

Gaining Ground

FOUNDED: 1990

CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET: \$1,425,000

CONTACT: Jennifer Johnson, *Executive Director*

☎ 978.610.6086

✉ jennifer@gainingground.org

🌐 www.gainingground.org



More people than ever in Massachusetts say they do not have enough food to eat, according to the latest [MA Food Access Report](#) from the Greater Boston Food Bank and Mass General Brigham. 40% of survey respondents said they are food insecure — that is twice as many people as in 2019. The rise in food insecurity comes as the cost-of-living increases and the federal government makes cuts that affect benefits, such as food stamps.

Gaining Ground (GG), a nonprofit organic farm in Concord, MA, directly addresses this crisis by donating 100% of the produce it grows to a network of nonprofit partners in 41 cities and towns across Eastern Massachusetts including Boston, Chelsea, and Lowell. In 36 years, GG has never sold a single fruit or vegetable. Some of the partner organizations use the produce to make healthy and delicious meals for their clients. Others distribute the produce they receive from GG directly to families living in their community.

Gaining Ground is committed to modeling a different kind of food system using regenerative and climate friendly practices, including no-till farming. In 2025, GG donated over 500,000 servings of healthy, delicious, culturally responsive food to underserved communities.

Two-Year Goals

- Donate 200K more servings of organic produce to underserved communities across Greater Boston
- Increase the number of people served from 10K to 13K
- Build the Farmers Apprenticeship Program
- Expand impact by increasing the number of servings of food donated in the winter months

Investment Opportunity

Gaining Ground seeks a \$3,650,000 investment over two years to reduce food insecurity in under-resourced communities. To achieve this, GG will expand its winter growing program to increase produce distribution to partners during colder months, expand farming operations to additional growing fields, and scale its farming education program to train more farmers in community-centered, climate-friendly agriculture.

Ways to Invest

- \$100,000: Expand footprint of farming operations
- \$75,000: Hire an additional year-round farmer
- \$25,000: Support winter growing
- \$10,000: Farmer apprenticeship training

Gaining Ground's Model



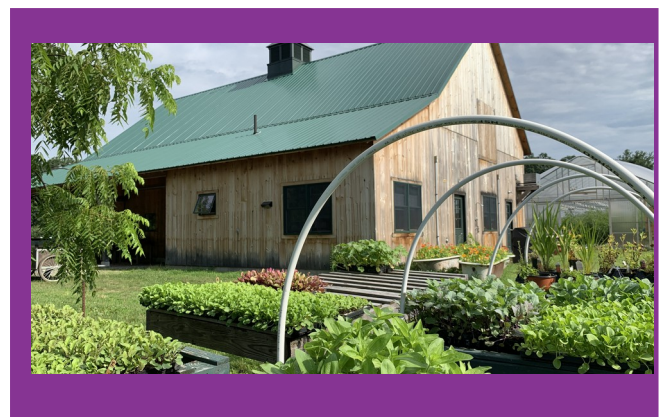
Rooted In Concord

When Gaining Ground started growing vegetables in Concord 36 years ago, it was run entirely by volunteers.

In order to meet the growing demand, GG made the strategic decision to professionalize its farming operations.

GG now employs 5 year-round farmers and 5 seasonal farmers and apprentices. Gaining Ground is committed to elevating the farming profession. Food security depends on skilled farmers, yet Massachusetts agricultural workers are excluded from basic wage protections and often earn far below the cost of living. Many people are shocked to learn that agricultural employees in MA are only guaranteed a minimum wage of \$8/hour, compared to the \$15/hour guaranteed to most other workers. Gaining Ground is committed to paying industry-leading wages to its farmers. By investing in fair compensation and professionalizing farm work, GG supports a sustainable agricultural workforce essential to addressing long-term food insecurity.

As a responsible steward of the land, Gaining Ground uses regenerative no-till farming practices and annually documents its management and land improvements for the Natural Resources Commission. Conventional farming often depletes soil, relies on chemicals, and undermines long-term productivity. GG's no-till, biodiversity-rich practices restore soil health, improve resilience to climate variability, and ensure consistent harvests in both wet and dry years. This approach sustains the land for future generations while feeding more neighbors today.



Building Relationships

Rather than creating its own food distribution sites, GG currently works with eighteen partners including Bedford Community Table and Food Pantry, Bridge Boston Charter School, and Eastie Farm.* These organizations know their communities best and help shape GG crop plans, ensuring cultural relevance and responsiveness to need. GG also creates opportunities for their partners to visit or volunteer at the farm, offering transportation subsidies to reduce barriers to access. This collaborative model strengthens relationships and amplifies collective impact.

Currently, there is a waiting list of 20 organizations which would like to partner with Gaining Ground. Additionally, many of GG’s current partners would like to receive more servings of produce.

GG also hosts approximately 3,500 volunteers every year who work and learn alongside our farm team. Volunteers of all ages and abilities learn about the importance of climate-friendly, local agriculture, while also learning about the pervasiveness of food insecurity in Eastern MA.

*Additional 15 partners are listed to the right

“Our guests can truly taste the difference—there’s nothing quite like the freshness of just-harvested ingredients, and it shows in every bite.”

