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Aren't We All Eaters?: Creating an Equitable Food Policy Agenda in Central New York

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IN COLLABORATION WITH

**The Congressional Hunger Center & The Syracuse-Onondaga Food
Systems Alliance**

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The Congressional Hunger Center is a global nonprofit organization dedicated to the principle that access to nutritious, affordable, and culturally appropriate food is a basic human right.

SOFSA works to strengthen our food system so that it works for all people in Syracuse and Onondaga County. We bring communities together to foster relationships, develop projects, align resources, and advocate for policies to improve the health of our neighbors and our environment.



**Syracuse-Onondaga
Food Systems Alliance**

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List of Abbreviations

<p>SOFSA - Syracuse-Onondaga Food Systems Alliance</p>	<p>The Syracuse-Onondaga Food Systems Alliance is an independent food policy council (FPC) focused on engaging food system stakeholders across various sectors.</p>
<p>CNY - Central New York</p>	<p>Central New York is the central region of New York state and is comprised of eight counties; Madison, Oneida, Herkimer, Montgomery, Schoharie, Otsego, Chenango and Broome</p>
<p>DUFB - Double Up Food Bucks</p>	<p>Double Up Food Bucks is a healthy food incentive program that provides SNAP recipients a \$1 to \$1 match for purchasing healthy and locally grown food.</p>
<p>SNAP - The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program</p>	<p>The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the largest federal nutrition program that works to alleviate hunger and poverty among low-income individuals.</p>
<p>FPN - Food Policy Network (referred to as food policy groups/councils (FPG's/FPC's))</p>	<p>The Food policy network refers to the growing community of food policy groups/councils that represent various stakeholders to address food-related issues and needs within a city, county, state, tribal, or other designated region.</p>

Part 1: Introduction



Introduction

As part of the Congressional Hunger Center's (CHC) Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellowship program, fellows are paired with community-based organizations and tasked with completing a comprehensive hunger-free community report. These reports outline both the important work of the fellows during their placement and identify specific needs/assets of the communities served.

This report is the culminating product of my fellowship placement with the Syracuse-Onondaga Food System Alliance (SOFSA) in Central New York. The report itself focuses on the process of creating a racially just, and equitable policy agenda for SOFSA.

SOFSA is an independent food policy council (FPC) focused on engaging food system stakeholders across various sectors to improve the area's food system. SOFSA works to strengthen our food system so that it works for all people in Syracuse and Onondaga County. We bring communities together to foster relationships, develop projects, align resources, and advocate for policies to improve the health of our neighbors and our environment.

SOFSA is now creating an ongoing policy agenda that outlines the organization's current policy interventions and recommendations. My hope is that my research along with a set of policy recommendations will help SOFSA and similar food policy groups across the country.



Background

Established in 2019, SOFSA has worked to strengthen the local food system for the city of Syracuse and Onondaga County. The organization's creation was prompted by the need for a local food policy council to help address food-related issues in the region and foster relationships between stakeholders in the food system.

Like SOFSA, other food policy groups across the country are also working to improve their food system. Food policy councils construct a variety of projects, policies, and recommendations needed to create the conditions for a resilient food system. These councils/coalitions create spaces that foster unlikely conversations among various actors within the food system on policies and laws that affect the local food system. They also educate and amplify the voices of their communities.

Food systems are defined as the pathway food takes from farm to table. This includes how food is produced, distributed, processed, marketed, consumed, and how food waste is then managed. These systems are vital for the health and wellbeing of communities, making it important to work toward sustaining long-term solutions. Although surrounded by rich agricultural land, the food system in Syracuse and Onondaga county suffers from food access inequities and a lack of adequate infrastructure (Foodplan CNY). The city and county are plagued with rising food production costs and processing difficulties, which ultimately impacts the local economy. In addition, food insecurity and hunger are major public health concerns in Onondaga County and disproportionately impact black and brown communities.

