

Ashley B. Gripper, PhD, MPH

Drexel University Dornsife School of Public Health
Department of Community Health and Prevention
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EDUCATION

Harvard University, T.H. Chan School Public Health Boston, MA
Ph.D., Population Health Sciences, Concentration in Environmental Epidemiology

Dissertation: We Don't Farm Because it's Trendy: An Environmental Justice Approach to Understanding the Connections between Urban Agriculture and Health.

Committee: Drs. Gary Adamkiewicz (Chair), Ichiro Kawachi, Rachel Nethery, Monica White

Research interests: environmental health, social epidemiology, structural racism, collective agency, wellbeing, social movements, Black health, agriculture, foodways, built environment, spirituality

Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health New York, NY
MPH in Epidemiology, Certificate in Advanced Epidemiology

Arcadia University Glenside, PA
BA in Sociology

RESEARCH PROJECTS AND SUPPORT

Urban Agriculture and Health Study, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

Role: Principal Investigator

Project Title: We Don't Farm Because it's Trendy: An Environmental Justice Approach to Understanding the Connections between Urban Agriculture and Health.

Description: Black farmers continue to grow to provide healthy food access to their families and communities, exercising collective agency and community resistance. Using spatial regression techniques, focus groups, and structural equation modeling, this study investigates the connections between urban agriculture, mental health, spirituality, and collective agency of Black farmers and gardeners in Philadelphia and in cities across the nation.

Grant: \$12,500

Health Policy Research Scholar, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Role: Principal Investigator

Project Title: Health Policy Research Scholars

Description: Health Policy Research Scholars is a national leadership program for second-year doctoral students in any academic discipline who want to apply their research to help build healthier and more equitable communities.

Grant: \$120,000

Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) (T32), National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Role: Predoctoral Trainee

Principal Investigator: Dr. Francine Laden

Project title: Training Program in Environmental Epidemiology

Description: The Environmental Epidemiology Training Program is funded by the National Institute for Environmental Health, which provides support for pre- and postdoctoral training fellowships. Successful applicants will join a stimulating, interdisciplinary research environment that combines rigorous training in epidemiology and exposure analysis.

Grant: \$147,600

OTHER GRANTS AND AWARDS

Outstanding Recent Alumni Award, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health	2022
Healing Garden Oases Project, William Penn Foundation (\$110k)	2021
Mutual Aid Resource and Capacity Fund, National Black Food and Justice Alliance	2021
Black Womyn's Leadership Fund, RWJF Community Change Leadership Network	2021
Equity Fund, Health Policy Research Scholars	2021
Philadelphia Food Justice Initiative, The Reinvestment Fund	2020
Dissertation Award, RWJF Health Policy Research Scholars	2020
Dissertation Award, Center for Health and Happiness at Harvard University	2020
Bernard Challenor Spirit Prize, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health	2017
Sustainabuild Design Winner, New York Department of Design and Construction	2016
Heilbrunn Scholarship, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health	2016
Mailman School Scholars Fund, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health	2016
Phi Beta Delta Honor Society for International Scholars, Arcadia University	2012
Distinguished Scholars Award, Arcadia University	2008 – 2012

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed

Gripper A, Nethery R, Cowger TL, White M, Kawachi I, Adamkiewicz G (2022). Community Solutions to Food Apartheid: A Spatial Analysis of Community Food-Growing Spaces and Neighborhood Demographics in Philadelphia. *Social Science and Medicine*. doi: doi: 115221. 10.1016/j.socscimed.2022.115221.

Butler B, **Gripper A**, Linos N (2022). Built and Social Environments, Environmental Justice, and Maternal Pregnancy Complications. *Current Obstetrics and Gynecology Reports*.

Szmulewicz A, Wanis K, **Gripper A**, Angriman F, Hawel J, Elnahas A, Alkhamesi N, Schlachta C (2018). Mental health quality of life after bariatric surgery: A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized clinical trials. *Clinical Obesity*.

In Preparation

Gripper A, Sayres J. Practices of Care and Relationship-building: A Qualitative Analysis of Urban Agriculture's Impacts on Agency and Wellbeing in Philadelphia. (Target Journal: Social Science and Medicine).

Jahn J, Duarte C, Gonsalves, G, **Gripper A**, McClure L, Bailey Z. Building a Movement Accountable Research Process: How can epidemiologists partner with activists to produce actionable research? *American Journal of Epidemiology*.

Soil Generation, Interface Studio (Expected June 2022). Growing from the Root: Philadelphia's Urban Agriculture Comprehensive Plan. *Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation*.

