

# Food councils: Advancing health justice through policy and programs

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KS Community Health Promotion Summit

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**FOOD POLICY**  
**NETWORKS**



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# Overview

- The value of collaboration and civic engagement for health justice
- How food councils advance health justice through:
  - increasing food access
  - food systems assessments, plans and data collection
  - internal practices
- Closing/Q&A



Mary Pham, CLF Food Policy Networks Photo Contest, 2019

# The value of collaboration and civic engagement for health justice

# Why civic engagement is important

- City of Indianapolis example of poor engagement:



# Principles for Equitable and Inclusive Engagement

- Embrace gifts of diversity
- Realize the role of race, power and injustice
- Radical hospitality
- Trust building and commitment
- Honoring dissent and embracing protest
- Adaptability to community change



*The Principles for Equitable and Civic Engagement (2016) by Kip Holley, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, Ohio State University*

# What are food policy councils (FPCs)?

An organized group of stakeholders from various sectors that may be sanctioned by a government body or may exist independently of government, which works to address food systems issues and needs at the local (city/municipality or county), state/provincial, regional or Native American/First Nations levels through policy.



# What do FPCs do?

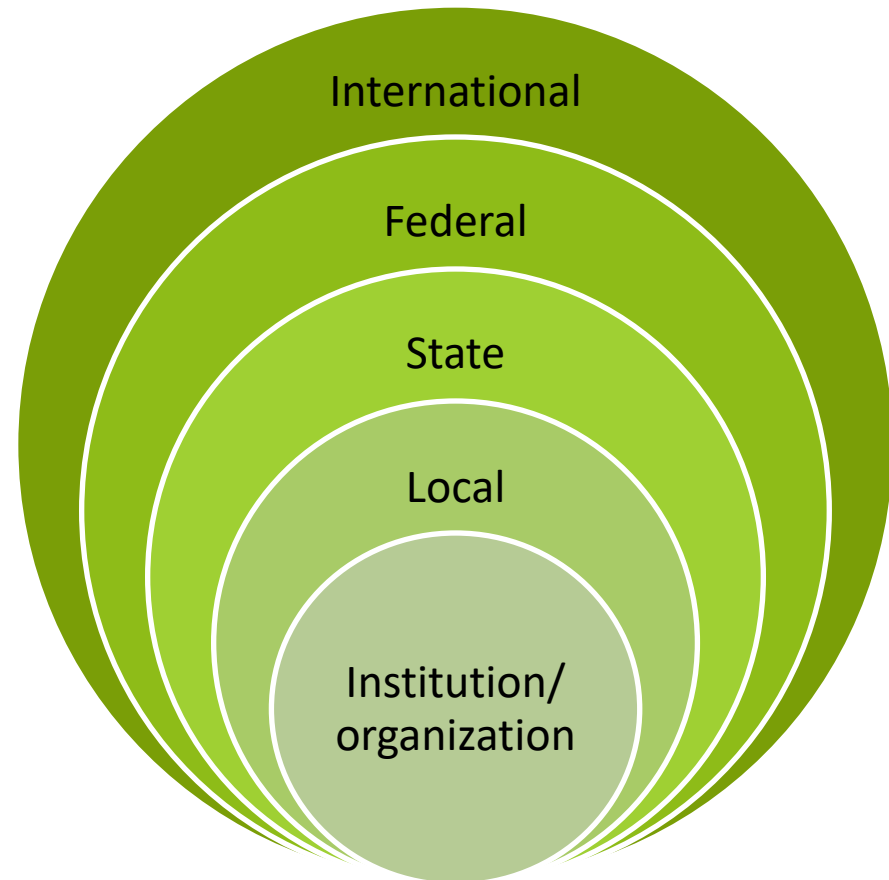
- Bring **PROGRAMS** together to create synergies
- Provide a forum for food system stakeholders to **EDUCATE** each other and the general public about respective areas of expertise
- Coordinate efforts and build **PARTNERSHIPS** within a specified geography or jurisdiction to serve as a voice for the community related to food
- Influence government or institutional food **POLICY**, especially ones that promote equity, health, and sustainability

# How we define policy

A course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business, or individual *(Source: Oxford dictionary)*