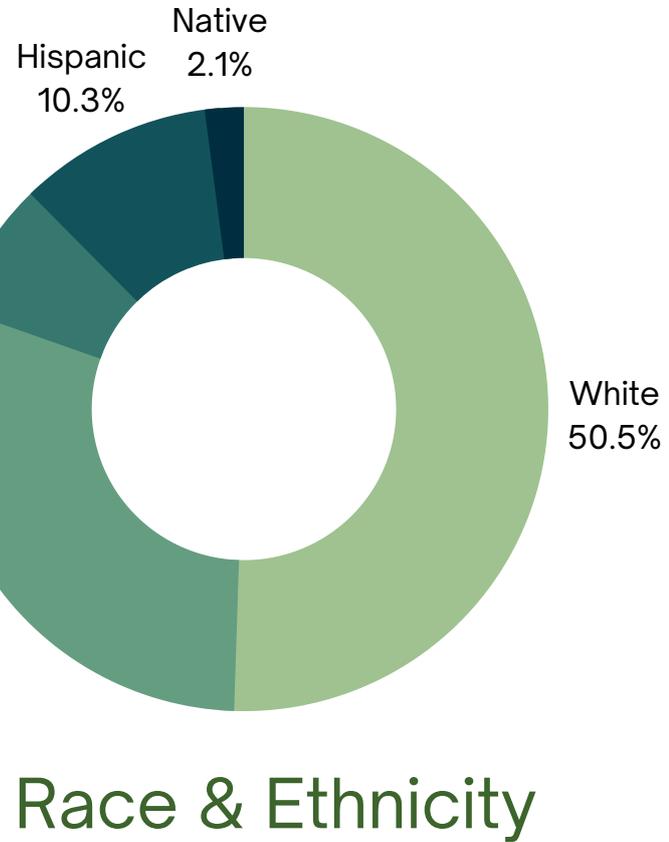
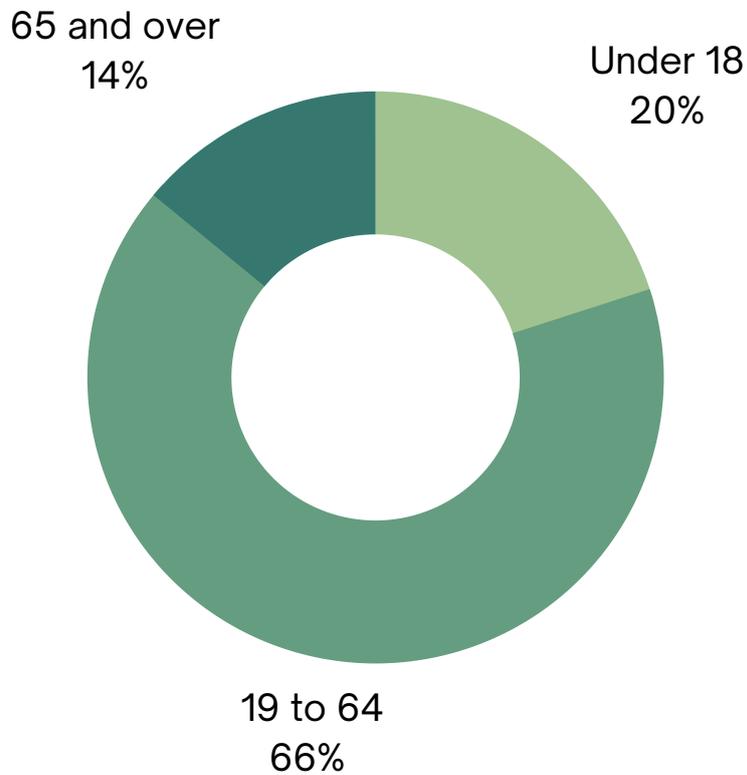


Methodology

My fellow work-plan consisted of three different components; a literature review (review of several Central New York comprehensive city plans), a matrix of policy actions undertaken by FPCs (regional and national), and a set of policy recommendations that align with SOFSA's mission. While conducting the literature review, I focused on looking for previously conducted assessments that would give me insight into CNY regional food system, but more specifically the local foodscape. Understanding the local food environment including barriers in accessing healthy food, transportation access, and food store placement are key in creating impactful efforts. This was essential as I moved forward in the workplan to create a policy matrix. The matrix consists of 4 categories aligned with SOFSA's current focus. Part of the matrix process was making sure I was not only covering regional FPC but also reaching out to similarly-positioned national organizations. In total, I chose to focus on ten organizations; three regional and seven national. After filling in the matrix and reviewing priority areas and specific policy actions, I began working on creating food policy council profiles. Each profile contains a brief scope of the organization's work and then outlines both priority areas and current policy interventions. This process was helpful in understanding various policies and policy actions taken at the county, city, and state levels to help identify what may be best and feasible recommendations for SOFSA. After completing those steps I then created policy recommendations falling under the five following categories; urban agriculture, zoning, school food/school nutrition, SNAP, food and food-related waste reduction, and uplifting indigenous voices.

