



FRESH



LOCAL FOOD ACTION PLAN
CITY OF COLUMBUS & FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2019

If you eat food, the health of our local food system matters.

If you eat food, the health of our local food system matters—from how food is grown and gets to our tables, to what happens to the food we throw away. A weak local food system can prevent residents from accessing healthy and affordable food, lead to unnecessary food-related waste and make it hard for small food businesses to succeed. But a strong and resilient local food system can help support the health of our residents, feed our hungry neighbors, strengthen our local economy and protect the natural resources that make our community a great place to live, work and play.

The City of Columbus and Franklin County believe in the power of a thriving local food system. That's why since 2016, the City and County have committed resources to implementing the Local Food Action Plan to make our local food system better for everyone.

The Local Food Action Plan is the result of a community planning effort to create a stronger, more sustainable local food system for the City of Columbus and Franklin County. Under the leadership of Columbus City Council Member Priscilla R. Tyson and Franklin County Commissioner John O'Grady—and with the program and project support of City and County staff and the Local Food Board—our vision is a fair and sustainable food system that benefits our economy, our environment and all people.



Fresh produce at Jubilee Market in Franklinton



Greater South East Community Garden at Gethsamane



Learning tour at Franklinton Farms

Local Food Action Plan Goals:

- A: Enhance coordination and communication among existing food resources and agencies.**
- B: Improve access to and education about healthy food, affordable food and local food.**
- C: Increase the role of food in economic development.**
- D: Prevent food-related waste.**

In 2018, the Local Food Action Plan was all about moving forward and making progress toward our goals. Some of our biggest accomplishments included establishing new places where residents can access healthy and affordable local food, such as the Linden Farmers Market, understanding the financial and technical support resources new and growing local food businesses need to thrive, and setting in motion a plan to develop better solutions for food waste in Franklin County. We provided more than \$50,000 in City and County funds to support 47 community gardens and continued to develop and strengthen local partnerships that support all facets of the plan.

All together, over \$900,000 in local, state and federal funds were invested to help support our local food system efforts in 2018.

Spotlight On:

Our Local Food System

- It is estimated that for every dollar spent at a local farmers market, 30 to 45 cents stay in the area. Large chains only return 15 cents to the local economy.¹
- In Franklin County, 1 in 4 adults eat vegetables less than one time per day and almost half of adults consume fruit less than one time per day.²
- The Mid-Ohio Foodbank estimates that each year Franklin County residents who live at or below 200 percent of the poverty line are missing 69 million meals each year. In 2018, 200 percent of the poverty level was \$50,200 for a family of four.³
- In Franklin County, 65 percent of adults are overweight or obese and 11 percent of adults have been told by a healthcare professional that they have diabetes.⁴
- About 12.8 percent of the material entering Franklin County Sanitary Landfill each year is food waste. That means more than 152,000 tons of food waste went into the landfill in 2018.⁵

2018 Key Accomplishments

Establishing a formal farmers market management collaborative

A network of strong farmers markets where local producers can sell healthy, local food gives Columbus and Franklin County residents more access to food and creates economic opportunities for local food businesses.

Working together, the Ohio Farmers Market Network (OFMN) and the Community of Caring Development Corporation launched the inaugural season of the Linden Farmers Market in 2018. The market, championed by Council Member Priscilla R. Tyson and funded by Columbus City Council, operated every Sunday, from July 1 to September 1. Thirty-six vendors—10 of which were based in Linden and 17 of which were minority or women-owned—served an estimated 4,000 customers. Those customers spent over \$3,000 in nutrition program and incentive dollars—including WIC Farmers Market Coupons, SNAP, Produce Perks and Linden Farmers Market Greens—making the market more accessible to those living in low-food security households. Based on customer surveys, almost two-thirds of the market customers lived in the Linden area.

“I enjoy visiting farmers markets because I love to buy local fresh produce in the summer. As someone who lives and worships in Linden, I was thrilled that a market was opening in my neighborhood. In addition to providing another fresh food option, the market provided a place for old friends to catch up and new friendships to develop.”

– Jocelyn Armstrong, Linden Resident and Farmers Market Customer

The Linden Farmers Market exemplified what a professionally managed farmers market can bring to a neighborhood and identified best practices that can be applied to other farmers markets throughout the region. A group of community stakeholders—which included farmers market managers, nutrition incentive program staff, producers and residents—helped identify what our community needs from a farmers market management collaborative and piloted those approaches in Linden.

This group of stakeholders also helped the OFMN develop a plan to increase consumption of and access to locally and regionally produced agricultural products in Central Ohio through technical assistance, marketing support and a strategic plan for the growth of farmers markets. The United States Department of Agriculture Farmers Market Promotion Program awarded OFMN more than \$265,000 in September 2018 to support this collaborative effort.