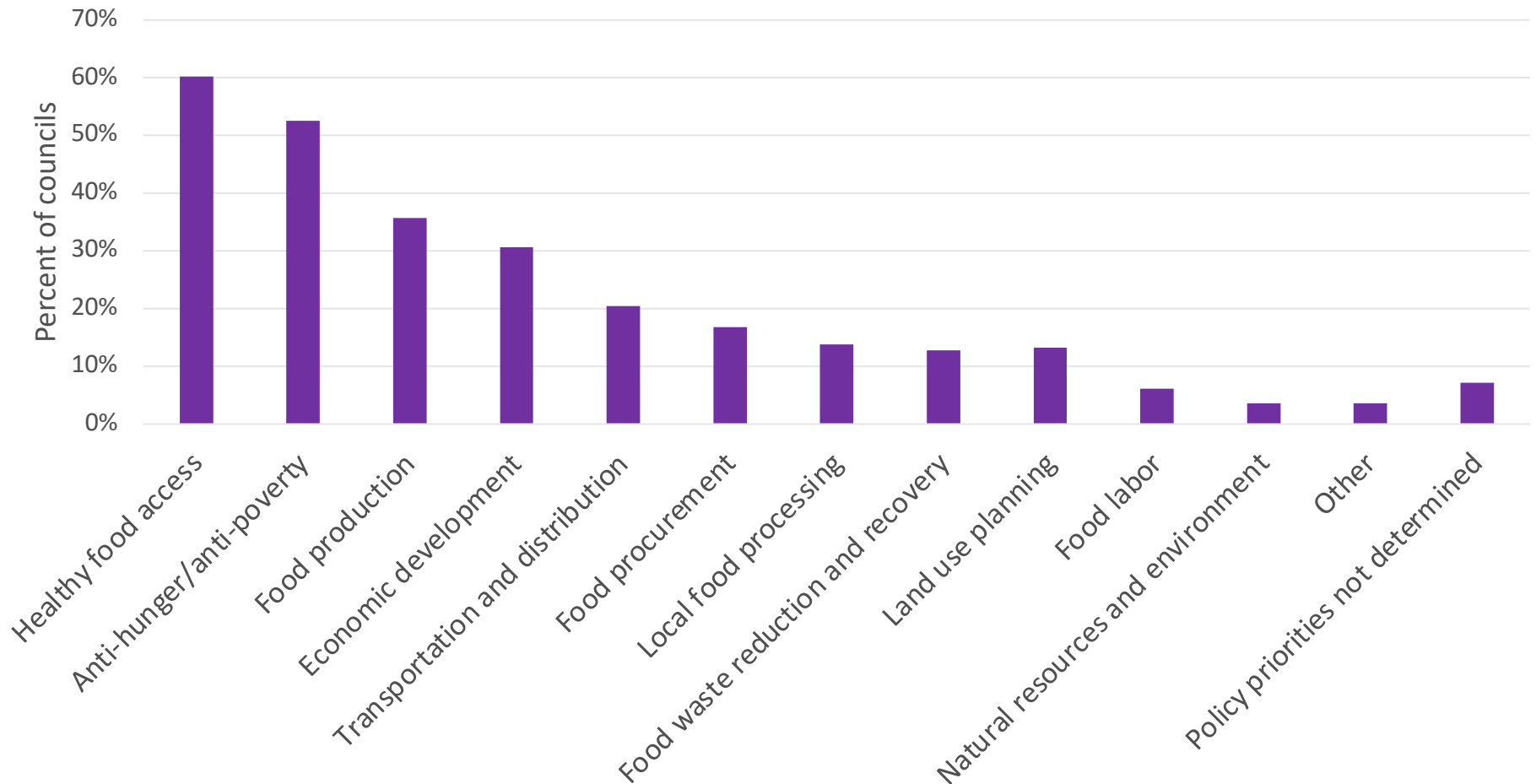
This includes:

- Laws and ordinances
- The administration, funding, or implementation of policy at local, state, tribal, or federal levels of government
- Changes in policies and standards set by institutions like schools, hospitals, and private companies