Demographics (City of Syracuse)

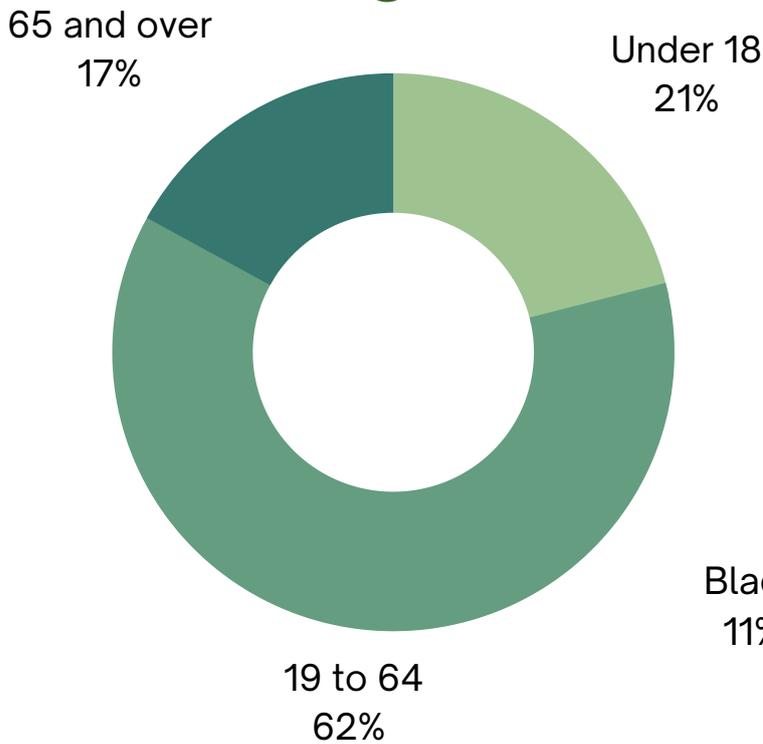
Age



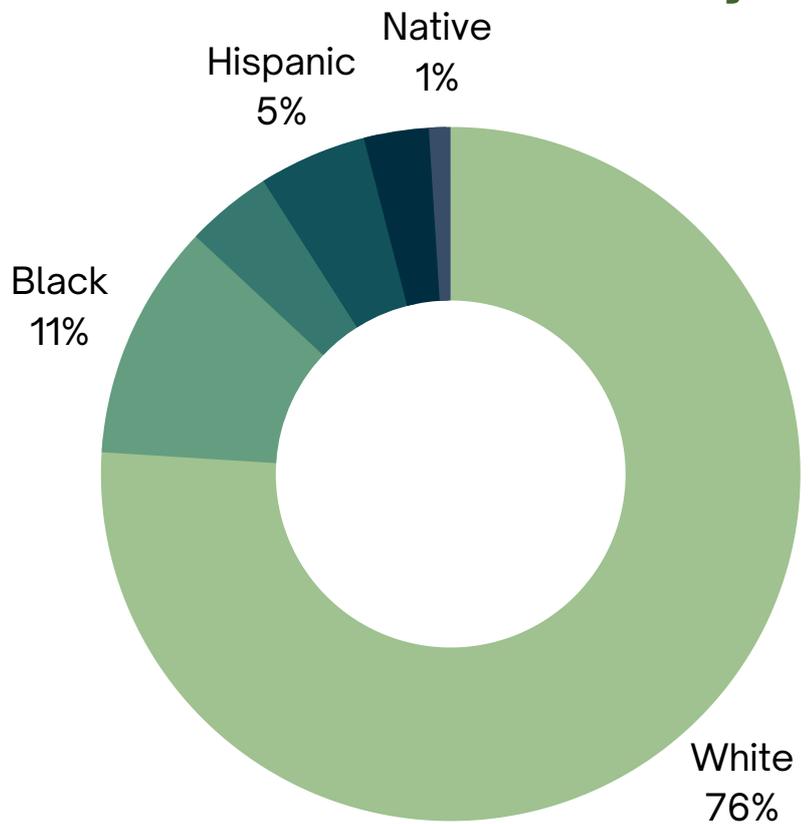
Poverty in the City of Syracuse is more than double the rate in Onondaga County. About 31% of the population falls below the poverty line, many of whom are people of color. Among children across the city 44% fall below the poverty line.

Demographics (Onondaga County)

Age



Race & Ethnicity



Food insecurity and hunger are major public health problems facing Onondaga County and contributing to and resulting from heightened poverty. These problems often go hand in hand, especially in rural counties where lack of food access and improper health care continue to be problems. About 14% of the county lives in poverty, but these rates are significantly higher for communities of color.