Columbus City Council also provided funding to the Greater Columbus Growing Coalition to provide the insurance coverage their member gardens needed to sell products at local farmers markets. Additionally, Columbus City Council provided funding

to OSU Extension Franklin County to make soil testing available at no cost to producers growing food for Columbus residents.



Pictured left to right: Jocelyn Armstrong, Kim Palmer, Charity Clancy

“In 2018, I invested financial and social capital behind important issues that disproportionately affect our most vulnerable populations: economic hardship and lack of access to healthy food. By piloting a farmers market in the Linden area, we provided residents with healthy food and supported economic development for vendors while learning lessons that can be applied to other markets throughout Columbus and Franklin County. We remain dedicated in tackling issues around urban agriculture and grocery stores. I will continue to be resolute in working with our community to create a stronger food system that benefits our economy, our environment and all people.”

– Priscilla R. Tyson, Columbus City Council



“Food is a critical part of our local economy and community. Restaurants, food trucks, grocery stores, urban farms and other types of food businesses create jobs, strengthen our community and ensure residents have access to healthy, affordable and local food. That’s why Franklin County remains committed to working with community stakeholders to implement the Local Food Action Plan.”

– John O’Grady, Franklin County Board of Commissioners



Connecting new or growing food businesses to flexible financial and technical assistance options

Connecting food businesses, particularly new or growing ones, with flexible financial and technical assistance increases their likelihood of success. New or growing businesses need an array of funding options, as well as training and tools.

Another team of food system stakeholders—including food businesses, small business advocates, lenders and economic development experts—explored the challenges and opportunities facing local food-related businesses, such as access to traditional funding. They engaged dozens of local partners to develop and support food-related businesses by connecting them to the financial and technical assistance options they need. This work will lead to the creation of a one-stop, online business portal for entrepreneurs and business owners looking to start, operate and grow a food-related business in Columbus and Franklin County.

Reducing food waste in Franklin County

Food waste is a critical issue in the food system but is not yet widely understood. Developing the future of food waste recovery infrastructure requires convening local leaders and food businesses to learn about and discuss current models of prevention, reduction and recovery efforts.

The Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio (SWACO) leveraged Local Food Board partnerships to elevate the issue of food waste in Franklin County. In September 2018, the Central Ohio Food Waste Initiative (COWFI) convened to form an action plan for reducing, rescuing and recycling food waste, and to conduct a compost facility feasibility study. Plans for COWFI’s work will focus on: (1) creating a public education campaign about food waste, (2) promoting existing food waste services and programs, and (3) developing school curriculum on food waste. A comprehensive report and action plan is expected in 2019.

Spotlight On:

Equity

Everyone involved in the implementation of the Local Food Action Plan has remained committed to ensuring that all residents have fair and equitable access to affordable food, healthy food and local food. The pilot of the Linden Farmers Market, the City and County’s Community Garden Grant program, and efforts to connect food businesses to financial and technical assistance tools provide examples of how that commitment has translated into action in 2018.

The **Linden Farmers Market** pilot project intentionally provided economic opportunities for Linden and minority-owned businesses while making food more accessible to residents in the area.

The **Community Garden Grant program** is an ongoing effort to increase access to healthy food for those in low-income and low-access areas. In 2018, 100 percent of the County’s grant funding and 74 percent of the City’s funding was awarded to gardens that were located in low-to-moderate income neighborhoods and CelebrateOne Priority Neighborhoods, respectively.

In our efforts to **connect new or growing small-scale neighborhood food businesses to flexible financial and technical assistance options**, we engaged and interviewed a wide range of diverse stakeholders, including low-income and minority entrepreneurs and business owners, minority business providers, and diverse professional associations. Their feedback has significantly shaped the project, ensuring that low-income and minority-owned food-related businesses have the resources and services they need to succeed.

Advancing Our Goals: Progress Snapshots

In 2018, members of the Local Food Board and Local Food Team developed new partnerships, strengthened existing partnerships and provided support to community projects that will help advance the Local Food Action Plan goals. Use the key to the right to learn what goals were supported with each project. This work included:

Local Food Action Plan Goals:



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



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



C: Increase the role of food in economic development.



D: Prevent food-related waste.

All People's Fresh Market 🍏

All People's Fresh Market, a program of Community Development for All People's Healthy Eating and Living Initiative, opened in March 2018 in a former drive-thru liquor store on the south side of Columbus. Since opening, the market has distributed more than 1.5 million pounds of fresh food, including produce, dairy, bread and meat provided by Mid-Ohio Foodbank and other donors, to 26,944 qualifying individuals and families in 8,734 households.

