

Food Council Progress Report:

Based on goals identified in the Food Council's 2019-2020 Work Plan and coordinator work plans from 2019 to 2021

INTRODUCTION

The Food Council's 2019-2020 work plan was designed to be a living document that would evolve over time. The work plan was requested during the process to approve the MOU to create a Food Council Coordinator position in the county during the winter of 2018-2019. Any changes made to the Food Council's work plan and/or the Coordinator's scope of work have been approved by the County Manager and the Food Council's Executive Committee. These changes have been communicated in past Food Council Coordinator reports and board presentations.

In 2020, the Food Council shifted its focus to developing connections between community expertise and decision-makers. This work has involved 1) building trusting relationships with the most impacted communities, 2) institutional capacity building, 3) data collection and policy evaluations, 4) community-led research and recommendations.

In 2022, the Food Council will expand these efforts to include the following:

1. **Food Access Assessment:** The assessment began in fall 2021 and will run through spring 2022. A final report will be provided to County and Town leadership in late summer of 2022. The final report will include a community evaluation of food access data and recommendations for service providers and policy makers. This assessment has been designed and facilitated with community experts who have lived experience with food insecurity and hunger.
2. **Expanding Local Food Markets Pilot Program:** Facilitate a stakeholder input process with Cooperative Extension to gauge the interests, needs, and challenges of food producers in Orange County. After evaluating stakeholder responses, the Food Council and Cooperative Extension will provide recommendations for future pilot programs to support expanding markets and increasing access to local products. The stakeholder input process will include food producers and growers in Orange County plus local institutional buyers and regional distributors.

COORDINATOR WORK 2019 – 2022

The Food Council Coordinator was hired in summer of 2019. An annual work plan is developed by the Food Council's Executive Committee and the County Manager approves a final plan. The following are highlights of the Food Council Coordinator's work from 2019 to 2020:

- **Staff liaison to Piedmont Food Processing Center:** Coordinated the completion of a new Management Services Agreement and managed County reporting needs for a collaborative Golden Leaf Foundation grant.
- **Regional Coordination:** Attend regular monthly meetings of statewide and regional networks including NC Farmworker Advocacy Network, North Carolina Network of Food Councils, NC Food System Advocacy Coalition, and regional meetings with TJ Council

of Government, Triangle area food councils, and Cooperative Extension Food Security Coordinators.

- Food Council Coordination: Organize and facilitate all food council meetings and administrative needs, support board development with co-chairs, manage all requests from elected boards, coordinate and implement Food Council projects, committees, and activities.
- Administrative Support: Manage the Food Council's administrative needs including annual budgets, invoicing and contracts, grant writing, annual reports, County staff requirements, and email/website communication.
- Education and Capacity Building: Coordinate and lead trainings, attend regular webinars/professional development workshops, read relevant research, and stay up to date on equitable food system practices.

2019-2020 WORK PLAN GOALS, PROGRESS, AND OUTCOMES

Network Development & Community Engagement

Goals	Performance Measures	Summary of Progress	Outcomes
Facilitate conversations between regional food councils, food system practitioners and elected officials to build collaboration as a regional foodshed.	Attend 4 regional meetings per year; increase collaborative activities and sharing of resources/information	*Co-led the development of the Triangle Regional Food Council Collaborative *Coordinate and participate in regular regional meetings between cooperative extension, food councils, and TJCOG *Participated in Project 40 (including elected officials, food system practitioners, regional planners, and Triangle J COG)	Regional collaborative able to engage in larger scale food policy Strong partnerships with regional planners, economic developers, and policy makers interested in regional work Workshops facilitated by this network and UNC School of Government

