



## LOCAL FOOD ACTION PLAN

### CITY OF COLUMBUS & FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO

# 2021 Annual Report

April 2022

In 2021 the Local Food Board built on its 2020 Statement on Racism by working closely with consultant Kip Holley (K. Holley Consulting, LLC) on a Racial Equity Study to inform future implementation of the Local Food Action Plan. The strategies recommended by the Racial Equity Study will guide the Local Food Board to build deeper relationships with Black communities and center the needs of those most impacted by the effects of structural racism.

This past year continued to demonstrate the disparate impacts of both COVID-19 and food insecurity on racial and ethnic minorities, especially Black households. While the ongoing pandemic continues to disrupt daily life, we have begun to see important changes that will hopefully strengthen our local food system in the future. The pandemic has reminded us how fragile the global food system can be with breakdowns in supply chains creating shortages in communities. Last year saw more local growers respond to these shortages to restaurants and schools with cutting-edge vertical growing operations. One example is Mid-Ohio Food Collective's Farm on the Hilltop, which is testing the viability of innovative business models for local food production. Long-awaited changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) now allow shoppers to use curbside pickup and online shopping/delivery options. Likewise, more SNAP shoppers took advantage of the increased purchasing power provided by Produce Perks to purchase fresh, healthy and local food for their families.

We are still living through the crises of structural racism and the COVID-19 pandemic, but these glimmers of hope demonstrate a way forward. It was this hope for a truly healthy local food system that inspired Columbus City Council Member Priscilla Tyson and Franklin County Commissioner John O'Grady to create the Local Food Action Plan, form the Columbus & Franklin County Local Food Board, hire city and county staff dedicated to food system efforts, and support the grassroots work of the Franklin County Local Food Council.

### Vision

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

### Goals

**A: Enhance coordination and communication among existing food resources and agencies** to create a greater impact through collaboration

**B: Improve access to and education about healthy food, affordable food and local food** for everyone in our community

**C: Increase the role of food in economic development** to strengthen small businesses and ensure the supply of healthy and locally produced food for our community

**D: Prevent food related waste** and recover edible food before it is wasted

# 2021 At a Glance

## Contents

Introduction.....	1
2021 At a Glance.....	2-3
Accomplishments ....	4-7
Advancing Our Goals: Progress Snapshots... ..	8-11
Local Food Action Plan Partners ... ..	12

## Increasing Access

- In 2021, a total of \$99,551 in local government grants and \$30,761 of Scotts Miracle-Gro product was **provided to 67 community gardens** located in Columbus and Franklin County. More than 55% of the supported community gardens are located in CelebrateOne priority areas, which are geographic areas of Franklin County with higher infant mortality rates and social vulnerability. The Centers for Disease Control describes social vulnerability as the potential negative effects on communities caused by external stresses on human health. *(Page 7)*
- The newly established Linden Fresh Market and Charitable Pharmacy **increased food access in Linden** by allowing community members to shop for free and fresh produce. *(Page 8)*
- Local Matters expanded its **community food access efforts** by assisting with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) processing at four Women, Infants & Children (WIC) markets and accepting WIC Farmers Market coupons at the Local Matters Veggie Van. *(Page 9)*
- Mid-Ohio Food Collective is installing a new 19,000 square-foot warehouse addition through the support of the Franklin County Board of Commissioners. This additional space will house a new 14,000 square foot freezer and a 5,000 square foot cold dock that will **double its current freezer capacity, allowing for more frozen food donations**. *(Page 9)*
- Franklin County Public Health's (FCPH) Ohio Days Farm to School Program **distributed 2,240 kits** containing lesson plans and gardening supplies to 49 educators across 12 school buildings in Franklin County. *(Page 10)*
- The Produce Perks program experienced **77% growth in fruit and vegetable purchases** in Franklin County. From January to October 2021, the program generated over \$60,000 in fresh produce purchases from 16 Franklin County farmers' markets and grocery stores and an additional \$71,000 in SNAP sales. *(Page 10)*