Part 2: Literature Review



Literature Review

I conducted a scan of previously-conducted assessments both in Syracuse and Onondaga County. This review covers four comprehensive plans to improve the city of Syracuse and Onondaga County: FoodPlanCNY, The Onondaga County Community Health Assessment and Improvement Plan 2019-2021, The Syracuse Sustainability Plan, and The Syracuse Land Use and Development Plan 2040.

I have also included the *Food Justice Agenda For A Resilient Boston*, which outlines five areas in which Boston can work toward a more resilient and sustainable food system. A food justice-based and racially equitable approach are key in SOFSA creating a food policy agenda that works toward a more resilient food system. Although it is not a local example, the agenda is a compelling example of what SOFSA is trying to accomplish. The agenda focuses on a food justice-based approach that affirms the following; "Food justice means social justice, dismantling the oppressive systems that undervalue our food chain workers, commodify our food supply, and threaten the stability of our climate; means environmental justice, valuing our farming and fishing communities and building a resilient regional foodshed to accelerate climate action; means racial justice, demanding a clear-eyed understanding of how white supremacy has shaped our food systems" (Food Justice Agenda, page 6).

I give a brief overview of each plan's scope, then I outline the goals, data collection efforts (if applicable), key takeaways, and policy interventions recommended in each plan. This review will help SOFSA in identifying priority policy areas for intervention and contribute to the organization's action plan for equity and racial justice. Additionally, by examining regional priorities, this report also reinforces the recommendations from these documents. SOFSA is reducing any duplicative content that other local plans may have previously addressed.

FoodPlanCNY

FoodPlanCNY, published in 2021, is a report that resulted from research beginning in 2016. This community-based effort was developed in order to assess the food system in CNY while also offering suggestions to build on assets and address weaknesses. A major goal of FoodPlan CNY was to create recommendations to enhance the local food system and local economy while also making the wider public aware of the importance of the regional food system. After reading the plan, I became familiar with the food environment in Syracuse and Onondaga County, and also understand major areas for policy intervention that SOFSA may be able to help with. The report highlighted three main goals: 1) Improved public health, 2) Inclusive economic development, and 3) Resilient environments. To accomplish these goals, there was a baseline assessment of each stage of the food system; production, distribution, processing, markets, consuming, waste & recycling. Based on project goals, the baseline assessment, and public input there were 5 recommendations that may help in creating more coordinated food system efforts.

Key recommendations:

1. Strengthen the “middle” of the food system
2. Grow community-based, healthy food environments
3. Create healthy, resilient environmental systems
4. Expand public space and participation in the food system
5. Coordinate food system projects, planning, and policy: Support the newly formed Syracuse-Onondaga Food System Alliance (SOFSA)

Policy opportunities:

- Expand Institutional purchasing (promote policies to preferentially purchase regionally sourced food, Build upon existing models, such as the Good Food Purchasing Program (goodfoodpurchasing.org))
- Support policies, planning efforts, and projects that promote community food spaces
- Support policies linking disparities in food access to broader structural issues needing to be addressed (workforce development, housing policy, etc)
- Support policies and programs for maintaining and promoting culturally-specific food spaces such as markets, restaurants, gardens, and community kitchens
- Encourage policies and incentives to support diverse retail opportunities

The Onondaga County Community Health Assessment and Improvement Plan

Developed by the Onondaga County Health Department, the Onondaga County Community Health Assessment and Improvement Plan (CHA/CHIP) provides an overview of the current health status and challenges facing Onondaga County residents. In alignment with the 2019-2024 New York Prevention Agenda, the plan identifies ways to work toward a healthier community and the factors that may be contributing to health risks and negative health outcomes. After reviewing the assessment, it was clear that Onondaga county residents face several health obstacles that disproportionately plague communities of color. Among these outcomes, chronic conditions like stroke, diabetes, cancer, obesity, and hypertension disproportionately impact racial and ethnic minorities. In addition to the health status of residents, the report also focused on socio-economic determinants (trauma, employment, education, etc) and environmental determinants (transportation, housing, food access, etc) that may be influencing the health status of the county residents. Understanding external factors that are leading to hunger is important when thinking of policy advocacy. Both the assessment and community feedback gathered established two main priorities (listed below) for 2019-2021.