Hold regular food council and workgroup meetings and community forums.	Convene monthly meetings with Food Council members, workgroups, partners and community members and biennial community forums; increase the number of people participating	*Monthly meetings have continued and workgroup participation expanded from 2018 to 2020 *Relationships with community members have deepened and we have expanded the amount of community partner organizations we work with *New website was launched in spring 2020 and meeting minutes will be updated soon *community forums planned for 2020 - 2021 fiscal year are postponed due to the Covid19 pandemic; smaller gatherings are happening via zoom	6 new council members New designated seat for Cooperative Extension Expanded partnerships with food agencies and practitioners Council leadership includes lived experience with food insecurity and farming Website with user-friendly resources More workgroup members and one new workgroup created
Learn about barriers and opportunities to engage hard to reach populations in creating a stronger county food system.	A listening session guide is developed; collaborate with community organizations like Jackson Center, Family Success Alliance, El Centro, and Refugee Community Partnership	Change: in conversations with community leaders and partners it was determined a listening session guide would not support the actual goal. The Food Council has redirected their efforts to engage directly with community members most impacted by issues in the food system. Two projects have come out of this process since 2020: Orange County Black Farmer Think Tank and a community-led Food Access Assessment.	A methodology for equitable community-based food system development *the methodology is being built through two pilot programs happening in the beginning stages of a Food Policy Agenda process
Develop and implement a broad communication	Regular social media posts and website	*Information and resource sharing	Emergency food resources and

strategy to build awareness of the resources, activities and needs within the Orange County Food System	updates	happens regularly	information shared Regular updates about events shared Increased page traffic Website with new resources
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Local Food Economy

Goals	Performance Measures	Summary of Progress	Outcomes
Identify funding sources to stimulate economic growth and increase demand for local foods	Regular workgroup meetings are held (at least 10 annually) A presentation is developed on the use of other funding sources for local food system activities. Develop a plan for the use of the identified funding sources to stimulate economic growth and increase demand for local foods.	*Workgroup met monthly from 2018 - until March 2020, workgroup leads have been meeting remotely via zoom *From 2018 - 2019 the Local Food Economy Workgroup and members of the Ag Preservation Board met to develop an Agricultural Trust Fund Proposal. The proposal focused on the use of deferred taxes through the Present-Use Value Program. *Invested more time in determining racial equity gaps and needs in the proposal *Met regularly with local farmers' markets, Cooperative Extension, and Economic Development to understand regional supply and demand	Ag Trust Fund Policy Proposal created Racial Equity Assessment of two county agriculture programs completed Black Farmer Think Tank group (ongoing) Stronger partnerships with regional planners, food processing facilities, farmers, and economic developers
Identify a baseline of locally grown food consumption in	Meetings of the Local Food Economy Workgroup are held	*Worked with Chapel Hill Mayor's office, Farmer Foodshare, and UNC to create a	Local foods purchased by UNC Increase of local

Orange County public institutions and through strategic partnerships support an increase in the amount of locally grown food procured by the identified partner institutions and agencies (measured in dollars spent for food purchasing).	with representatives of local institutions to chart out a plan to meet the goal. The Local Food Economy Workgroup will facilitate relationship building between local food providers and local public institutions to help meet the determined goals around local food procurement.	relationship for an ongoing local procurement commitment *Convened meetings between school nutrition directors and Farmer Foodshare to support schools in sourcing some local foods with available entitlement dollars from Department of Defense funding *Supported the Orange County Farm to Early Child Education Coalition to increase locally grown foods in childcare centers and develop partnerships between farmers and centers	foods purchased by Orange County Schools Local farmers selling directly to several child care centers
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Food Access

Goals	Performance Measures	Summary of Progress	Outcomes
Increase community awareness of food access resources available in Orange County.	10 meetings of the Food Access Workgroup are held each fiscal year. Develop a Community Food Resource Guide that incorporates the many different resource guides available through various agencies in the county.	*Food Access Workgroup met monthly from 2018 - March 2020, workgroup has been meeting via zoom since the pandemic began *Created a Community Food Resource Guide in collaboration with food access providers and community leaders *Guide is updated 1-2 annually or anytime someone contacts the Coordinator with new information	Community Food Resource Guide available on website and in PDF (in multiple languages) Workgroup membership grew and diversified 3 community workshops hosted