## Health Equity

- The Local Food Board partnered with Kroger, Community of Caring Development Foundation and consultant Kip Holley to **commission a Racial Equity Study** focused on equitable implementation of the Local Food Action Plan and building partnerships with Black communities. *(Page 4)*
- The Ohio Farmers Market Network's FarmsSHARE program purchased more than \$20,000 worth of locally grown Ohio produce in 2021 and **distributed that produce to more than 3,100 local residents**, 84% of whom are Black, indigenous and/or people of color. *(Page 9)*
- Ohio State's Initiative for Food and AgriCultural Transformation (InFACT) **distributed \$200,497 in seed grants** through the Linkage and Leverage program. One funded program by The Ohio State University seeks to address food security and sovereignty needs among Indigenous peoples who were removed from tribal lands.
- The St. Stephen's Community House (SSCH) Urban Farm was **awarded a USDA Farm to School Grant** to increase students' awareness of the importance of consuming nutritious, locally produced food and increase students' interest in agricultural careers. *(Page 8)*
- Researchers at Ohio State **created an Equity Mapping Tool** to track the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines and assist local public health departments in effective vaccine distribution strategy. Researchers noted both geographic and racialized similarities between COVID-19 vaccine distribution disparities and broader patterns of community disinvestment, including food access.



Bronzeville Growers Market (2020)





Linden McKinley STEM Urban Agriculture Career Pathway Garden (2020)

## Supporting the Local Food Economy

- Columbus City Council adopted the **Residential On-site Produce Sales Ordinance**, which updates the Columbus zoning code to allow for the sale of fresh, local produce in residential areas. *(Page 5)*
- Mid-Ohio Farm on the Hilltop **harvested over 200,000 pounds of mixed produce** from 200 vertical towers in 2021 and hosted 19 community tours. When in full use, the Farm will feature 800 towers producing 235,000 pounds of produce, at a harvest rate of 98%. *(Page 9)*
- The Local Food Board created a new project team to identify zoning code recommendations and best practices to **enable and support small scale urban agriculture**. The project team has already completed a current conditions assessment and will be releasing a full report in 2022. Communities throughout Franklin County will be encouraged to consider zoning changes consistent with the report recommendations. *(Page 7)*
- The Franklin County Local Food Council **hosted a listening session** to hear how the cities of Chicago, Boston and Lawrence, KS updated zoning codes to support urban agriculture. *(Page 10)*
- The Franklin County Food Business Portal had **more than 2,100 users** in 2021 and referred six food entrepreneurs to additional services from the OSU Extension and Small Business Development Center.

## Reducing Food Waste

- Save More Than Food, SWACO's consumer education and awareness campaign for households, schools, restaurants, and businesses, has **over 10 million views and 55,000 website visits** since launching in late 2020. *(Page 6)*
- SWACO received a \$60,000 U.S. EPA grant to implement and evaluate the impacts of the Save More Than Food campaign in the City of Upper Arlington. Preliminary findings show that **food waste among participating households declined significantly** and SWACO plans to release a full report in the near future. *(Page 6)*
- SWACO initiated a public process for identifying potential partners and evaluating opportunities to develop a **regional composting facility**. *(Page 6)*
- SWACO grant funding and assistance for residential food waste drop-off programs resulted in **580,000 pounds of food waste being diverted** from the landfill in 2021. *(Page 6)*

### A Message from Our Health Commissioner

"Access to healthy and fresh foods is an important social determinant of health. When we bring fresh and affordable foods to underserved neighborhoods, we give residents the choices they want and need to improve their health and lives. Food access is critical to helping us achieve health equity."

- Columbus Health Commissioner  
Dr. Mysheika Roberts

# Accomplishments

## Local Food Board Racial Equity Study

“It’s never been clearer that our collective energy is necessary to achieve true and lasting equality. Members of the Columbus & Franklin County Local Food Board have taken a very thoughtful and purposeful approach to develop what we believe are the right actions to substantially and positively impact our city and our county, creating real change now and into the future. We are approaching this effort with humility, knowing we can’t do it alone and don’t and won’t have all the answers. Our Racial Equity Study is just one step in our desire to redefine, deepen, and advance our commitment to ending racism and health disparities.”

- Amy McCormick, Corporate Affairs Manager, The Kroger Co., Local Food Board Chair

In 2020, the Columbus & Franklin County Local Food Board unanimously adopted a Statement on Racism in the Food System calling for solidarity with Black communities and an end to structural racism in the food system. In 2021, the Board turned this statement into action by partnering with Kroger, the Community of Caring Development Foundation, and consultant Kip Holley to commission a Racial Equity Study focused on implementation of the Local Food Action Plan.