Priority areas:

1. Prevent Chronic Diseases
2. Promote Well-Being and Prevent Mental and Substance Use Disorders

Policy opportunities:

- Adoption of Health Across all Policies framework (HAAP)
- Support for ReZone Syracuse
- Support for interstate 81 improvements

The Syracuse Land Use and Development Plan

The Syracuse land use and development plan 2040 outlines the city's zoning and development regulation changes. The plan highlights five primary goals; Preserve and enhance Syracuse's existing land use patterns, protect and enhance the character and unique sense of place of Syracuse's neighborhoods, ensure high-quality, attractive design throughout the city, promote environmentally sustainable land use patterns, transportation options, and site plans, and lastly ensure that development regulations and review processes are efficient, predictable, and transparent. The document also offers neighborhood-specific recommendations in the effort to drastically change existing conditions. The plan offers a good deal of information making it a great guiding document for creating a more holistic approach to zoning ordinances and neighborhood structures.

Guiding principles:

- Overall Land Use Pattern
 - I Preserve and enhance Syracuse's existing land use patterns.
- Character of Existing Neighborhoods
 - II Protect and enhance the character and "sense of place" of Syracuse's neighborhoods.
- Design & Form of Infill Development & Major Alterations
 - III Ensure high-quality, attractive design throughout the city.
- Energy & the Environment
 - IV Promote environmentally sustainable land use patterns, transportation options, and site plans.
- Regulatory Process
 - V Ensure that development regulations and review processes are efficient, predictable, and transparent.

The City of Syracuse Comprehensive Plan 2040 (includes Syracuse Sustainability Plan)

The City of Syracuse comprehensive plan 2040 is the update to comprehensive plan 2025. This plan encompasses several new subject-specific components; Bicycle infrastructure, historic preservation, land use and development, public art, and sustainability. These components along with several others are related to improving the city in terms of physical and economic development. Although the plan is short-term, it can serve as a guide for regional planning efforts. In addition to this information, the plan also outlines guiding policies for the document and goals with recommended actions.

Priority areas:

1. Capital Facilities
2. Cultural Assets
3. Economic Development
4. Education
5. Government Modernization
- F. Housing
6. Land Use & Development
- H. Public Safety
7. Sustainability
8. Transportation
9. Utilities

Quick note: The Syracuse sustainability plan was created as part of the City of Syracuse Comprehensive Plan 2040 and created in 2014. The plan sought to examine community needs through energy and green building, education and training, food systems, natural environment, and waste and recycling.

Policy opportunities:

- Ensure that Syracuse's zoning ordinance and development regulations are consistent with the character desired of future development.
- Overhaul the City's zoning ordinance (implement Land Use & Development plan components)
- Revise the City's Landmark Preservation Ordinance
- Protect natural resources for future generations and enhance the quality of life of Syracuse residents (Implement the Sustainability components)

Food Justice Agenda For a Resilient Boston

Similar to FoodPlan CNY, the Food Justice Agenda for Boston identifies regional priorities and offers recommendations for improving the local food system. The agenda focuses on leveraging knowledge from Boston's local context and also engaging food justice work to attain a more equitable food system. There are five key areas that are outlined below relating to worker's rights, public health, the racial wealth gap, and small businesses.

Priority areas:

- Investing in Boston's food chain workers
- Supporting Boston's restaurant and food economy
- Expanding Boston residents' access to fresh, nutritious, affordable, and local food
- Leveraging public procurement to drive broader food system change
- Strengthening the food system coalitions to pursue a food justice agenda

Policy opportunities:

- Affirm workers' right to organize by enforcing existing city procurement standards that give preference to union vendors.
 - Good Food Purchasing ordinance
- Work to extend the right to organize to workers that are not covered by major federal labor law
- Proactively enforce all procurement standards, including the Living Wage Ordinance.
- Support to pass the Fair Work Week ordinance in Boston
- Bring new urban land into food production
 - Use tax incentives or vacant lot registry fees to incentivize private landowners to transfer non-buildable lots to farmers
- Reduce stigma for low-income shoppers
 - Subsidizing the purchase of EBT-processing equipment for all HIP vendors participating in Boston markets.

Part 3: Food Policy Council Profiles (regional and national organizations)



Food Policy Council Profiles

Food policy development is a systemic approach to creating a suitable and equitable food system. Many FPC's have constructed policy platforms and/or agendas in hopes of improving food access and the local economy while also impacting local, state, and even federal food policy. It is very important for these policy platforms to build upon the work that has already been done and not be duplicative. To do this, I've compiled a scan of policy platforms put forth by regional and national FPC's. The ten (three regional, seven national) FPC's that I've chosen are similarly aligned with SOFSA and working on similar issues for their county, city, or state. Each profile contains a short snippet of the organization's history. I then outline 3-5 major policy interventions and recommendations outlined by the organization's policy agenda. Here, I identify priority areas and/or specific legislative or regulatory policies supported by various councils, especially among councils whose work is rooted in racial justice and support for indigenous communities.

