



**brighter**bites






Brighter Bites is a non-profit that delivers fresh fruits and vegetables directly into families' hands, while teaching them how to use and choose a different kind of fast food.

We make it fun. We make it free.  
And we make it happen via a simple, replicable formula. *More on that later.*



Since 2012 **brighter**bites has provided  
**8.2million** pounds of produce  
*to more than 20,000 families at*  
**over 90 sites\***  
across **HOUSTON, DALLAS, and AUSTIN**



## How it all started...

For several years, Lisa Helfman and her family took part in a weekly **fruit and vegetable co-op**, and she watched her children's eating habits dramatically transform. So much so that her little boy turned down a piece of cake at a birthday party, asking instead for the **blueberries** he'd grown fond of eating at home.

She thought she may be on to something and wondered if she could replicate the same **behavior change** that she saw in her young son in **underserved neighborhoods** where access to fresh foods is low and childhood obesity rates are high.

# The Need

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- **Three out of ten children** in the U.S. are **overweight or obese**, with higher rates among low-income, minority populations.
- This generation of children will have an average **5 years' lower life expectancy** as compared to their own parents due to obesity.
- **Annual healthcare costs** for one obese child with Medicaid is about **\$6700**.
- Many Americans live in **food deserts**, or areas with limited access to fresh foods.
- National data indicates that **less than half of children eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables** daily.
- **Prevention is the key.** Eating a diet high in fruits and vegetables can prevent obesity.
- To sustain lifelong healthy eating behaviors, we need to **increase access to healthy food AND food literacy** among populations at highest risk for obesity.

... the time for action is now



# The Big Idea

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Produce  
Distribution



Nutrition  
Education



Fun Food  
Experience

*Fill the Plate*



Bring fresh produce to where  
kids already are.

*Educate*



Teach kids and families healthy  
ways to use the food.

*Make it Great*



Create a fun food experience  
for everyone involved.

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—————→ *Measure Outcomes to Determine Impact* ←————

In the beginning...

# one class in one school

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Mike Feinberg, founder of KIPP, pledged one class in a Houston school to Brighter Bites that had a 93% reduced/free lunch program population.



**KIPP:** Explore

Houston, TX (2012)

one grade

150 kids

No Produce



No Curriculum



No Problem



# Introducing: The Brain Trust


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## Leveraging strengths




- HFB distributes over 30M lbs of produce each year
- Community engagement, sourcing, warehousing, transportation
- Leading a conversation on 'feeding with impact'

## Building capacity

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- Brian Greene, President of the Houston Food Bank, offers HFB as the food distributor
  - Brighter Bites uses approximately 10% of HFBs total produce for distributions



- Dr. Shreela Sharma, Epidemiologist focused on childhood obesity at the UT School of Public Health
- Community Nutrition Program research and evaluation
- CATCH Nutrition Education curriculum

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- Leads team for program development, evaluation and building the evidence base for behavior change
  - Maintains focus on influencing school + home food environment to improve health outcomes
  - Monitors process and outcome evaluation measures; consistently assesses program fidelity and impact

# From Source to School to Home here's how we do it...

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Produce  
Distribution



Nutrition  
Education



Fun Food  
Experience

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1. Engage  
Communities



2. Select  
Variety



3. Load Up!



4. Bag  
Produce



5. Teach Brighter  
Choices



6. Sample  
& Share



7. Take Home  
the Fun



8. Replicate



## 1. Engage Communities



It all starts with the right relationships. We engage schools, communities, and partners and introduce them to our Brighter Bites model: produce distribution + nutrition education + a fun food experience.



## 2. Select The Week's Variety



Our produce suppliers donate fresh fruits and vegetables to our partnering food banks. Each week, our staff chooses 8 to 12 different types of produce from the huge warehouse coolers, and the food is specially tagged for Brighter Bites.





### 3. Load Up!



Massive pallets teeming with bags and cases of fresh produce for Brighter Bites are loaded by warehouse staff into a large box truck. It is hard work: each truckload can feed hundreds of families.



#### 4. Bag the Produce



Once the truck arrives at the site, it is typically unloaded into a gym or cafeteria. Unified in our bright red t-shirts, Brighter Bites staff and parent volunteers work as an assembly line to unpack and divide the variety of produce into bags.





## 5. Teach Brighter Choices



All educational materials are linked to children's in-class nutrition lessons from CATCH and other evidence-based, coordinated school health programs that we help implement via our specially-trained staff.