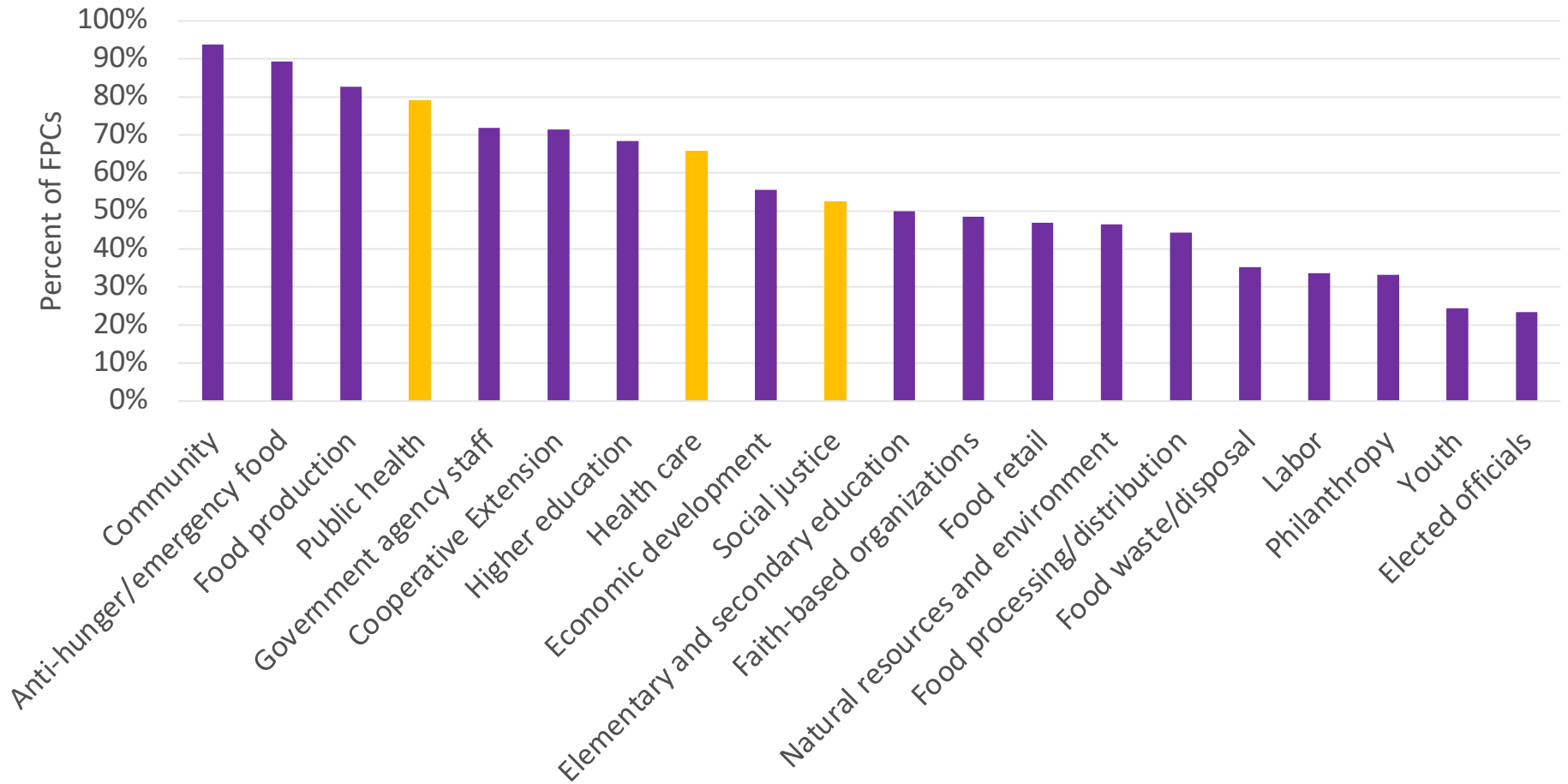


# Top policy priorities



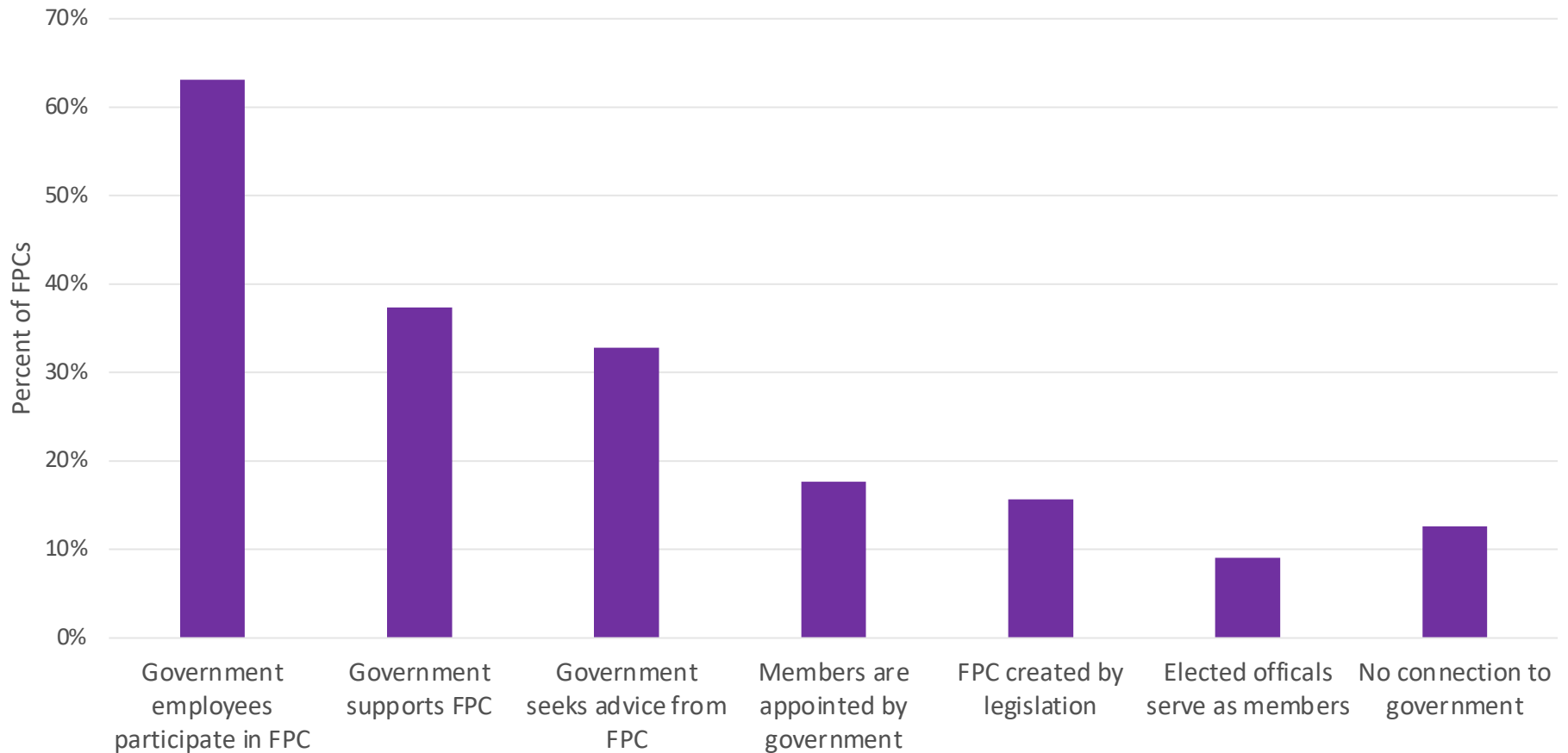
*Percent of FPCs indicating each policy priority (councils could only select 3 each) (n=196)*

# Membership representation



*Percent of FPCs with members representing each sector (n=196)*

# Relationship to government



*Percent of FPCs with each relationship to government (n=198)*

# What do we mean by equity?

- Equity is a state in which all people in a given society share equal