

# Executive Summary CitySprouts Business Plan (2019 - 2021)

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## **Mission and Vision**

The CitySprouts mission is to cultivate wonder for all children with hands-on learning through urban gardening. Our model is based on the schoolyard learning garden to engage children in deep and authentic learning through the natural world where they live, learn and play. Our aim is that all children, regardless of their background, their previous experience or their learning abilities, are given intellectually challenging opportunities to explore science, technology engineering, and math (STEM) through the garden. CitySprouts is recognized for providing valuable benefits to the communities it serves through unique and impactful programming for children and youth, especially vulnerable populations.

With over 18 years in design, development and local expansion, the CitySprouts model is both innovative and unique for accessible and effective garden-based science education in public schools. CitySprouts has developed a strong program with committed staff and board leadership. Programs are mission-driven, effective, and implemented with resourcefulness. As CitySprouts approaches its 20 year mark, the organization's leadership is launching an effort to magnify and deepen the organization's impact beyond the current program design and audience, and assume a higher profile locally, regionally, and nationally. The board of directors have identified the following strategies to successfully meet this challenge:

*Diversify the organization's partnerships* to build a strong base for sustaining program impact and open doors for more meaningful engagement

*Develop new program models* to increase the impact of hands-on science learning through the garden and increase access to the most vulnerable children CitySprouts programs serve

*Amplify CitySprouts' impact* as a local and regional leader in informal STEM education and leverage the organization's resources to increase its national profile

*Activate Alumni* by creating an alumni network and beginning to capture longitudinal impacts of participation

## **Program Impact through Strategic School Partnerships**

Operating on public school grounds and working closely with school staff, CitySprouts' two programs are designed to inspire and deepen children's interests in STEM subjects; build a foundation for healthy social emotional skills; and provide tools to make healthy food choices for life. CitySprouts stands out from its peers in its unique food systems approach to both STEM and environmental education, attracting many youth who do not perceive that science is relevant to their lives and often would not otherwise participate in STEM activities. Many of the youth that CitySprouts serves have not had any meaningful environmental activities; a significant number have not previously been to a farm, worked on an outdoor project such as a garden or been encouraged to reflect on environmental impact.

CitySprouts' School Partnership Program documents significant changes in children's learning and health, including applying science skills in real-world situations; enhanced social-emotional skills,

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and increased food systems knowledge. Because of CitySprouts, teachers' are more confident in utilizing school gardens as a basis for teaching standards-based inquiry science and more families understand the importance of inquiry-based science education for their children.

*"Families love our garden. It is a strong selling point with prospective families and a great community builder. It has also brought our staff together through our shared commitment to an asset that contributes to who we are as a school."* Principal, Boston Public Schools

Youth participating in CitySprouts Middle School Program enter their teen years more confident about science and armed with appropriate workforce skills. Their social emotional skills are enhanced, and they are thinking more critically and abstractly about their natural environment, food systems and their own neighborhood.

*"CitySprouts is a place for growing, not only plants, but a community. My time at CitySprouts had a great impact on my day to day life. Having the opportunity to learn and cook new recipes from all over the world has been the most wonderful part of my experience!"* Youth in 2018 summer program, age 13

## **CitySprouts' Potential**

CitySprouts levels the learning field for children, addressing the opportunity gap that makes it so much harder for children growing up in economically stressed neighborhoods to end up with the job and health prospects of their more well-resourced peers. The STEM opportunity gap begins early and gets increasingly difficult to close,<sup>1</sup> especially for children of color who are not encouraged to see themselves as scientists or see science principles reflected in their lives. While schools play an important and essential role in imparting STEM knowledge, they cannot do it alone.<sup>2</sup> Children also need rich, authentic out-of-school time learning experiences that ideally tie back into and are valued by schools.<sup>3</sup>

CitySprouts is in a unique position to address this challenge. Utilizing our strategic partnerships with Cambridge and Boston Public School Districts and with the support of several key funders, CitySprouts is preparing to *deepen its impact* through two program initiatives for hands-on science learning through the garden and *increase access to the most vulnerable children* our programs serve.

CitySprouts Early Start with STEM Initiative levels the learning field for young students by ensuring that all children have school time opportunities to achieve a strong STEM foundation by 5th grade when they leave elementary school. CitySprouts Youth Leadership Initiative develops a STEM pipeline through garden-based learning, broadening access for youth historically disenfranchised from a future in environmental fields.

At the same time CitySprouts is *building its base for sustaining and amplifying impact* through expanded staffing and increased visibility. CitySprouts is well-positioned to magnify its role as a

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<sup>1</sup> Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeier and Maczuga, 2016

<sup>2</sup> Harvard Family Research Project, 2010

<sup>3</sup> Bevan & Michalchik, 2013; Falk et al., 2016

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local and regional leader in informal STEM education. Our successful model highlights the effectiveness of STEM education for students before high school age and has proven to be a valued resource to public school teachers. The organization has proven to be resourceful under the leadership of its founding director, successfully building its financial assets with minimal fundraising staff. It is time for CitySprouts to galvanize new support as well as rally its champions to realize its vision and potential.

Based upon established plans and new board approved organization and program goals, the following table highlights CitySprouts' 3-year projected budget (FY2019 -FY 2021). Budget projections are driven by and reflect the organization and program plans described in the organization's 3-year business plan.

Revenue	FY 2019	FY2020	FY 2021
Corporate & Public Donations	\$108,000	\$125,000	\$145,000
Grants	\$362,500	\$430,000	\$500,000
Individuals	\$195,000	\$245,000	\$300,000
Boston Public Schools	\$72,000	\$80,000	\$96,000
Cambridge Public Schools	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$110,000
Other	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000

<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$862,500</b>	<b>\$1,005,000</b>	
<b>\$1,176,000</b>			

### Expenses

Total Employees	\$646,716	\$ 692,245	\$898,978
Total Contractual	\$60,500	\$ 99,000	\$90,000
Total Program	\$54,400	\$57,995	\$61,855
Total Fundraising	\$24,500	\$27,575	\$27,652
Total General & Overhead Expenses	\$74,255	\$91,645	\$96,685

<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$860,371</b>	<b>\$ 968,460</b>	<b>\$1,175,170</b>
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