Also added into the bags are nutrition handbooks, tip sheets, and recipes that incorporate that week's fresh produce.



## 6. Sample & Share



Let the fun food experience begin! Our team prepares healthy, tasty “brighter bites” for families to sample, using one or more of the produce items being shared that week.

The recipe for that very demo also waits in the bags, ready to be taken home and tried out.



## 7. Take Home the Fun



When all is said and done, each family walks away with a pair of bags that contains 50 to 60 servings of fresh, seasonal produce, plus tips and tools for how to use it.

For one week for a family of four, that's two extra servings per person of fruits and vegetables a day—at no extra cost to our participating families.





## 8. Replicate



This process repeats for 16 weeks during the school year and 8 weeks during the summer. Our scalable co-op model allows us to bring Brighter Bites to more schools each season, creating a culture of health wherever we go.

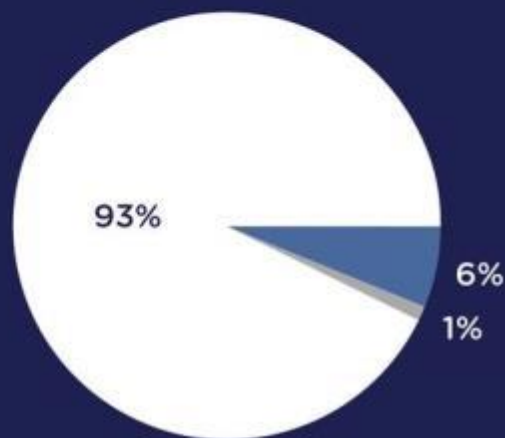
# Impact

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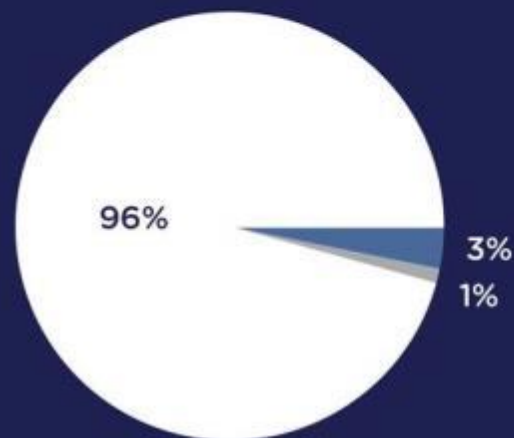
1. **Effectiveness** / Addressing the last mile by actually delivering fresh healthy food to underserved children and their families, while educating them on how to eat healthier and having them consume it.
2. **Family Savings** / Taking advantage of partnering with private corporations and non -profit food banks for distribution in order to provide families a 'risk free' trial to practice cooking and eating healthy foods with their children.
3. **Building Demand, Changing Behavior** / Tracking the efficacy of the program in regards to health, shopping/eating habits, and parent participation in schools, and proving that we're having sustainable impact.

## EFFECTIVENESS

### VEGETABLES



### FRUITS



● Ate All or Most    ● Ate Half    ● Ate Less than Half

(n=4,415 families)

## FALL 2015

### Reported Family Consumption (Houston, Dallas, and Austin)

**93%** of families reported that they ate all or most of the vegetables.

**96%** said they ate all or most of the fruit.





(n=4,415 families)

## FALL 2015

### Average Weekly Savings on Grocery Bill

*(Houston, Dallas, and Austin)*

Weekly Cost per Family: \$0, Weekly Savings per Family: \$34.30



(n=678 families)