rights, access, opportunities, and outcomes that are not predicted or influenced by their identity characteristics, including race, gender, and class.
- Equity is achieved by providing targeted investments to “meet people where they are” to create equitable opportunities. Equity creates equality.

Applying Racial Equity to U.S. Federal Nutrition assistance Programs: SNAP, WIC, and Child Nutrition by Marlysa Gamblin, Bread for the World)

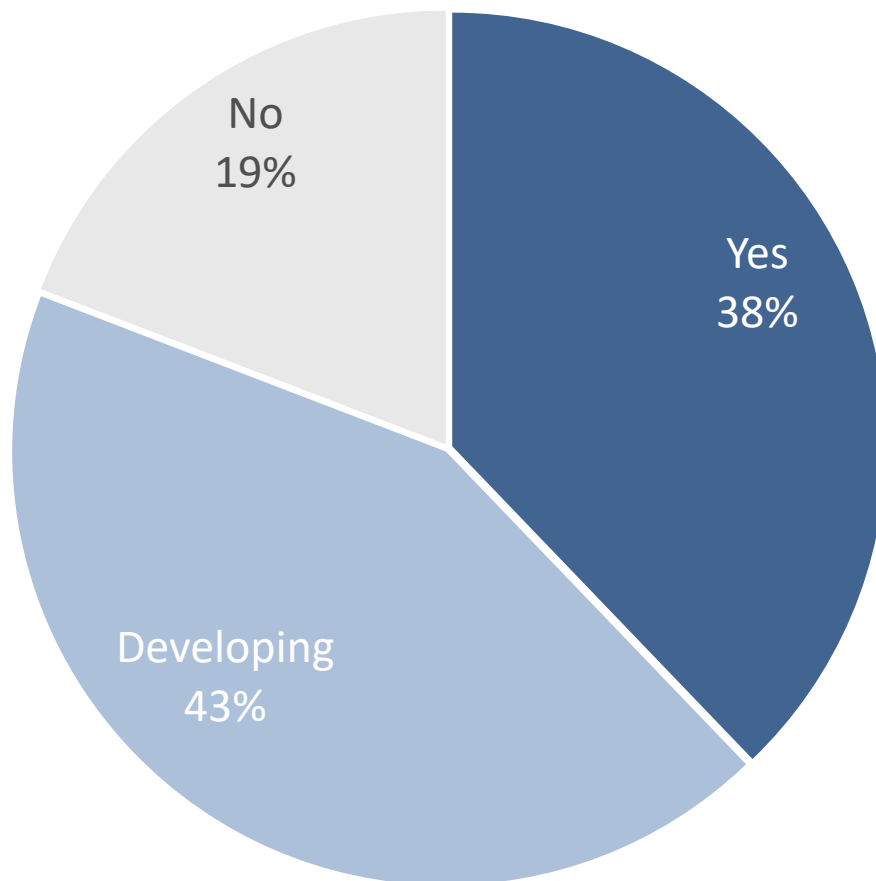
# What do we mean by equity in Indianapolis?