Coordinate with Town and County departments and associated partners to research successful policies that provide incentives, help subsidize purchasing and/or increase access to healthy, fresh foods.	6 meetings with Town and County departments and food system partners (Health, Housing, Aging, DSS, Summer Food Program etc.) to provide presentations on findings to the advisory boards associated with the Town and County departments. Town and County departments as well as food provider partners that are better informed on policies and practices that can help increase access to healthy foods and help the Town and County departments meet their strategic goals	*Met over 12 months with strategic partners including county staff, HHS leadership, Food for the Summer program partners, elected officials, and community members with lived experience around food access; focus of meetings was to understand 1) what programs, resources, and policies currently exist that address the issue of hunger and 2) look at the issue of access to fresh, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods through a multi-sector approach (how housing and cost of living impacts access to food) *Participated in meetings with food councils and advocates across NC and around the U.S. to better understand best practices and innovative approaches to address the systemic issues that cause hunger and limited access to fresh food *Developed a report and presentation that was shared at the annual County Commissioner retreat in January 2020 *Create an infographic that was shared across our network, with the	Relationships formed with food agencies and County agencies Presentation given to BOCC at annual board retreat Food insecurity report with pandemic data Food Security infographic Increased food access representation on the Food Council including direct service agencies and community members with lived experience Food Access Think Tank is in development
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		Food Council, and elected liaisons (infographic will need to be updated due to the pandemic); the infographic is intended as a tool to help policy makers and community members understand a systems change and racial equity approach to solving hunger *Cross sector and cross departmental identification of resources, data, and best practices is ongoing	
Identify redundancies and recommend more efficient use of resources and effective program implementation	Food council representatives attend, convene, and/or facilitate meetings between outside agency food providers at least six times per fiscal year. Food Access Workgroup convene Orange County and Chapel Hill-Carrboro public schools to better understand how food access can be improved in the school system.	*Met with outside agencies working together to map overlap and improve practices *Shared best practices and other resources with outside agencies about racial equity approach to food access *Met work CHCCS Sustainability Director, Nutrition Director, and some faculty to understand the impact and potential growth of school gardens *Co-facilitated a school garden tour for elected officials in the county *Provided a presentation on best practices for farm to school with support from CHCCS	Resource list created to help agencies Attend monthly Food for the Summer meetings (now focused on Covid coordination) Partnerships and communication channels created with food agencies Hosted school garden tour and provided educational materials to elected officials Partnerships between farmers and school nutrition directors Increased local foods purchased by school systems

		Sustainability Director and CEFS North Carolina Farm to School Coordinator	
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Food Waste

Goals	Performance Measures	Summary of Progress	Outcomes
Reduce food waste across all sectors within Orange County	10 meetings of the Waste Recovery Workgroup are held each fiscal year. The number of businesses utilizing the Orange County Solid Waste composting program will increase. Create a toolkit for waste diversion best practices, programs and resources Create a toolkit for waste diversion best practices, programs and resources Work with the Orange County Solid Waste Advisory Board as one of the stakeholder groups in the 2019 strategic planning process Develop goals and recommendations for decreasing food waste	*Waste Recovery Workgroup met monthly from October 2018 to March 2020 (meetings will begin again in fall 2020) *Facilitated a relationship between OC Solid Waste and Joe Van Gogh Coffee which helped JVG Coffee transition to all compostable products *Developed a survey that was distributed across Orange County and the Triangle to gather best practices and waste reduction strategies from institutions and the private sector (findings are being compiled into a report) *Discovered other toolkits focused on waste reduction and workgroup determined a new toolkit was not needed *Convened meetings between OC Solid Waste, Brooks Composting, and Orange County Schools to develop a	Over 10 meetings annually held Increased number of businesses utilizing the OC Solid Waste composting program Collected valuable data via a regional food recovery survey Partnership developed between Orange Co Solid Waste and Orange Co Schools Composting pilot program adopted by Orange Co Schools SOP's for food recovery created at state level (via DHSS)

		pilot compost program modeled after CHCCS's program (program now on hold due to Covid19) *Worked with a statewide coalition to advocate for the NC DHHS to develop standard operating procedures for prepared food recovery and donations (including the issue of sharing tables in schools and other food recovery practices) *Working with OC Solid Waste and plan to participate in future SWAG strategic planning process	
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