### 2014-2015 SCHOOL YEAR

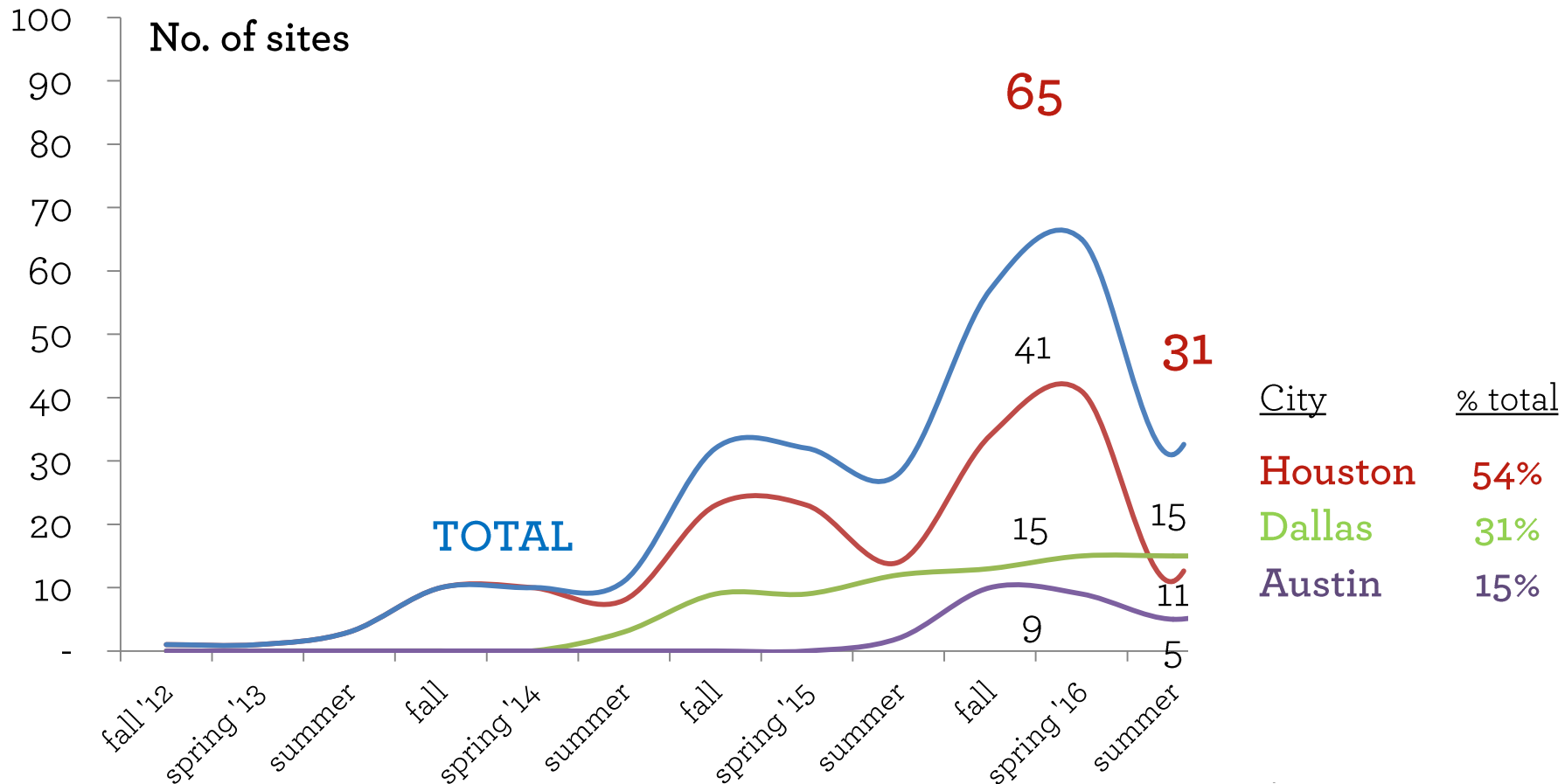
**98%** of parents in Houston reported that their children **ate more fruits and vegetables** while participating in Brighter Bites.

Of those, **74%** said they were able to **maintain that increased level** after the Brighter Bites season ended. *Holy guacamole, these habits stick!*

“Brighter Bites made me cook things I wouldn’t have bought for fear of wasting money if my children didn’t like it.”



