery stores like a chain. Then they could share resources to help each store sustain over time. We felt that doing this under the nonprofit would allow us to access resources and help get the stores up and going a lot quicker.” A second Farmacy Marketplace location in Oakland, Mississippi – slated to open in 2025 – will be the first test of this theory.

FINANCIAL STRATEGY

In Her Shoes has been very successful in fundraising, specifically through various federal and private grants, to support its programs. Federal grants and a variety of private donors – including unlikely sources like *The Kelly Clarkson Show*¹⁸ – made it possible for Farmacy Marketplace and Farmacy Mobile to get up and running.

While fundraising was crucial during the start-up phase to cover renovations and equipment, the store is now largely able to sustain itself through sales. The bulk of its revenue is used to purchase products (65%), followed by labor expenses (15%), utilities (10%), and miscellaneous items like insurance and general maintenance (10%). As of 2024, these ongoing costs have been maintained by store revenue, while big-ticket items, like a recent upgrade to their Point of Sale System, have been supported by grants.



While In Her Shoes views its various programs as interconnected, they remain fiscally separate. For instance, all revenue from Farmacy Marketplace goes back into Farmacy Marketplace – it does not subsidize its Farm Business Enhancement Program.

FARMACY MARKETPLACE KEY FUNDING SOURCES (2022-2024)			
DATE	FUNDING TYPE	USE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT
2022	USDA NIFA and 2501 Program Grants	Mechanical upgrades and equipment	\$78,000
2022	Local Bank Loan	Building renovations and equipment	\$30,000
2022	UNFI Foundation Grant	Grocery operations	\$10,000
2023	The Kelly Clarkson Show Grant	Grocery operations	\$5,000
2023	Liberated Capital Grant	Equipment, partnership capacity building, and new market development activities	\$50,000
2024	American Heart Association Grant	Farmacy Mobile equipment and operations	\$125,000 (spread over two years)
2024	Local Food Promotion Program Grant, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service	Farmacy Mobile equipment and operations	\$307,243 (spread over three years)

EQUIPMENT, TECHNOLOGY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Using its initial Point of Sale (POS) System, Farmacy Marketplace was unable to track how much local product was sold at the store. In 2024, the store transitioned to the Birmingham Toledo* POS system, which has been programmed to track local vs. non-local sales and customer data. Farmacy Mobile uses the same system. It also allows Farmacy Marketplace to participate in the Double Up Food Bucks program, which incentivizes EBT recipients to purchase fresh produce.

***Note:** Brand names appearing in this publication are for product identification purposes only. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied, of similar products not mentioned.

FARMACY MARKETPLACE SPACE BREAKDOWN

USE OF SPACE	SQUARE FEET**
Dry storage	1,500
Refrigerated storage	250
Frozen storage	200
Customer-facing retail	3,000
Bathrooms	160
Office	1200

****Note:** There may be overlapping functions for the same square footage.

FARMACY MARKETPLACE EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

VEHICLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile market vehicle
COOLERS AND FREEZERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk-in storage cooler • Walk-in storage freezer • Reach-in coolers and freezers
PROCESSING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metal tables and sinks for food sorting and preparation • Separate washing and sanitizing stations for food and workers • Cutting and chopping equipment • Wrapping machines • Sealers • Bulk boxes • Certified weigh scales
SHELVING, DISPLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open face vegetable display cases • Deli and pastry display cases • Open face meat display cases • Retail shelving and display tables • Shelf Labels
TECHNOLOGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computers and monitors • Credit card processing machines • Weigh scales • Software subscriptions • Birmingham Toledo POS system*

***Note:** Brand names appearing in this publication are for product identification purposes only. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied, of similar products not mentioned.

PRODUCT OFFERINGS

Farmacy Marketplace offers the full range of products one would expect to find in a conventional grocery store. The store would not be able to sustain itself with just the produce and meat it sources locally, so it also carries other grocery staples including dairy, dry goods, frozen items, beverages, health and beauty products, and other household items. Non-local conventional products are sourced from their national distributor, UNFI, and a regional meat distributor, Scarianos. Local products are sourced from farmers within a 150-mile radius of Webb. Currently, roughly 12% of Farmacy Marketplace’s produce sales are locally sourced; their goal is for at least 25% of store offerings to be locally sourced.