Suffolk County Food Policy Council (NY)

History

The mission of the council is to promote the production, distribution, and awareness of locally grown food and strengthen and prioritize policies that will improve food access, health, and nutrition. The council also focuses on enhancing the regional food system by utilizing local agriculture, fishing and shellfish aquaculture.

Current priorities

- Improve and strengthen SNAP
- Create summaries (short document) on the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and the CARES Act to advocate for:
 1. Increase investment in federal nutrition programs such as SNAP and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) in ANY COVID-19 stimulus package to come
 2. Increase support to school food service workers
 3. The extension of child nutrition waivers through the end of the 2020-2021 academic year.
 4. Increase support for food-insecure military families through the creation of a Military Family Basic Needs Allowance.
- Focus on building relationships with store owners to help them feel supported (help stores decide which products would work best for the store and determine what additional support may be needed to ensure success and nutritional items)

Food Policy Council of Buffalo & Erie County (NY)

History

There were many local food system leaders that rallied for the need for a food policy council in Buffalo and Erie County. The council's mission includes advocating for an equitable and sustainable food system for the people of Buffalo and Erie County.

Current priorities

Top priority areas: outlined in Local Food Action Plan (2020-2024)

- Agriculture
- Economic development
- Education
- Environment and climate change
- Food access
- Health

2022 Working groups/goals:

- Urban food production (GBUB)
 - Influence urban agriculture policy
 - Work with the City on permit development
- Outreach committee
 - Outreach efforts with community
- Food action planning:
 - Oversee implementation of the Food Action Plan and serve as a liaison to the FPC and the Food Action Plan Working Groups.

Food and Health Network of South-Central New York

History

Since 2005, the Food and Health Network of South-Central New York has worked to build food-secure communities throughout eight surrounding counties. The Food and Health Network is a program of the nonprofit Rural Health Network of South Central NY, whose mission is to advance the health and wellbeing of rural people and communities. The network takes an interdisciplinary, systematic, and regional approach to impact South Central New York's food system.

Current priorities

- Farm to school program
- South Central NY Fruit & Vegetable Prescription Program
- Regional & Community Food Systems program: developing community-based food systems centered around enhancing the economy, environment and health
- Food System Assessments (series of data-driven approaches to strengthening our regional food system)
 - Regional food system
 - Summer food service program assessments
 - Community garden and urban agriculture inventory
- Food as Medicine Summit

Detroit Food Policy Council (MI)

History

Established in 2009, the DFPC is an education, policy, and advocacy organization. The organization was created following a city council resolution. Their focus includes influencing policy impacting Detroit residents and promoting a just food system. The DFPC also frequently creates and distributes City of Detroit Food System Reports. These reports track and assess various parts of the city's food system.

Current priorities

Research and policy committee focus:

- Land Use
- Economic Impact Study
- Food Security Policy Update
- Food System Report

Detroit Grocery coalition

- A coalition of organizations working to improve and promote the grocery landscape in Detroit
- Created Detroit Food Toolkit
 - A blog that serves a community board where residents can find information on food-related programs, organizations and the services they offer

Portland Food Council (ME)

History

The PFC was created from the 2021 Mayor's Initiative for a Healthy and Sustainable Food System. This is an independent organization that works with the Portland city government to improve Portland's food economy.

Current priorities

- **Three working groups;** Thriving economics, Food insecurity, and Institutional sourcing
- **Focus areas include support for**
 - Socially just, environmentally, and economically sustainable practices in all parts of the food system that supports Portland.
 - Reduction in food insecurity, cultivation of greater community resilience and food literacy, and healthy food access, including greater consumption of fruits and vegetables.
 - Thriving food economies, including sustainable food-sector businesses and quality jobs.
 - Sourcing of more Maine products in institutions and the private sector, and exporting of more Maine products.
 - Productive, sustainable, and resilient farms, gardens, fisheries, and aquaculture.
- Thriving economics working group and the institutional sourcing group created a joint survey for businesses in Portland (assessed needs to growth and barriers to success)
 - 'Food Business Survey: Needs and Challenges of Portland's food-based businesses.'

