



# LOCAL FOOD ACTION PLAN

## CITY OF COLUMBUS & FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NOVEMBER 2016

In November 2014, rooted in the belief that all residents of Columbus and Franklin County should have access to nutritious and affordable food, Columbus City Council and the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, led by Councilmember Priscilla Tyson and Commissioner John O'Grady, partnered to launch the Columbus & Franklin County Local Food Action Plan. Nonprofit Local Matters was an important part of the leadership team.

The Columbus & Franklin County Local Food Action Plan provides a framework of common goals and actions that serve to unify residents, schools, community organizations, businesses and local government in supporting a healthy, strong and resilient local food system. The plan's goals and actions represent those with the greatest potential for a positive impact on the food related issues facing our community.

The plan seeks to address the consequences of significant social issues such as poverty, underemployment and unemployment that lead to inequalities in access to food.

### Community Snapshot

**1 in 5 children** in Columbus are food insecure and are more likely to experience chronic disease.

*(2014 Franklin County Children's Report; Community Research Partners)*

In the 2014/15 school year, 30% of pre-K and 28% of kindergarten students in Columbus City Schools had a Body Mass Index at or above the 85th percentile, putting them at **increased risk for high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and other weight related issues.**

*(Columbus City Schools Wellness Initiative)*

In 2012, **less than 6% of total agricultural sales** in Franklin County were for fruits, vegetables and livestock.

*(2012 USDA Census of Agriculture)*

**Less than 25% of adults** in Franklin County report consuming fruit and vegetables the recommended five or more times a day.

*(Franklin County Health Map 13)*

**About 13% of the material** entering the Franklin County Sanitary Landfill each year is food waste.

*(2013 Waste Characterization Study of the Municipal Solid Waste Entering the Franklin County Sanitary Landfill)*

In 2010, The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) described 275,641 Franklin County residents (24%) as having **low access to grocery stores** with 72,902 of those also identified as low income.

*(Food Access Research Atlas; United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service)*

In 2011, on average, 24% of Franklin County residents had to **travel 2.5 times farther to reach a full-service grocery store than they did to reach a fast food restaurant.** The rate was as high as almost 40% in some neighborhoods.

*(Columbus Public Health)*

## Purpose

**VISION: A fair and sustainable food system that benefits our economy, our environment and all people.**

The plan is intended to inform public policy, inspire program development, foster community collaborations, guide local funding strategies, and establish the foundation for successful philanthropic and public grant applications. Working together to implement the actions and achieve the plan's goals, residents in the City of Columbus and Franklin County will realize the following benefits:

- A stronger, more resilient local food system with increased coordination between public, private and community stakeholders.
- Neighborhoods with better access to healthy foods through improved transportation and

transit routes, and more neighborhood food retail outlets offering healthy affordable food.

- Increased access to education about healthy foods through a coordinated, equitable and culturally competent community plan for food education.
- A stronger market for food businesses through an enhanced local food supply chain that connects producers, processors, distributors and buyers.
- More employment and job training opportunities through new and expanded local food businesses.
- Revitalized communities through the development of centralized neighborhood food marketplaces and the redevelopment of vacant spaces.
- Increased consumer education for food waste reduction and household composting, technical assistance to food businesses, and regulatory updates that support food waste diversion.

## Implementation

More than 1000 residents and stakeholders participated in the development of this plan through community-level food planning meetings, stakeholder interviews, surveys and public feedback sessions. Successful implementation of the plan will involve the collaboration of communities, stakeholders, food businesses, nonprofits and public agencies in the City of Columbus, Franklin County and the region.

New opportunities and ever-changing conditions in our community will require plan users to consider

new and innovative ideas that support the vision of the plan going forward.

A City-County Joint Local Food Team along with an advisory board will be formed to guide implementation of the plan. The team and board will issue annual progress reports and updates on the plan.

To view the plan and all supporting documents from the planning process, visit: [www.columbus.gov/LFAP](http://www.columbus.gov/LFAP).

### CULTURAL COMPETENCY AND HEALTH EQUITY

Franklin County and the City of Columbus are home to more than one million people, but not everyone has the same opportunities to be healthy. We see differences in health based on race, ethnicity, sex, neighborhood, income, education, sexual orientation and other factors. Health inequities are differences in health status and death rates across population groups that are systemic, avoidable, unfair and unjust. These differences are sustained over time and are beyond the control of individuals. To ensure all residents have fair and equitable access to affordable, healthy and local food, each of the plan's goals has been developed with a commitment to cultural competency, race, age, ethnicity, language, nationality, religious diversity, literacy levels, and residence, and they must be considered throughout implementation. To ensure equity and the cultural competency of the Local Food Action Plan's implementation, staff training with key community agencies, organizations and groups will be undertaken annually.