Kip Holley utilized interviews, surveys, an analysis of past engagement strategies, and a review of best practices to assess the Board’s past practices and recommend future strategies for addressing racial inequities affecting Black communities. The study identified that efforts focused on partnering with Black communities suffered from a lack of knowledge, connection, and overarching strategy among the Local Food Action Plan partners, while Black communities experienced a mismatch between engagement opportunities and the actual desires of the community.

The Racial Equity Study recommends a three-phase plan to be implemented over at least five years:

- **Phase 1 - Internal Exploration** - The initial phase prioritizes self-reflection, internal coordination, expanded funding, and identification of assets and challenges to create a readiness for effective engagement with Black communities.
- **Phase 2 - Relationship Building** - Once a readiness for engagement is achieved, the second phase prioritizes an authentic, humble and relevant presence among Black communities to deepen relationships and ensure effective and productive dialogue.
- **Phase 3 - Developing Alternate Policy Networks** - Once deeper relationships have been developed with Black communities, the third phase prioritizes grassroots policy development and the implementation of holistic community-led approaches that center the needs of those most impacted by marginalization and oppression and build capacity for Black communities to transform existing power structures.



*Tomatoes at Southside Family Farms (2020)*

The 2020 Local Food Board Statement on Racism in the Food System affirms the need for Black leadership and broad participation as a central component of future policymaking and pledges to expand the work of the Local Food Action Plan in the service of ending racism and health disparities. The 2021 Racial Equity Study provides a roadmap for how to accomplish this vision.

In 2022, the Local Food Board and Local Food Team will work with the Franklin County Local Food Council and other key partners to begin the process of Internal Exploration (Phase 1) with the goals of greater coordination, deeper self-reflection, expanded resources, and, ultimately, a readiness for effective engagement with Black communities.

To download the 2021 Racial Equity Study please visit [www.columbus.gov/LFAP](http://www.columbus.gov/LFAP).



## Residential On-site Produce Sales Ordinance 🍏💰

The onsite sales zoning change is a great step forward in expanding opportunities for local growers to benefit financially from the agricultural endeavors. It brings equity into this space and that is a key part of the mission of The Growing and Growth Collective. Some people who are just starting out in urban growing may not have the resources or connections to sell at larger outlets like farmers markets and most city dwellers do not live on one acre let alone several acres. Allowing flexibility in approved locations for onsite sales aligns with the realities of modern life in urban communities.

- Jera Oliver, The Growing and Growth Collective

In June 2021, with the support of the Local Food Board, Columbus City Council adopted the Residential On-site Produce Sales Ordinance. This ordinance **revised the Columbus zoning code to allow for the sale of fresh, local produce in residential areas.** These critical changes will increase access to fresh, affordable, local produce in Columbus neighborhoods that may lack access to healthy food sources while also expanding opportunities for local farmers and gardeners to sell and distribute fresh, local produce. The ordinance revises the Columbus zoning code in the following ways:

- Creates a definition of “Produce Stand” that includes what it can look like and what can be sold from it.
- Allows agriculture uses, including produce stands, on a minimum lot size of 1 acre and on lots of less than 1 acre as an accessory use with certain stipulations (e.g. time of day, time of year, storage of produce stand, sign standards, vision clearance).

Over 274,000 Franklin County residents are identified as having “low access” to a full service grocery store (United States Department of Agriculture, 2015). However, local farmers and gardeners were previously prohibited from on-site sales or distribution of fresh, local produce grown onsite unless the lot size was at least 5 acres. This ordinance was made possible by Local Food Board and Local Food Team leadership, cross-departmental collaboration within the city of Columbus and substantial community outreach through public meetings and engagement with the Urban Farmer Networking group, The Ohio State University Buckeye Institution Supported Agriculture (ISA) Growers’ Network, and Greater Columbus Growing Coalition. This ordinance implements recommendations related to urban agriculture found in both the Local Food Action Plan and the city of Columbus Green Business and Urban Agriculture Strategic Plan.