City of Columbus & Franklin County Community Garden Support 🗨️🍏💰

In 2018:

- Forty-seven (47) community gardens received grants from the City or County
 - \$30,000 to 34 community gardens in the City of Columbus
 - \$20,000 to 13 gardens located in low-to-moderate income areas of Franklin County
- The Land Bank Center leased more than 90 vacant properties for community gardens
- Franklin Park Conservatory hosted the Community Garden Earth Day Celebration
- Sixty-four (64) Scotts Miracle-Gro employees distributed 2,450 pounds of donated product

“The Bronzeville Growers Market created a place of learning for youth and adults and provided a source of inspiration for new ways in which to engage the community through the land—no matter how neglected it may be.”

– Julialynne Walker, Founder of the Bethany Presbyterian Church Garden & Market Manager of Bronzeville Growers Market



Mid-Ohio Foodbank USDA Urban Agriculture Grant 🗨️🍏💰

In 2018, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Services and the City of Columbus Land Redevelopment Office helped provide funding to support the development and expansion of sustainable urban farming activities. Through this work:

- \$150,000 was awarded to 13 local urban farms and community gardens
- Four (4) trainings/workshops were provided by OSU Franklin County Extension and area farms



Urban farmer Mark Van Fleet preparing carrots for market



Jenn Fowler and Tim Van Meter from Seminary Hill Farms serve customers at the Linden Farmers Market

Lower Lights Jubilee Market and Cafe 🍏💰

The Lower Lights Health Center Jubilee Market and Cafe opened in Franklinton in May 2018. The non-profit grocery store offers fresh produce, meats and shelf-stable items, as well as a cafe and salad bar. The market welcomes SNAP benefits and offers discounts on fresh produce for income-eligible shoppers. In addition to financial support from the City of Columbus, the Local Food Team helped connect Jubilee Market to other resources to obtain donated equipment such as shelving, display cases and serving utensils.

Kroger Zero Hunger | Zero Waste Initiative 🍏♻️

This social impact plan is Kroger’s commitment to end hunger in our communities and eliminate waste across the company by 2025. In 2018, the Kroger Columbus Division:

- Rescued more than 3.2 million pounds of food
- Donated over 40 million meals (in food and funds)
- Diverted more than 21,000 tons of food waste from local landfills

Northern Lights Resource Guide



Franklin County helped connect residents to resources with the 2018 Northern Lights Resource Guide. The guide identified businesses providing similar services to those previously offered by large grocery retailers that have left the Linden community and helped residents locate essential services within walking distance of the Northern Lights Shopping Center. The Local Food Team worked with organizations in the Linden community to distribute the guide. To download the guide, visit www.tinyurl.com/northernlightsresources.

Spotlight On: Community

The Local Food Action Plan has always been a community plan—and with the help of the Franklin County Local Food Council, the community remains at the heart of implementation efforts. The Council will continue to build upon the planning process, in which more than 1,200 residents and stakeholders have been engaged through surveys, public hearings and neighborhood planning meetings facilitated by Local Matters.

Find out how you can get involved and sign up for the Council’s email updates at www.fclocalfoodcouncil.org.



Produce Perks Columbus 🍏💰

In 2018, Produce Perks Columbus increased access to fresh, local foods for customers using SNAP by matching SNAP spending at farmers markets, dollar for dollar up to \$20. The program reported a 22 percent increase in spending and incentives in Franklin County over 2017 with:

- 11 farmers markets
- 354 vendors
- \$18,713 in SNAP dollars
- \$16,320 in Produce Perks
- \$35,033 in total economic impact

Produce Perks Columbus were also part of Harvesting Health in the Heartland through Statewide Nutrition Incentive Program Expansion effort, earning a \$2.7 million Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) award from the USDA to fund farmers markets throughout Ohio through 2021.

Council of Development Finance Agencies Franklin County Pilot 💬💰

The Council of Development Finance Agencies (CDFA) was awarded funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to explore supporting the local food economy using traditional finance tools, such as bonds, tax increment finance, tax credits and revolving loan funds. This project includes food systems finance research, case studies, pilot projects and a national advisory council. CDFA has identified Franklin County as one of the pilot project locations and they are working with the Local Food Team to identify existing financing options for food system projects. To find more information on CDFA's Kellogg project, visit www.cdfa.net/cdfa/cdfaweb.nsf/pages/cdfakelloggproject.html.