Address racial equity in the food system

Create an inclusive, sustainable, and effective mechanism to coordinate food efforts in Indianapolis

Improve equitable access to healthy food in Indianapolis

# FPC use a racial or social equity framework when making decisions



*Percent of FPCs responding to question (n=193)*

# Indy Food Council Equity Goals

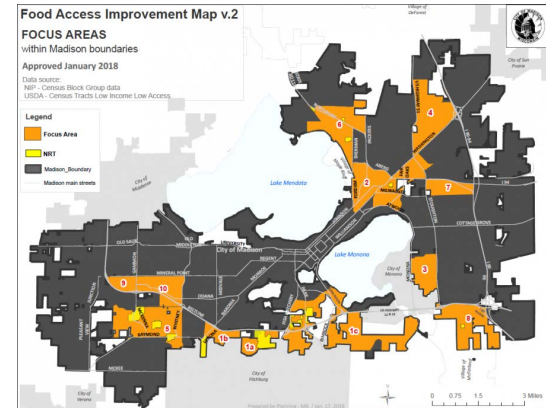
- Elevate community needs related to food equity
- Enable consistent flow of information and emergency food response
- Empower communities on issues related to food and solutions that impact them
- Promote “food in all policies” across City departments and funding streams
- Advise policymakers, local organizations, and funders on major food initiatives and investments
- Consider and advance citywide food policy initiatives

# How food councils advance health justice: **Increasing food access**



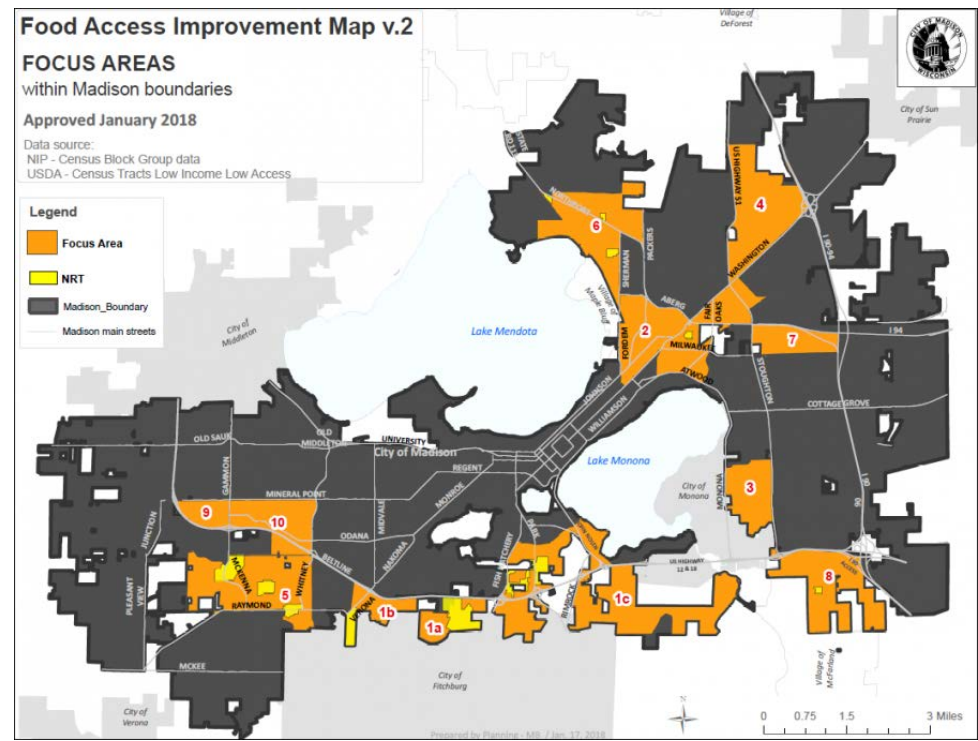
# Examples: Increasing food access

- Investment in under-resourced neighborhoods (Madison, WI)
- Improved transportation options (Kansas City, KS/MO)
- Good Food Purchasing Program