Commentary

Gripper A (2020.) We don't farm because it's trendy. Farming is not new to Black people. We farm as resistance, for healing and sovereignty. *Grid Philly Magazine*. (reprint).

Gripper A (2020). We Don't Farm Because It's Trendy: For Black folks, Growing Food Has Long Been a Form of Resistance. *In These Times*. (reprint).

***Gripper A** (2020.) We don't farm because it's trendy: we farm as resistance, for healing and sovereignty. *Environmental Health News*.

*Commentary viewed 900,000 times; highest viewed article for Environmental Health News in 2020.

Reports and Memos

DiStasi C, **Gripper A**, McGhee Paul (2020). Public Meeting #1 Summary. *Philadelphia Urban Agriculture Plan*. Link: <https://sites.google.com/view/phillyagplan>.

Wolfe M, Williamson D, **Gripper A**, Martinez D, Williams P, Encarnacion A (2019). Expanding the definition of the built environmental using an environmental justice framework. *Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Sciences (IAPHS)*.

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

Yin J, **Gripper A**, Tomasso L, Yu S (2021). Incorporating Nature into Built Environment at Different Spatial Scale for Population Health. *Nature and Health*.

Gripper A (2021). Food, Environmental Justice and Health Inequities: Some Lessons from Philadelphia. *Peace and Justice Studies Association Annual Conference*.

Boykin M, **Gripper A**, Hines R, Martinez J (2021). “Addressing structural racism to advance health and racial equity.” *RWJF Change Leadership Programs Summer Virtual Convening*.

Gripper A, Gonsalves G, McClure L, Bailey Z (2021). Building a Movement Accountable Research Process: How can epidemiologists partner with activists to produce actionable research? Symposium organized by Jackie Jahn and Catherine Duarte. *Society for Epidemiologic Research*.

Gripper A (2021). Vision for a return: Black food sovereignty and the post-pandemic city. *Delaware Valley University One Health Lecture*.

Gripper A, Encarnacion A, Martinez D, Williams, Williamson D (2019). Expanding the definition of the built environmental using an environmental justice framework. *Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Sciences (IAPHS)*.

Gripper A (2016). Public Health Implications for Urban Planning and Design: Improving Retail and the Food Environmental for Residents of NYCHA’s Red Hook Houses. Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health

Cheung K, **Gripper A**, Hernandez A (2016). The Highbridge: Maximizing Public Health Impact through Design. *SustainaBuild Design Challenge*, New York Department of Design and Construction.

INVITED TALKS

Gripper A, Dobson L, Allen M, Williams T (2022). Black Farmer Justice. *The Organic Center*.

Gripper A, Hayden-Smith T, Demirtaş A, Mhuireach G (2021). Care by Urban Food Growing. *The Design Museum*.

Warford N, **Gripper A**, Glover H, Holmberg T (2021). Food Sovereignty Panel. *Root Rot: A Climate Action Livestream Benefit*.

Richard A, Galiber S, **Gripper A**, Forsyth P, Gilpin M, Harris D, Douglas K (2021). Nectar, Nurture and You: Philly’s Recipe for Urban Agriculture. *bioPhilly*.

Bolden-Newsome C, Dobson L, **Gripper A** (2021). She Hid Sees in Her Hair: The Power of African American Ancestral Foods. *Brooklyn Botanic Garden* (keynote address).

Riano Q, Chavis D, **Gripper A** (2021). Urban Farming / Common Ground. *Philadelphia Contemporary*.

Gripper A, Dobson L, Marcus A, X P (2021). Black Owned Farms and Gardens: Agriculture as Activism, Community, and Healing. *Michener Art Museum*.

Gripper A, Jordan J, Morningstar S, Guerrero S (2020). Rooted and Ready: Exploring how BIPOC Communities are Cultivating Crisis-Proof Food Systems. *HEAL Food Alliance*.

Gripper A, Reardon T, Desmond T (2020). Food security in the post-pandemic city. *Princeton Mellon Initiative in Architecture, Urbanism, and the Humanities*.

Charger J, **Gripper A**, Baxter K, Hudson AJ (moderator) (2020). Under fire: intersections of climate and conflict. *Harvard Global Studies*.

Gripper A, Martinez D, VanNoy B, Aung M (2020). Prioritizing inclusion in environmental health, food sovereignty, the ecology of Indigenous cultural fire practices, and balancing energy needs with community health. *Collaborative on Health and the Environment*.

Powell W, Gilbert K, Griffith D, **Gripper A** (2019). The Scholar Activist: The Intersection of Research, Policy, and Practice. *Society for the Analysis of African American Public Health Issues* (SAAPHI).