— Inna Khitrick, Executive Chef, Women’s Lunch Place

Leadership & Governance

Since 2020, Jennifer Johnson has served as Gaining Ground’s Executive Director; she is passionate about equitable access to healthy food and the healing power of nature. Jennifer leads a talented year-round staff of eight which grows to thirteen during the high season. Under Jennifer’s leadership, Gaining Ground’s budget tripled from \$500,000 to \$1,600,000 and increased both the number of program partners and servings of produce donated.

Gaining Ground’s Board of Directors is currently composed of 13 individuals who are all dedicated to the mission of the organization. Many of the board members started as volunteers on the farm. The board is currently engaged in a strategic planning process and is looking forward to increasing Gaining Ground’s impact.

Financial Stability

Gaining Ground is grateful to the individuals, foundations and corporations that support them financially so that they can continue to donate 100% of the produce they grow.

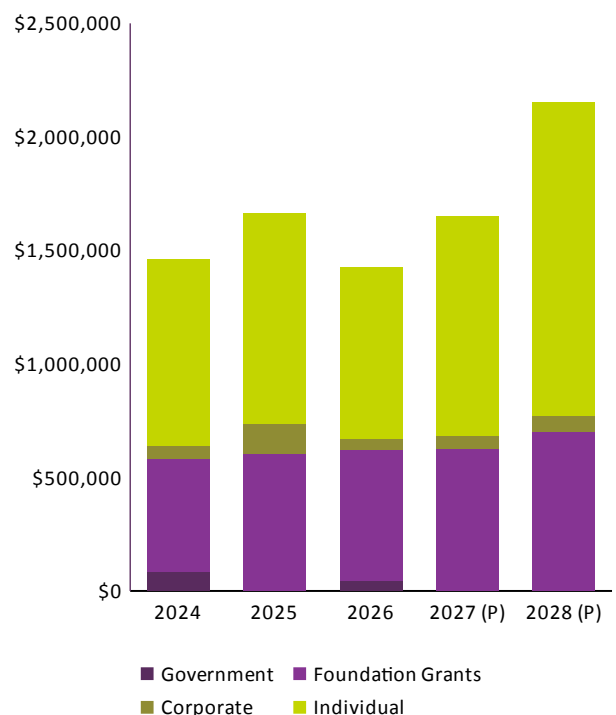
KEY INVESTORS

- Adobe Foundation
- The Boston Foundation
- The Cabot Family Charitable Trust
- Community Foundation for MetroWest
- Concord Carlisle Foundation
- Cummings Foundation
- Greater Lowell Community Foundation
- The Ludcke Foundation
- The Sudbury Foundation
- Theodore Edson Parker Foundation

KEY PARTNERS

- Community Teamwork
- Daniel’s Table
- East Boston Community Soup Kitchen
- Harvard Square Churches Meal Program
- Healthy Waltham
- House of Hope Lowell
- La Colaborativa
- Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry
- Lowell Transitional Living Center
- Open Table
- Sudbury Community Food Pantry
- UTEC
- Westford Council on Aging
- Women’s Lunch Place

Revenue by Source





Success Story

JUAN CAMILO SAAVEDRA, LA COLABORATIVA, DIRECTOR OF FOOD AND NUTRITION

Juan Camilo Saavedra works closely with Gaining Ground to bring fresh produce to the immigrant communities that La Colaborativa serves in Greater Boston.

"For low-income communities who are struggling to put food on the table, having vegetables and fruits—especially now, with the prices and the tariffs—is becoming a luxury."

Without access to fresh produce, families turn to ultra-processed options that harm their health. Food insecurity, he adds, "forces people to make decisions between putting food on the table or paying for rent or medicine or education."

What Juan Camilo values most is Gaining Ground's responsiveness. "It goes to show how they are able to adapt and make their partners really feel heard and understood"—a quality reflected in Gaining Ground's commitment to growing culturally relevant crops like cilantro, chilis, jalapeños, and squash, drawing families to La Colaborativa from as far as New Hampshire.

Program Performance and Organizational Health

Gaining Ground is committed to measured growth that is sustainable. Below are the key measures that GG will track to demonstrate its commitment to addressing food insecurity locally and investing in sustainable agricultural practices.

	FY 2026	FY 2027 (P)	FY 2028 (P)
Program Performance			
Servings of produce donated	650,000	700,000	850,000
People served	10,000	11,000	13,000
Farmer apprentices	3	5	7
Total acres of farmable land	6	8	10
Organizational Health/Capacity-Building			
Staff: Full-time year-round	8	11	13
Board members	13	15	17
Total Revenue	\$1,425,000	\$1,650,000	\$2,150,000

Social Impact

In addition to donating 100% of produce to under-resourced communities, GG is committed to educating the larger community on local food insecurity and sustainable organic farming practices. GG does this through its volunteer program where community members work side by side with its professional farming staff to plant, weed, harvest, and deliver food. In 2025, Gaining Ground hosted 3,825 volunteers from 89 cities and towns. They also invited community partners to the farm in order to build community and connection.

Indicator	Current Numbers	2028
% of partners who report that GG is meeting their fresh produce needs	33%	50%
% of partners who receive produce in the winter	50%	85%
% of volunteers who report they are more informed on local hunger	61%	80%
% of volunteers who report they are sharing what they learned about food insecurity and local agriculture	66%	85%