## GOAL A: Enhance coordination and communication among existing food resources and agencies.

At the city and county level, coordinated support is needed to improve how people access food, grow food, learn about food and prevent food waste. A collaborative approach is required to ensure these issues are addressed across public departments, aiming for cooperation among similar efforts. Increased collaboration will benefit community programs, neighborhood efforts and cross-county networking while ensuring that underserved residents have increased access to a wide range of services.

### ACTIONS

- A-1** Establish a Joint City and County Local Food Team and Advisory Group to coordinate the implementation of the Local Food Action Plan and connect to other food system initiatives

## GOAL B: Improve access to and education about healthy food, affordable food and local food.

The following actions will improve the availability and affordability of healthy food and local food for all residents while providing them skills to feed themselves and their families. These actions represent a variety of solutions to expand and improve programs that have been tested in our community and around the country.



### ACTIONS

- B-1** Prioritize access to healthy, affordable food sources in transit system infrastructure and planning efforts
- B-2** Expand the availability of training and tools to help small food retail locations become reliable places for healthy, affordable and local food
- B-3** Establish a formal farmers market management collaborative serving the City of Columbus and Franklin County
- B-4** Expand consumer access to local healthy food purchasing incentives
- B-5** Grow capacity and enhance viability of civic agriculture to allow more residents to grow food for themselves and their neighbors
- B-6** Support grocery store and healthy food retail location and expansion in neighborhoods with low access
- B-7** Identify and implement mobile strategies that bring healthy, affordable and local food to residents
- B-8** Public and institutional buyers adopt and implement food purchasing policies to support increased purchases of healthy and local food
- B-9** Support the development of a comprehensive network of educational resources and infrastructure that connects residents with healthy, affordable and local food
- B-10** Engage those most impacted by health disparities, including low-income, African American, Hispanic, New American and other underrepresented communities, in developing and implementing culturally appropriate food assistance, education, nutrition, gardening and cooking programs
- B-11** Incorporate onsite nutrition education and counseling, shopping strategies and healthy food purchasing incentives at food retail
- B-12** Support the expansion of nutrition and food system education in Pre-K-12 curricula





## GOAL C: Increase the role of food in economic development.

Building on the existing role of food in the economy, the following actions will support a stronger market for local food businesses, create jobs and foster community revitalization. Improving the viability of food businesses benefits everyone in the food system.

### ACTIONS

- C-1** Create a food processing and distribution collaborative
- C-2** Establish a local food supply connector position to expand market opportunities for local food
- C-3** Create a consumer-producer-buyer verification process to support increased and authenticated healthy local food purchasing
- C-4** Advocate for food system workers in local and regional workforce development efforts
- C-5** Study and describe the impact of wages and policies on food system workers and the affordability of food
- C-6** Revise zoning codes, related permit requirements and land use plans to support and encourage agricultural and food system uses as a viable option for community revitalization
- C-7** Repurpose vacant commercial, industrial and residential sites for local food system uses
- C-8** Develop central food marketplaces that reflect the culture and diversity of neighborhoods
- C-9** Connect new or growing small-scale neighborhood food businesses to flexible financial and technical assistance options

## GOAL D: Prevent food-related waste.

These actions will bolster existing food waste prevention efforts, while supporting new and impactful strategies that decrease the amount of food-related waste going to local landfills.



### ACTIONS

- D-1** Expand food waste prevention education campaigns for consumers, local governments, Pre-K-12 schools and food businesses
- D-2** Leverage food waste reduction resources and strategies to increase the number of residents who access training, education and equipment for effective backyard composting
- D-3** Recommend changes to policies, zoning and health codes that support and encourage food waste recovery and diversion
- D-4** Provide training, tools and economic incentives for new and existing food businesses to develop, adopt and implement food waste prevention plans
- D-5** Build support for food waste recovery infrastructure among local leaders and large-scale food waste generators

**Learn more at [columbus.gov/LFAP](https://columbus.gov/LFAP).**

Go online to view the full plan and learn more about our process.



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