



Pacific Northwest Region Partnership Supports Garden & Business Skills Development



Shawn Gross | Pacific NW Regional Office Portland, OR

“By expanding fresh and healthy food access in underserved communities, you are holistically **changing the outcomes** and behaviors these communities are subject to. Whether that is tackling food deserts due to poor community planning or educating individuals on meal prep, alleviating hunger is a great **first step in a social movement**,” explains Shawn, an in-store and local Marketing Specialist. He applied for a Community First Grant because he believes that every **great social change** comes from within a **network of community actions**. Through the partnership between the regional office, local stores and Mercy Corp, Shawn hopes Whole Foods Market can play a part in increasing the public discourse around women’s issues and ultimately, help Portland become a **beacon of change**.

Mercy Corps mercycorpsnw.org

Mercy Corps aims to build thriving communities by providing individuals with **small business education** and **financing** while **advocating** for equitable opportunities. They work with those who have been historically marginalized, including those incarcerated. Through two core programs, Mercy Corps strives to help participants make a successful **transition to life outside of prison**. Participants of their **gardening program** gain practical skills and develop a work ethic that will prove favorable in obtaining employment. Their 32-week accredited LIFE (Lifelong Information for Entrepreneurs) program provides **valuable life skills**, as well as business planning and training designed to increase participants potential for self-employment, resilience and financial stability upon release. Whole Cities Foundation is proud to support Mercy Corps as they **empower future microentrepreneurs**.



Whole Foods Market Team Members can nominate a local nonprofit increasing access to fresh, healthy food or nutrition education for a \$5,000 grant.

WholeCitiesFoundation.org