Columbus City Council’s adoption of the Residential On-Site Produce Sales Ordinance also marked the successful completion of the Local Food Board’s Action B-5 Project Team. In January 2019, the Local Food Board created the Action B-5 Project Team and appointed Charles Nabrit (Greater Columbus Growing Coalition) and Matt Habash (Mid-Ohio Food Collective) as Co-Sponsors to oversee its work. Action B-5 from the Local Food Action directs the Local Food Board to “Grow capacity and enhance viability of civic agriculture to allow more residents to grow food for themselves and their neighbors.”

The Action B-5 Project Team focused on building capacity and increasing coordination among existing urban agricultural stakeholders to identify barriers and opportunities related to land access, zoning, education and funding for urban agriculture. The Project Team celebrated several successes in addition to the Residential On-Site Produce Sales Ordinance, including:

- Creating the *Growing Food in Columbus - Applicable Regulations & Permits Explained* document, which compiles, summarizes and simplifies the complex regulatory requirements for those growing food within the city of Columbus.
- Assessing and revising the Columbus & Franklin County Urban Gardening Grant to better serve the public through a single application, a simplified timeline and a merged grant review process.

The Local Food Board’s support for urban agriculture will continue through the Action C-6 Project Team, formed to create comprehensive recommendations for revising zoning codes to support urban agriculture across Franklin County.

## Focusing on Food Waste

Since 2018, the Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio (SWACO) has facilitated the Central Ohio Food Waste Initiative (COFWI). Guided by a goal to cut food waste in half by 2030, the Central Ohio Food Waste Action Plan lays out a roadmap of 20 solutions and a strategic framework for local food waste prevention, rescue and recycling. The Initiative's 2021 focus areas and accomplishments include:

- **Save More Than Food:** Launched in September 2020, the Save More Than Food is a consumer education and awareness campaign aimed at cutting food waste - in homes, schools, restaurants and businesses - in half by 2030 by providing tools for food waste prevention, rescue, and recycling. Since its launch, it's estimated that the campaign has been seen over 10 million times and the website has had 55,000 visits. Visit [savemorethanfood.org](https://savemorethanfood.org) to learn more.
- **Measuring the Impact with Waste Audits & Surveys in Upper Arlington:** SWACO received a \$60,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to implement and evaluate the impacts of the Save More Than Food campaign throughout the City of Upper Arlington (UA). In collaboration with UA and The Ohio State University, the project evaluated the impacts of the campaign messaging and resources on household food waste behaviors. Preliminary findings reveal that after sharing materials from the Save More Than Food campaign across the community, the amount of food waste among participating Upper Arlington households declined significantly (-35% overall and -44% for inedible food scraps) between spring and summer 2021. Information from this study will be used to further refine campaign strategies and promotional material for implementation with additional communities in 2022 and beyond. The full report findings will be released in early 2022.
- **Regional Compost Facility Development:** A critical step toward diverting food waste from the landfill will be the development of composting infrastructure capable of serving the Central Ohio region. In the fall of 2021, SWACO initiated a public process for identifying potential partners and evaluating opportunities for a public-private partnership to address the region's composting needs. In the future, SWACO plans to identify, finalize and establish a regional composting facility in partnership with a private operator.
- **Market Study on Commercial Food Waste Diversion Opportunities:** SWACO initiated a regional market analysis, based on interviews with a representative sample of large-scale food waste generators in the region. These interviews will provide insights on current successes and challenges to reducing, recovering and diverting food waste and help inform future programming and services.
- **Community Food Waste Drop-off Programs:** Over the past three years SWACO has provided grant funding and assistance to support seven communities in establishing residential food waste drop-off programs. These drop-offs diverted over 580,000 pounds of food waste from the landfill in 2021 alone. During 2021, the communities of Grandview Heights & Village of Marble Cliff and Grove City received grants to implement an organic drop-off program. For more information on SWACO's grants programs, visit [swaco.org/grants](https://swaco.org/grants) and see a list of current drop-off programs here.
- **Food Rescue US - Columbus Chapter:** Food Rescue US - Columbus (FRUS-CBUS) diverted more than 2.8 million pounds of food out of the landfill during 2021, delivering that excess instead to more than 80 social service agencies around Franklin County. The food rescued by FRUS-CBUS volunteers ranges from bags of surplus bagels to pallets of rejected produce, from bins of unsold groceries to pans of unserved meals from caterers. In the last year, more than 40 new food donors joined the FRUS-CBUS network, including the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department's GoLunch program, DNO Produce, Gourmet Fresh Catering, and five local food pantries that donate any undistributed produce before it spoils. The variety of food, and the diversity of social service partnerships allows for tailored rescues to suit storage constraints, dietary requirements and client preferences. FRUS-CBUS currently provides food to 16 church and mosque groups, about 12 local food pantries, 18 supportive residential locations for youth, adults, and seniors, and 15 agencies that focus on serving youth and families.