Shoppers at the North Market Farmers Market



Summer squash at local community garden

Ohio Days: My Plate, My State 🗨️🍏💰

Columbus City Schools Food Service launched Ohio Days in January 2016 and now six of the 15 local school districts in Franklin County are offering one menu a month consisting of foods grown, raised and/or processed in Ohio. Ohio Days continues to gain local and national recognition as a best practice in farm-to-school efforts and was highlighted at the 2018 National Farm to Cafeteria Conference.

In 2018, Columbus City Schools Food Service spent approximately 21 percent of their food budget on foods grown, raised and/or processed in Ohio (excluding milk), up from 17 percent in 2017.

This represents an economic investment of more than \$2 million dollars, with over \$500,000 spent on Ohio grown fruits and vegetables.

Columbus City Schools Apple Processing Line 🗨️💰♻️

With the support of a USDA Farm to School Grant, Columbus City Schools (CCS) installed an apple processing line in September 2018, allowing elementary schools throughout the district to regularly offer sliced apples on salad bars.

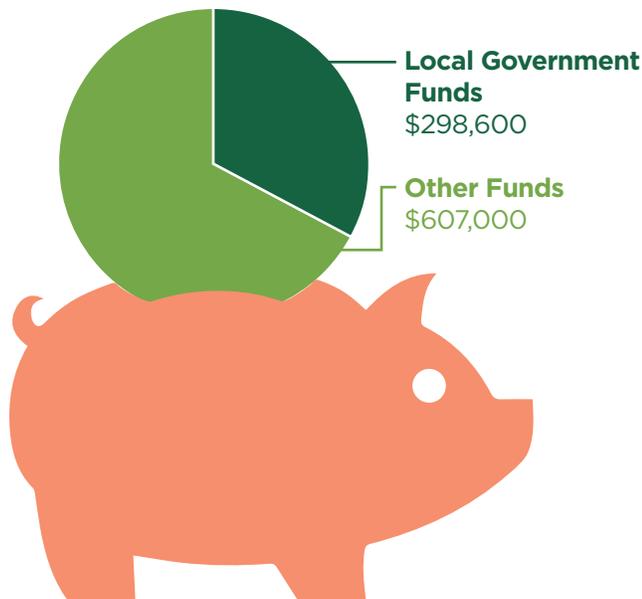
- Students ate 2.75 times more when offered sliced apples compared to whole
- 12,285 pounds of apple waste were sent to a local organics compost facility instead of the landfill in the first three months of operation.

“The sliced apples are delicious and help children to make healthy choices! They are good for your body and we all need things that are good for us!”

– Ava Corbin, 2nd Grader at Ecole Kenwood French Immersion School, Columbus City Schools



2018 Local Food System Investments



Council Member Priscilla R. Tyson visits the MPACC Community Garden. Pictured left to right: Carnell Willoughy, Sheri J. Neale, Cheryl Graffagnino, Council Member Priscilla R. Tyson, John Schrock, Jalisa Dawkins

Implementing the Plan

When Columbus City Council and Franklin County Board of Commissioners adopted the Local Food Action Plan in late 2016, Columbus City Council Member Priscilla R. Tyson and Franklin County Commissioner John O’Grady vowed that this would not be a plan that “sits on a shelf.” They committed City and County staff to ensure implementation of the plan and called on community leaders to support this effort by appointing them to the newly formed Local Food Board.

Local Food Board Members

Susan Beaudry

Vice President, Osteopathic Heritage Foundation

Matt Habash

President and CEO, Mid-Ohio Foodbank

Cathann Kress, PhD

Vice President of Agricultural Administration & Dean, The College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, The Ohio State University

Tony Logan, JD • Vice-Chairperson

Managing Partner, The Renewables Space LLC
Farm Owner, Logan Brothers, LLC

Aaron Mann (1/18-9/18)

District J Manager, The Kroger Co.

Ty Marsh

Executive Director, Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio (SWACO)

Amy McCormick (10/18-present)

Corporate Affairs Manager, The Kroger Co.

Laquore Meadows, PhD

County Extension Director, The Ohio State University
Extension Franklin County

Michelle Moskowitz Brown

Executive Director, Local Matters

Charles Nabrit

President, Greater Columbus Growing Coalition (GCGC)
Associate, Penn Nabrit & Associates

Ernest Perry • Chairperson

President and CEO, HandsOn Central Ohio

Randy Sokol

Restaurant Owner
Ohio Restaurant Association Representative

Chris Strayer (1/18-4/18)

Senior Project Manager, Columbus 2020

City-County Local Food Team

A team of City and County staff works with the Local Food Board to implement the Local Food Action Plan.

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How We Work Together

— Shared Responsibilities
... Supporting Relationships





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COLUMBUS
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

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