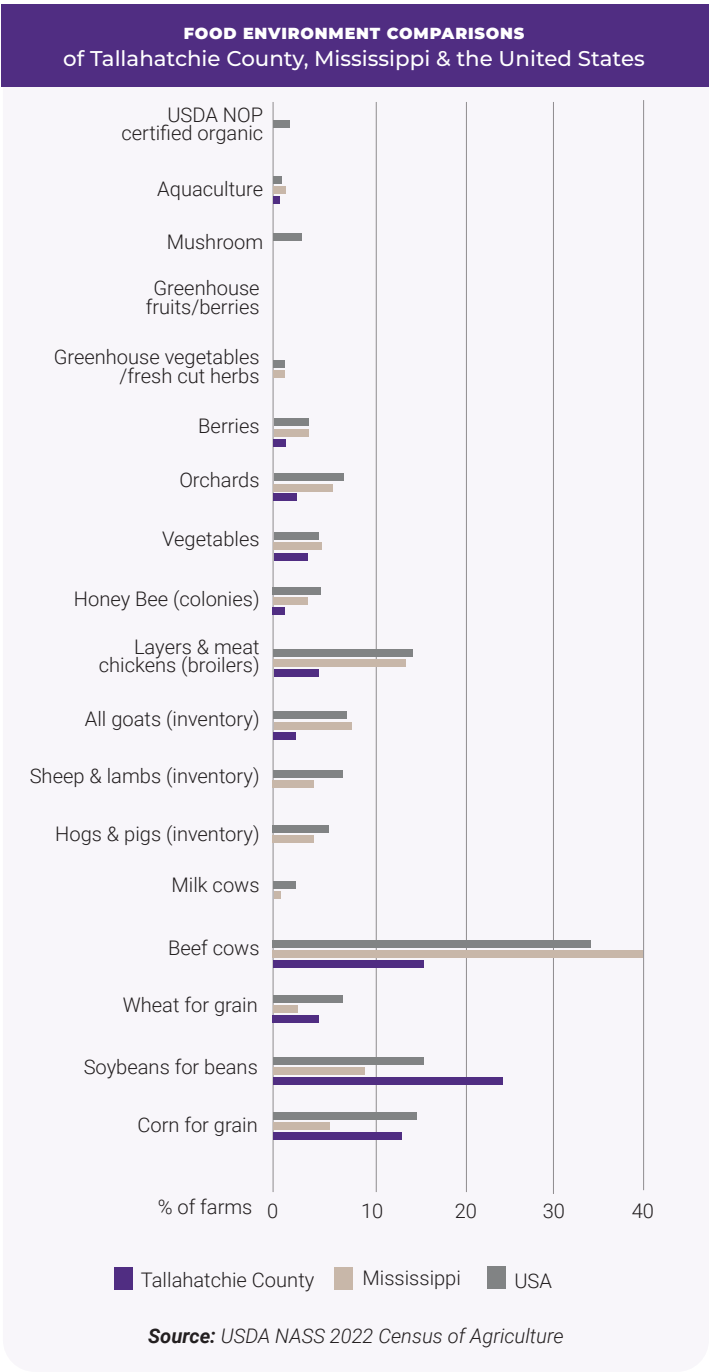
Farmacy Marketplace has been able to differentiate itself by providing fresh meat and produce, which the dollar store in town does not offer. In terms of fresh food offerings, meat is in highest demand. Popular vegetables include tomatoes, onions, bell peppers, corn, squash, and okra. To entice more people to buy vegetables, Farmacy Marketplace tries to keep these prices low.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Farmers are core constituents of In Her Shoes, and the organization has been able to establish and solidify relationships with farmers through the Farm Business Enhancement Program. As the training program progresses, the organization hopes that more and more farmers will be able to sell larger volumes to Farmacy Marketplace on a consistent basis.

Webb community members played an essential role in establishing Farmacy Marketplace. Local residents first brought the idea of opening a grocery store to the organization’s attention and then volunteered to support building renovations. To this day, Webb residents volunteer at the store by helping with general upkeep.

Numerous local, regional, and national partners have supported In Her Shoes. For example, a local organization based in the neighboring town, But God Ministries, manages a farmer apprenticeship program that teaches young people how to grow



food. That food is sometimes sold to Farmacy Marketplace. In addition, academic partners provide trainings in the Farm Business Enhancement Program, including the University of Georgia, Mississippi State University, and Alcorn State University. Partnership for a Healthy America, a national organization with an interest in improving food access, has provided In Her Shoes with valuable data and marketing assistance. These are just a few examples of ongoing partnerships that have contributed to the organization’s success.

CONCLUSION

Despite Farmacy Marketplace only entering its third year in operation, In Her Shoes is working to rapidly expand local produce offerings, programs, and partnerships to reduce food insecurity and help more local producers market their products. Given that the Mississippi Delta is among the least healthy regions in the United States, there is an opportunity for the Farmacy Marketplace model to spread throughout the

region to connect small-scale producers with brick-and-mortar and mobile grocery outlets. In addition, ongoing training and technical assistance through the Farm Business Enhancement Program helps build the know-how and capacity of local farmers so that they can consistently supply these markets. can consistently supply these markets.



ABOUT THE PROJECT

PROJECT OVERVIEW

This case study is part of a larger research project that highlights innovative models for increasing access to local foods in independent and locally owned grocery stores. Through in-depth explorations of businesses and organizations that are leading the way, we sought to answer the following research question: What lessons can be learned from innovative local sourcing models that could help locally owned, independent, and rural groceries become better integrated into local and regional supply chains? To read other innovative local sourcing case studies in this project, visit www.ruralgrocery.org.

PROJECT TEAM

This research project was carried out through a Cooperative Agreement between the Rural Grocery Initiative at Kansas State University and USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. Funding was provided through USDA Cooperative Agreement No. 23-TMLRF-KS-0021. The Rural Grocery Initiative aims to sustain locally owned rural grocery stores to enhance community vitality and improve access to healthy foods. It does so by identifying, developing, and sharing resources that support grocers and rural communities. The Agricultural Marketing Service administers programs that create domestic and international marketing opportunities for U.S. producers of food, fiber, and specialty crops. It also provides the agriculture industry with valuable services to ensure the quality and availability of wholesome food for consumers across the country and around the world.

METHODOLOGY

This research project was broken into four phases:

PHASE ONE –

In Phase 1, the project team developed a Project Advisory Committee to confirm project goals. The Project Advisory Committee was made up of key stakeholders who convened virtually four times over the course of the project to provide feedback and direction.

PHASE TWO –

In Phase 2, the project team solicited examples of innovative local sourcing models from across the country. As examples were received, the project team conducted preliminary research using secondary sources and saved this data in a catalog. This preliminary research allowed the research team to categorize models and determine which five examples to interview.

PHASE THREE –

In Phase 3, the project team conducted interviews with two to four stakeholders (e.g. grocers, producers, distributors, community organizations, etc.) from each of the five distinct local sourcing models selected.

PHASE FOUR –

In Phase 4, the team drafted in-depth case studies about each model and worked with a graphic designer to develop visuals. These resources were then promoted to partners and stakeholders.

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