Worcester Food Policy Council (MA)

History

Similar to SOFSA, the Worcester Food Policy Council brings together different actors from various parts of the food system and those who wish to influence it. Established in 2006 the WFPC works to create a healthy and just food system for all.

Current priorities

- **Urban Agriculture:** Working with City of Worcester Departments, City Councilors, Farmers, and Non-Profits to craft an ordinance that promotes health, food safety, good neighbors, and access to land.
- **SNAP:** Work with advocates to make sure the program is functioning with the best interests of those that need it in mind. This work is done with partners around the state through the Central MA SNAP Coalition.
- **Fight for 15:** Joined this national campaign and work locally with Raise Up MA and the Worcester Community Labor Coalition to fight for higher wages.
- **5(5 fruits and veggies) 2 (2 hours or less of recreational screen time) 1(1 hour or more of physical activity) 0 (0 sugary drinks, more water)**
Worcester: Nationally recognized childhood obesity prevention program (currently partnered with child care, health care, and other community organizations)

Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition (KS)

History

Established in 2005, this community-based initiative functions under KC Healthy Kids. Their mission is to advocate for the greater Kansas City food system and promote policies that positively impact the nutritional, economic, social and environmental health of the community.

Current priorities

2020-2023 Policy Agenda

- **Priority #1:** Improve access to affordable fresh foods through local, state, and federal policy
 - Food access working group
 - Better By Bus
 - Works to advance the recommendations of the 2019 Better By Bus report
 - Kansas food sales tax
 - Working towards reduction of state sales tax on food
 - Advocating for increased use of nutrition programs (state and federal)
- **Priority #2:** Improve community food security through planning and zoning policies that ensure urban farmers may operate successfully
 - Committee to pursue recommendations after urban farm zoning and planning task force releases report

Douglas County Food Policy Council (KS)

History

The Douglas County Food Policy Council was created in 2010, by the County Commission and was formed as a joint City-County advisory body with the City of Lawrence in 2013. The council's mission focuses on identifying the challenges, opportunities, and benefits for a sustainable local food system in Douglas County, Kansas.

Current priorities

- **A few council priorities**
 - Enabling agricultural economic development
 - Engaging priority voices in food systems work
 - Expanding food recovery throughout Douglas County
 - Reducing transportation barriers to accessing wholesome foods
 - Committing to elevating the impacts of racial injustice in the food system
- **Douglas County Food System plan:** The plan highlights five overall goals, each followed by objectives and multiple policy action items. Below I've highlighted a couple of policy actions from the document.
 - Develop a local initiative to assist agriculture producers to find farmworkers.
 - Develop policy tools and programs to help directly link farmers with lands for production.
 - Assess the policy barriers that may prevent grocery store locating in recognized food deserts.
 - Adopt a policy to encourage diversity in local government appointments to advisory boards and commissions.
 - Adopt public procurement policies that guide waste reduction.

Chicago Food Policy Action Council (IL)

History

Established in 2002, the CFPAC works to advocate and implement policy focused on food justice and food sovereignty in Chicago. The council emphasizes the need for equitable access for all communities, especially black and indigenous communities. Racial equity is an essential component of the organization's mission and woven into its policy priorities.

Current priorities

Top priorities:

- Urban stewards
- Procurement
- Food research
- Land access
- Licenses and permits

2021 water access for Chicago Urban Growers

- Develop 2021 Hydrant permit program by the City of Chicago's Department of Water Management with cooperation and input from CFPAC, advocates for Urban Agriculture (AUA), and NeighborSpace (NBSP)

Adoption of the Good Food Purchasing Program

- (GFPI) works to ensure that institutional food purchasing becomes more equitable, local, fair, and healthy. This helps to ensure a just food system and better food access.

Philadelphia Food Policy Advisory Council (PA)

History

Mayor Michela Nutter asked to convene the food policy council and appointed its first members in January 2011. FPAC works to address barriers in the Philadelphia food system and identify ways to empower Philadelphians to have more control of their land, food, and labor. The organization works to center the voices and experiences of Black, Brown, Indigenous, poor, and marginalized Philadelphians. They also work to build the political influence of these communities, equipping them with more power!