# Madison Food Policy Council (WI)

- Program launched in 2014 that provides \$50k from City budget in the form of micro-grants to projects that increase food access projects
- FPC administers the program
- During COVID-19, FPC successfully pivoted SEED grant funding to meet urgent community food needs, including: PPE, grocery delivery, food and medicine transportation, providing pre-packaged hot meals, etc.



# Dane County Food Policy Council (WI)

- The FPC partnered with the [County Office for Equity and Inclusion](#) to offer \$5,000 [Partners in Food Equity Project Grants](#).
- The grants encourage the development of projects that advance equity and access in local food systems.
- They can be used for projects to increase access to healthy food, ease access to land for growing food, or address issues of food waste and recovery.

# Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition (MO/KS)

- Convened Grocery Access Task Force
- Evaluated 6 bus stops near grocery stores
- Recommendations resulted in:
  - new bond funding
  - new complete streets ordinance in KCMO
  - new trip planning tools and bus stop signage in KCMO and KCKS
- Dietetic interns created healthy, affordable recipes using easy-to-carry ingredients (lightweight, fit in single bag, won't spoil on way home)



# Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP)



- The GFPP seeks to transform how public institutions **purchase food** by creating a transparent and equitable food system built on five core values: local economies, health, valued workforce, animal welfare, and environmental sustainability.
- Many FPCs have worked or are currently working towards/supporting efforts to advance GFPP passage, including in Chicago, Cincinnati, and the Twin Cities, MN

# Increasing Food Access: Covid Initiatives in Indy



# Increasing Food Access: Covid Initiatives in Indy

## OPERATION FEED INDY: COVID-19 EMERGENCY FOOD RELIEF EFFORTS

### Warehousing and Distribution Center

Lucas Oil Stadium

### Homeless Neighbors Food Distribution

Banker's Life Fieldhouse

### Mega Food Distribution Sites

- Indianapolis Motor Speedway
- Indiana State Fairgrounds

### Home Delivery Meal Program

Free home delivery of prepared meals and/or food boxes for all families experiencing a lack of access to food

### Pop-up Food Distribution Sites

- Hovey St. Church of Christ
- Barnes UMC
- Friendship MBC

# City of Indianapolis \$500,000 Initiative

The Indy Food Fund: Provides \$130,000 for programs and organizations that:

- Connect Indianapolis residents with long-term food and nutrition resources they need.
- Make strategic investments in neighborhoods and communities suffering from food access and insecurity.
- Work closely with community members to develop innovative ways to connect residents with the food and nutrition resources they need.
- Leverage the resources of the City of Indianapolis, in combination with those of community partners, funders, and developers, to drive sustainable growth in all areas of the Indianapolis food system.
- Neighborhood Food Champions: \$65,000 in funding to support community programming and infrastructure to support neighborhoods and residents
- Food Policy and Program Coordination: \$50,000 in marketing and educational support for programs and organization outreach to residents on how to better navigate the city's resources
- Food Advisory Commission: \$125,000 in funding for Data driven policy direction to City-County Council on what residents want and need to improve the food system
- Community Food Access Coalition: \$130,000 initiative to coordination and collaboration with community partners to move toward a more coordinated food system



# Healthcare Systems Partnerships



Food in Transit provides fresh affordable produce at the Transit Center



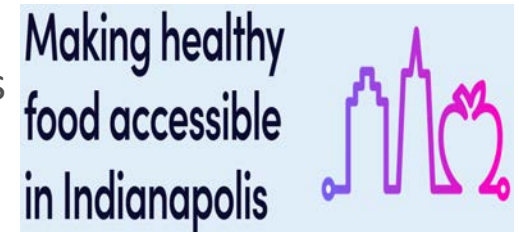
Marion County Public Health Department  
<https://freshbucksindy.org/produce-rx/>



Crooked Creek Clinic Food Pantry  
Hospital Fresh for You Market and Pantry  
Pecar Clinic Farm and Pantry