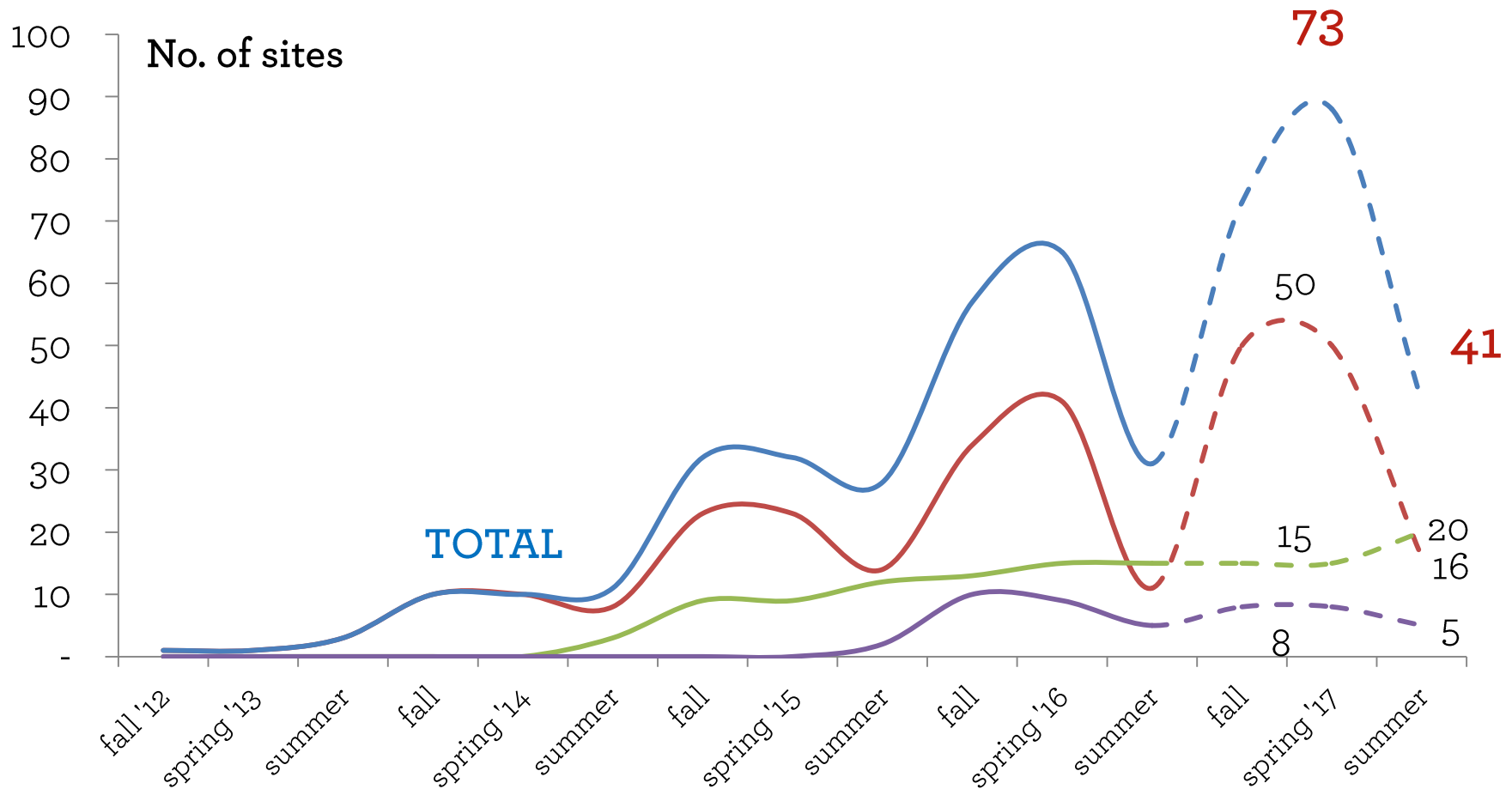
# Expanding our reach



# Measurable Impact

spring/summer 2016	Houston	Dallas	Austin	TOTAL
Sites	52	30	14	96
Families served	6,200	4,480	1,800	12,480
Volunteer hours per site per week (avg.)	16.3	11.1	16.5	14.6
Lbs distributed	1.36M	1.09M	403k	2.86M
- Growth vs. YA	+47%	+12%	-	+50%
BB % FB Produce	7.8%	9.3%	12.3%	8.8%
BB Ops Staff (ft/pt)*	7/8	4/5	3/0	14/13

# Looking ahead





# Brighter Bites difference

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- Very few existing non-profit initiatives that target both **increasing food access** and **food literacy**
- Addressing the **last mile** by delivering fresh healthy food to underserved children, and **educating families** on how to eat healthier
- **Increasing Parental Engagement** in the academic lives of their children
- Strong **research, data and evaluation** platform that asks and answers important questions to move the **scientific dialogue** forward in childhood obesity prevention
- Engaged **founders as advocates** for Brighter Bites
- **Strong partnerships** with public (USDA, TDA, CATCH), private (Sysco, H-E-B), and non-profit (food banks, UTHHealth) sectors
- National attention garnered from USDA/FNS relationship, Partnership for a Healthier America, Produce Marketing Association, Congressional testimony