Current priorities

2023 food policy recommendations

- Support city food program capacity
 - Increase and coordinate investment in Black and Brown community-led food justice initiatives (also used as a recommendation for expanding local food and produce distribution)
- Adopt a good food purchasing policy
 - Develop a rubric for evaluating all food-related City contracts and agreements with private and nonprofit organizations as part of determining vendor awards
- Increase access and ownership of land for agriculture use
 - Partner with community residents, farmers, and gardeners for technical assistance, advice, education, and feedback to develop new internal practices
- Expand local food and produce distribution
 - Establish a coordinated, public support network for farmers markets and farm stands (ex. technical assistance and funding)

"I've made two or three connections because of SOFSA, and I'm not sure when those would've happened if we weren't all brought to the table together"

Peter Ricardo

**Product Donations Manager,
Food Bank of Central New
York**

Policy Recommendations

The following sections outline five policy priority areas along with recommendations that align with SOFSA's mission and support its goals and objectives. The recommendations offer feasible actions that either apply to the county, state, or federal levels;

Local/regional agriculture (State, county, and municipal intervention)

- Enhance local economy and expand food access
 - Support and encourage the adoption of the Good Food Purchasing program/policy at both the county and state levels
- Increase BIPOC land access and ownership for agriculture use
 - Support policies that permit the use of privately-owned undeveloped land (also advocate for financial help in obtaining said land)
 - Collaboration with more food and farmworkers of color
 - Advocate for policy acknowledging BIPOC farmers and gardeners (support of groups and councils advocating for this)
 - Justice for Black Farmers Act (2021)
 - National Black Growers council
- **Expanded food-retail opportunities**
 - Support small-scale food retail (bodegas, corner stores, and neighborhood markets), BIPOC owned restaurants, and farms
 - Support Investment in capital and space
 - Invest in shared-use facilities (these could include community kitchens, public markets, etc)
 - Support policies improving wages and work conditions for farmworkers
 - Advocate for increased minimum wage
 - Advocate for safer work conditions and protections for workers

Zoning (State and municipal intervention)

- Promote guiding principles from the Land Use Development Plan
- Support ReZone and partner w/ local authorities to develop new ordinances

Policy Recommendations

continued

School food/child nutrition (Federal, state, county, and institutional intervention)

- Advocate for nutrition provisions in the Build Back Better legislation (BBB)
 - BBB not only advances racial equity among children but also supports efforts for expanding children's access to nutritional foods and reducing food hardship.
- Support for farm-to-school/farm-to-institution initiatives and programming
 - Advocate for 30% NY state initiative in Onondaga County schools
 - Help schools and farmers overcome barriers to reaching the 30% incentive

SNAP (Federal, state, and county intervention)

- Double Up Food Bucks
 - Continued support of budget allocations for DUFB
- Advocate for increased enrollment for seniors (help to combat senior hunger)

Food and food-related waste reduction (State, county, and municipal intervention)

- Support development of food recovery network
 - Partner with local food rescue organizations
 - Help increase access to cold and/or dry storage
 - Develop and distribute educational resources to food donors (food safety, liability rules, and tax reporting)
- Promotion of the recent Food Donation and Food Scraps Recycling Law
 - Support local government in creating a food scraps recycling program
 - Create educational tools explaining wasted food reduction and home composting

Uplifting Indigenous voices (Federal, state, county, and municipal intervention)

- Advocate for local, state, and federal policies supporting Indigenous communities
 - Highlight 2023 Native Farm Bill policy priorities
- Promote/partner with Indigenous activists exposing food system inequities for Indigenous communities
- Partner with Onondaga Nation and help host a roundtable for the Native Farm Bill Coalition

Conclusion

This report set out to assist SOFSA in creating equitable and sustainable policy recommendations to enhance the local food system in the City of Syracuse and Onondaga County. Upon review of existing resources and knowledge from similar FPC's, it is clear that there are several opportunities for SOFSA to engage in more policy work. Onondaga county continues to have flourishing agricultural land that requires more collaborative efforts to help strengthen the food system.

SOFSA should continue to implement processes that help to deepen our understanding of key issues facing the city of Syracuse and Onondaga county while simultaneously advancing policy change. In doing this, SOFSA needs to prioritize the recommendations that most closely align with pressing community needs and highlight lived expertise. Additionally, a large part of SOFSA's work should be making strides towards dismantling policies put in place to historically disengage communities of color, farmers of color, and more. The lessons learned from FPC's across the country shed light on the various ways in which SOFSA can continue to advocate for racially equitable policy changes.

In doing this project I gained a greater understanding of Onondaga county and the ways in which food and food access have impacted the city and county. In doing the literature review, I became familiar with the food environment and regional priorities, while the matrix and profiles helped identify key policy priorities/actions that may align with that of SOFSA. My recommendations add to this work but do not complete it, so moving forward my hope is the organization can use this report as a framework or reference piece for future policy work and influencing the county.



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