LYFTUP Grocery Access  
Senior Concierge  
FEED INDY Program



# How food councils advance health justice: **Assessments and data collection**

# Examples: Assessments and data collection

- [Racial Wealth Gap Learning Simulation](#) (Montgomery County, OH)
- Health Impact Assessment to explore region's “emergency” food distribution system (Southwest NM)
- [Food Equity Initiative](#) to compile research about local food system (Charlottesville, VA)



# Montgomery County Food Equity Coalition (OH)

- Along with Hall Hunger Initiative, hosts a simulation created by Bread for the World called the [Racial Wealth Gap Learning Simulation](#)
- The simulation walks participants through 13 government policies and shows the disparate impact on white and Black communities
- Have localized it by comparing a 1937 redlining map of Dayton to the areas currently experiencing higher rates of food insecurity, poverty, and many other challenges

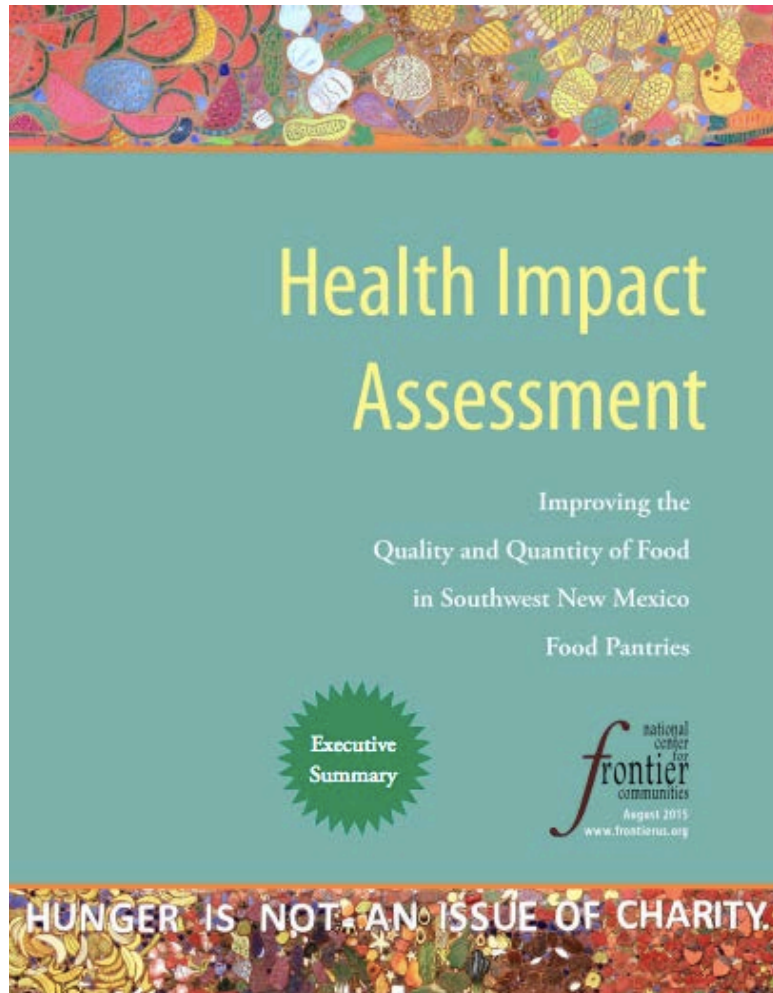


# Southwest New Mexico Food Policy Council

- This four-county FPC serves a low-density rural/frontier region in Southwest NM
- Council researches regional needs to organize more effective advocacy strategies
- Council members were concerned about quantity and quality of food distributed through USDA's "emergency" food program – TEFAP



# Southwest New Mexico Food Policy Council



- Council led Health Impact Assessment to explore region’s “emergency” food distribution system:
  - Quantity of food distributed
  - Nutritional value and quality of food sources
  - The unique infrastructure issues faced by rural and frontier communities struggling to address growing food insecurity
- Correlated data to health indicators of low-income families in region, most of whom are children, the elderly and Hispanic