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Johns Hopkins University Coursera Teach-out: Black Agricultural Solutions to Food Apartheid	February 2022
University of California Los Angeles Guest lecturer, Environmental Health Disparities Instructor: Lara Cushing, PhD, MPH	March 2022
University of Chicago Guest lecturer, Social Meaning of Race Instructor: Sireen Irsheid, LCSW, MSW	October 2020
Harvard University Teaching fellow, Human Health and Global Environmental Change Teaching fellow, Society and Health Teaching assistant, Society and Health	Spring 2020 Fall 2019 Summer 2019
Columbia University Teaching assistant, Analysis of Categorical Data Teaching assistant and section instructor, Core Quantitative Foundations	Spring 2017 Fall 2016

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Mann Global Health Data Analyst Project: Alignment of Condom Donors for HIV Preventions	North Carolina 2018
Harvard University T.H. Chan School of Public Health Graduate researcher, PI: Sara Bleich Project: Philadelphia Beverage Tax Study	Boston, MA 2018
Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health Graduate researcher, PI: Gina Lovasi Project: Linking local fast-food outlets with excess weight: a systematic review and meta-analysis	New York, NY 2016-2017

POLICY, ADVOCACY, AND ORGANIZING

Health Policy Research Scholars , Transforming Systems: Vision for an Anti-Racist, Non-carceral Society Conference organizer and moderator	2021
National Black Food and Justice Alliance , Blackacademics Working Group	2020 – Present
Mayor's Office , Philadelphia Food Policy Advisory Council Membership and Governance Committee member	2020 – Present
Philadelphia Parks & Recreation , Urban Agriculture Comprehensive Plan Project team member, data analyst, community engagement specialist	2019 – Present
Harvard University , Environmental Justice Conference organizer	2019 – 2020
Soil Generation , Organizer	2018 – Present
Food Policy and Obesity Prevention (FPOP) , Mailman School of Public Health President	2017

TESTIMONY

Baxter K, **Gripper A (2021)**. Harmful impacts of virtual sheriff sales on food access and urban agriculture. Philadelphia City Council Hearing on moving sheriff sales online.

MEDIA APPEARANCES AND PRESS

“In Praxis” (2022). The Praxis Project with host Blair Franklin.

“[Philadelphia Garden Adventures](#)” (2022). Venture Café with host Marie Nahikian-Seymour.

“[Funding Food Justice](#)” (2021). The Philadelphia Citizen. Article written by Katherine Rapin.

“[Getting Back to the Garden](#)” (2021). WHYY Radio Times with host Marty Moss-Coayne.

“[Why Mount Airy’s Ashley Gripper is teaching Philly residents how to heal as they garden](#)” (2021). The Philadelphia Inquirer. Article written by Cassie Owens.

“[Philly Rising: Honoring a garden's ties to the past ensures Black generations of the future](#)” (2021). KYW News Radio. Article written by Antionette Lee.

“[Info Hub Radio Hour: Earth Day](#)” (2021). Germantown Info Hub with host Maleka Fruean.

“[Farming and food as acts of Black resistance](#)” (2020). WHYY Radio Times with host Marty Moss-Coayne.

COMMUNITY BUILDING AND HEALING WORK

Sankofa Community Farm at Bartram’s Garden

2020 - 2021

Assistant Farmer, Volunteer Coordinator and Market Manager

- Manage and coordinate events, applications, and program evaluation for over 200 volunteers
- Support farm field tasks such as weeding, mulching, seed starting, transplanting, trellising, and harvesting
- Harvest, process, prepare, and sell produce at weekly farm stand and market for dozens of West and Southwest Philadelphia residents

Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative, Philadelphia, PA

2012 – 2015

Food Educator

- Established partnership with Mastery Charter School to plan and coordinate a nutrition festival for 120 elementary school students in grades 4-5
- Created and facilitated cooking demos and food education lessons with 20 high school youth
- Led professional development for high-school aged youth on nutrition and processing trauma
- Coached and counseled African-American, Latinx, West African, and Southeast Asian youth on holistic wellness through creating identifiable goals and accountability standards during group sessions
- Organized, coordinated, and supported several events focused on wellness promotion such as harvest festivals, fundraisers, and parent engagement dinners with up to 200 participants
- Researched, supported, and tracked applications to over \$2 million worth of grants

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)

Philadelphia Food Policy Advisory Council, Mayor’s Office

FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard University

Agents of Change in Environmental Health

Community Advisory Board, Asian Arts Initiative

Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group