# Our Partners

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# Our Founders

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**Lisa Helfman, JD**

Founder – Brighter Bites

Director of Real Estate, H-E-B



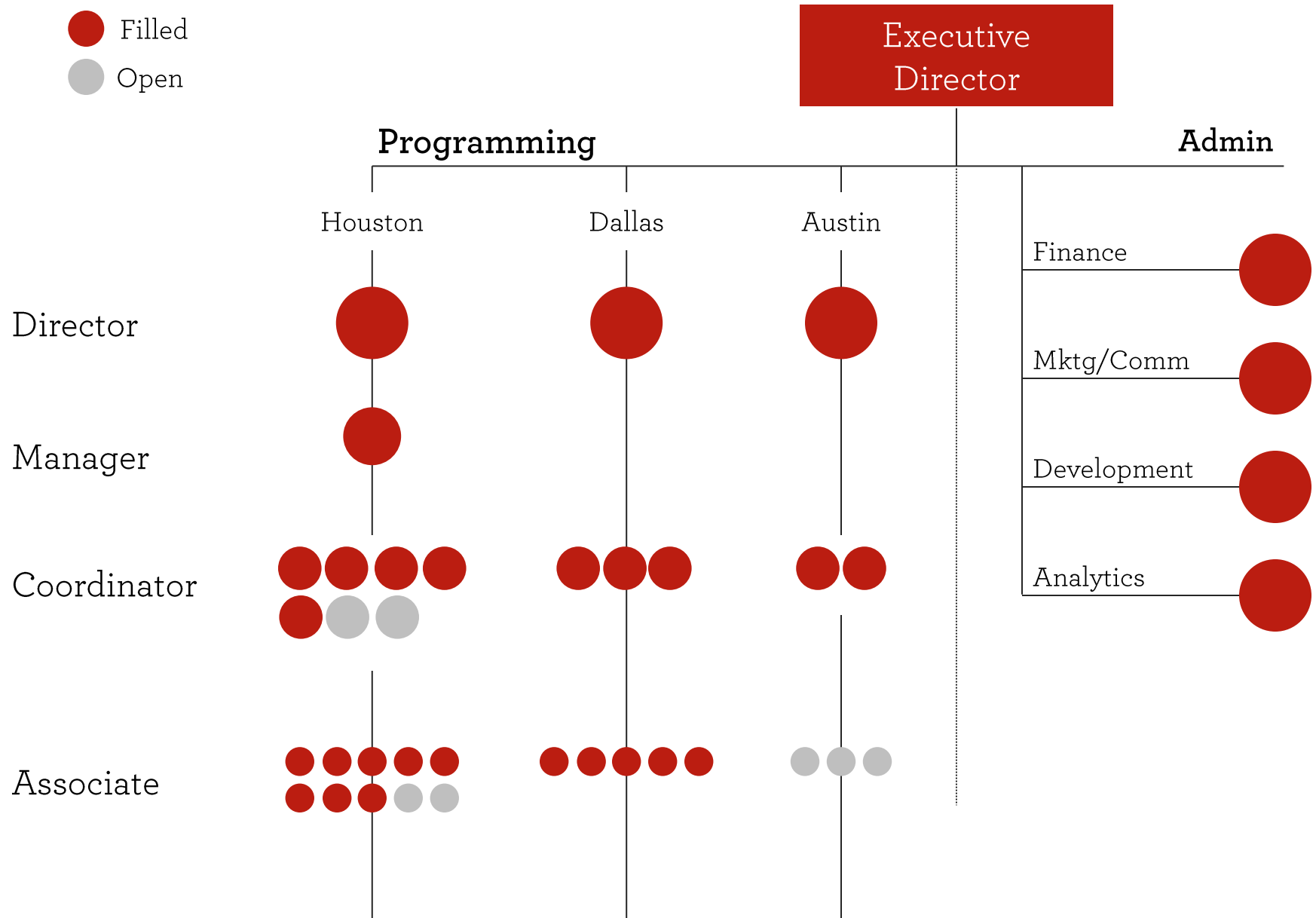
**Shreela V. Sharma, PhD, RD, LD**

Co-Founder – Brighter Bites

Associate Professor of Epidemiology at  
UTHealth School of Public Health

# Our Team

- Filled
- Open



# Our Board

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Rich Dachman	VP, Produce	Sysco
Steven Graubart	CEO	Off-site ED Strategies, MAYA Publishing
Susan Feigin Harris	Attorney	Baker Hostetler
Scott McClelland	President	H-E-B, Houston
Osama Mikhail	Senior Vice President, Strategic Planning	UTHealth
Benjamin Samuels	Co-President	Victory Packaging
Tadd Tellepsen	President	Tellepsen Builders