• In 2011, Growing Power Founder Will Allen pitched an idea to former UW-Milwaukee Chancellor Mike Lovell to establish a partnership that fosters academic/community/civic collaborations focused on advancing urban agriculture and nutrition.

• UW-Milwaukee and Growing Power established a collaboration to create a visible and vibrant institute. This partnership expanded to include civic and community partners and academic entities.

• These entities formed a temporary steering committee under a Memo of Understanding and began the work of planning and establishing IUAN. A formal agreement for Organizational Structure and Operational Principles is being researched and drafted.

• In order to operationalize a community-initiated research agenda, IUAN established the Community Collaborative Council (CCC) and the Academic Council. The CCC includes members of the Milwaukee Food Council and other community leaders, and plays a key role in determining IUAN’s research agenda, as well as IUAN’s Organizational Structure and Operational Principles.

• IUAN has been awarded funding from the Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program (HWPP) for several pilot projects (see inside), and from the Growth Agenda for Wisconsin Grant Program (GAWGP) to begin building the infrastructure necessary to implement IUAN.
Milwaukee is poised to become a national leader in urban agriculture and sustainable food system technology. Today, we are situated with an unusual abundance of natural freshwater resources, political support, community activism and investment, and academic research and practice. Add to those assets a budding enthusiasm from the corporate sector, and we are at the apex of opportunity to innovate technology and systems that can significantly increase access to healthy food—while creating jobs—in the growing urban market.

The Institute for Urban Agriculture & Nutrition is a cooperative* of universities, community organizations, businesses, and public agencies advancing the principles and practices of sustainable urban agriculture, healthy nutrition practices, and economic development through innovative collaboration.

* A cooperative is a business that is owned and controlled by its members. The cooperative is operated to benefit its members, not to maximize profits for outside investors.

The Good Food Circle is the foundation of our community projects. IUAN views the food system as a circle with these interrelated elements:

**Grow**

Whether food is grown in raised beds, rooftops, garden plots, outdoors, or inside, access to healthy compost, water, sunlight, and seedstock is the foundation for growing food in the city.

**Move**

Moving food includes everything from harvesting, cleaning, storing, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, retailing, and more.

**Eat**

Increasing the demand for good food is integral to the Good Food Circle. We can improve the quality of urban life through healthy nutrition education and practices.

**Return**

Making soil from the nutrient-rich food waste produced during the growing, moving and eating steps of the food cycle closes the Good Food Circle. And returning means not only composting food waste, but also returning resources to the community.

Rice is an uncommon crop in Milwaukee. Yet, Alice’s Garden and Marquette University have teamed up to collaborate on a mutually beneficial project growing cold-resistant rice in this community garden. The demonstration rice garden has been planted using culturally significant rice lines from Africa, and could prove to be an advantageous dietary staple for people living in the city.

IUAN is providing funding to Growing Power to train and give technical assistance to entrepreneurs interested in starting sustainable for-profit businesses to move good food to the table and create green jobs.

To increase demand for healthy foods, IUAN has teamed up with 16th Street Community Health Center and CORE/El Centro to teach gardening to kids at their school. This project includes working with kids’ parents using a promotore model that reinforces the benefits of providing good food for the entire family.

Elyve Organic Compost and Harambee Neighborhood Compost close the food system loop and recycle organic waste into new, nutrient-rich soil. Elyve Organic Compost makes and sells compost, while teaching kids green job skills. Victory Garden Initiative runs the Harambee Neighborhood Compost, which provides healthy composted soil—free of lead and other contaminants—to urban gardeners.