

Chicago Urban Farm Solutions

THE FARM

Deshawn leads a team of diverse vegetable growers at Chicago Urban Farm Solutions with a mission to produce high-quality vegetables and businesses centered on community, health, and accessibility. They have a combined production experience of over 10 years. Currently collaboratively farming at Legends Farm as participants in the Chicago Botanic Garden Windy City Harvest Incubator program; at the Star Farm incubator site; and on 5 acres of leased land in Pembroke, the team will formally join forces through the Working Farms Fund and enter into a lease agreement for the 20-acre Jongsma Farm. Deshawn currently sells to local food pantries; a prescription produce program with a health center & to local wholesalers.

On behalf of the farmers, The Conservation Fund has purchased 20 acres of farmland, which also includes a large steel utility building, storage garages, and a single-family home. The utility structure will be converted to a wash and pack facility and plans call for construction of a new greenhouse. Located in unincorporated South Cook County near Sauk Village, this farm is strategically located close to Chicago markets and wholesale buyers.

The farm team has immediate access to the farm under a flexible lease. They will meet key financial benchmarks and make infrastructure investments identified in their business plans—putting them in a position to purchase the farm from The Conservation Fund within 3 years after a farmland conservation easement is secured. Using a Buy-Support-Protect-Sell model, the [Working Farms Fund](#) is providing Chicago Urban Farm Solutions with immediate access to farmland, and a pathway to affordable farmland ownership.

BY THE NUMBERS

 8,160 cases fresh food produced by year 2

 20 acres permanently protected farmland

 5x Increased revenue projected in 4 years

PROPERTY

20 acres now in specialty crops



Sauk Village, Illinois
(30 miles to Chicago Loop)

FARMER

Deshawn Willingham



FARMER VISION

Chicago Urban Farm Solutions is dedicated to providing healthy, fresh, organically grown produce in Chicagoland.