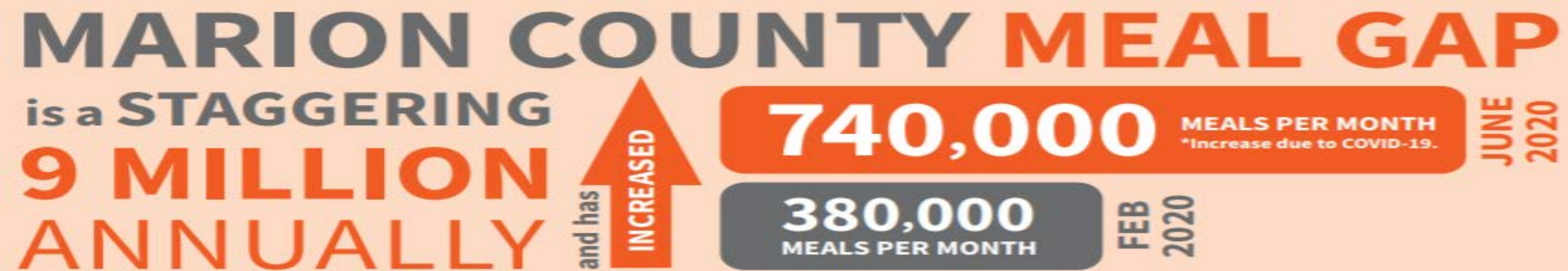
# Charlottesville Food Justice Network (VA)

- Successfully advocated for the City of Charlottesville to allocate \$65k toward coordinating a [Food Equity Initiative](#)
- The Initiative will:
  - compile research about local food system
  - establish mechanisms for community to inform Initiative activities
  - present recommendations to improve food equity for all Charlottesville residents.



# Examples from Indy: Assessments and data collection

- Use social science based data collection and analysis
- Be a hub of information gathering, sharing and engagement
- Assemble a vision based on the lived experiences, stories and data
- Have a legacy of meaningful dialogue for change and sustainability





# How food councils advance health justice: **Equity in internal practices**

# Examples: Equity in internal practices

- Create bylaws in which representation and decision-making processes reflect equity (Pittsburgh, PA)
- Racial Equity Working Group (Pioneer Valley, MA)
- [Food Equity Advisory Board](#) (St. Louis, MO)



# Pittsburgh Food Policy Council (PA)



- Revised its bylaws to change its representation and decision-making processes to reflect equity
- Created tiers of engagement for stakeholders that are less hierarchical
  - Supporting member
  - Collaborating member
  - Steering committee member
- Working on establishing a stipend to support members who are not attending as part of a salaried job

# Pioneer Valley Grows (MA)

- Created a Racial Equity Working Group to investigate and address systemic racism and inequities in food system
- Organized workshops and discussions around these topics, including
  - Regional forum on immigration, food access and land access
  - Undoing Racism workshop
  - Fundamentals of Facilitation for Racial Justice work



# St. Louis Food Policy Coalition (MO)

- Formed a [Food Equity Advisory Board](#) made up of community champions from underserved parts of the region who advocate for the needs of their communities.
- The Board works to connect community members with information about their food systems and to ensure the Coalition's goals and projects are aligned with the needs of the communities.

# Community Food Access Coalition (Indy): Equity in internal practices

- It is critical to call attention to the following aspects of the recommendations, which embed diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Coalition structure itself:
- Empowered by a City-County Council Resolution and Food Equity Charter
- Comprised of a racially diverse membership that includes City appointees, organization leaders, food system representatives, community members and youth representatives.
- Ensure that the needs of unique and vulnerable populations would be reflected on the Council, including representatives of and experts in youth populations, maternal-child health concerns, aging populations, individuals with disabilities, individuals experiencing homelessness, individuals who were previously incarcerated, and individuals lacking access to transportation, among others.
- Appointees on the Coalition also reflect the cross-sector nature of social determinants of health, and include the representation of healthcare, housing, transit, and economic development sectors.
- Coalition members drawn from all components of the food system in Indianapolis, from emergency food and hunger initiatives, growing food and urban agriculture, aggregating, processing, and distributing food, food retailing across a variety of retail formats and food economy, investment and infrastructure.

# Where to learn more

- Principles for Equitable and Inclusive Engagement, Kirwan Institute: <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/ki-civic-engagement.pdf>
- Examples of FPCs' equity actions: <http://www.foodpolicynetworks.org/equity/action/>
- Resources on operationalizing equity: <http://www.foodpolicynetworks.org/equity/capacity-building/>
- <http://www.Indyfoodcouncil.org>
- <http://www.Foodcomidarawl317.com>

# FOOD POLICY NETWORKS

Building Community | Applying Research | Cultivating Action

## NATIONAL

- FPN listserv with ~2000 members
- Food Policy Council Directory of 300+ councils
- Food Policy Resource Database with 1300+ resources
- Monthly webinars on federal, state and local food policy

## TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Regional food policy networking
- Pre-conference workshops & conference sessions
- One-on-one technical assistance

[FoodPolicyNetworks.org](http://FoodPolicyNetworks.org)