*Produce on display at Veggie Van market (2020)*

## Columbus Urban Gardening Grant 🗨️ 🍏

2021 saw the continuation of a successful partnership between the City of Columbus, Franklin County and Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation to jointly facilitate a unified Urban Gardening Grant. The Urban Gardening Grant **allows community gardens to access the funding and resources** needed to grow healthy hyper-local food and support the community. Community gardens help advance the Local Food Action Plan's vision of an equitable local food system by creating opportunities for food production and distribution in disinvested and under-resourced communities.

In 2021, a total of \$99,551 in local government grants and \$30,761 of Scotts Miracle-Gro product was provided to 67 community gardens located in the City of Columbus and Franklin County. Over 55% of the supported community gardens are located in CelebrateOne priority areas where higher unemployment, lower graduation rates, homelessness, lack of access to nutritious food, higher instances of crime, lower access to health coverage and timely access to prenatal care contribute to high infant mortality rates. Many of these factors also contribute to food insecurity. Urban agriculture can provide fresh, healthy and local food to build resilience in these communities.

## Launch of New Project Team focused on Zoning and Urban Agriculture 🍏 💰

In January 2021 the Columbus & Franklin County Local Food Board created a new project team to implement Action C-6 from the Local Food Action Plan and appointed Tony Logan and Jill Clark as Board co-sponsors to oversee and guide the work of the project team. Action C-6 calls for revising “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.” A supportive zoning code and flexible permitting requirements are critical for the development of local food production and a vibrant local food economy. The Residential On-site Produce Sales Ordinance passed by Columbus City Council this year is one example of how zoning code revisions can positively impact the local food system.

The objective of the project team is to identify zoning code recommendations and best practices for the entirety of Franklin County to **enable and support small scale urban agriculture** (up to 5 acres) and the mix of uses and structures associated with urban agriculture (e.g. season extension, composting, onsite sales). The recommendations will focus on removing barriers, creating clear rules, centering equity in implementation and enforcement and protecting public health and safety. In 2021, the project team worked with partners and stakeholders across Franklin County and experts nationwide to complete a current conditions assessment and understand the zoning-related challenges impacting urban agriculture. Franklin County also partnered with The Ohio State University's City & Regional Planning Program to run a fall semester studio in which a group of students produced an evidence-based hybrid zoning code to enable urban agriculture uses. The report developed by the students will inform the recommendations produced by the project team.

In 2022, the project team will be identifying recommendations and best practices that address issues identified as part of the current conditions assessment. A final report is expected to be published during the summer of 2022.

# Advancing Our Goals: Progress Snapshots

Community-led projects continue to be an important way for the Local Food Board and Local Food Team to partner with other organizations to support the goals of the Local Food Action Plan. Use the key at the right to learn what goals were supported by key community partners.

## Linden Fresh Market and Charitable Pharmacy



The newly established Linden Fresh Market and Charitable Pharmacy is a dynamic partnership between Community Development for All People, The Charitable Pharmacy of Ohio and Nationwide Children's Hospital. Within this market space, community members can shop daily for free and fresh produce Tuesday through Saturday. To date, The Linden Market has served 3,198 people through the Fresh Market. The Charitable Pharmacy is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, filling prescriptions free of charge to community members. Prescriptions are accompanied with a wellness and education check-in with a pharmacist or social worker. These check-ins provide the opportunity to ask questions and understand the medication being taken by the community member. Nationwide's outreach team continuously engages the community to provide resources, connections, check-ins, and more. These three organizations continue to build upon the incredible resources currently utilized by Linden residents to ensure every person has access to higher quality care and fresh produce.

## Linden McKinley STEM + St Stephen's Community House



The St. Stephen's Community House (SSCH) Urban Farm was awarded a USDA Farm to School Grant to increase students' awareness of the importance of consuming nutritious, locally produced food, increase students' interest in agricultural careers and food science and increase the amount of local food consumed by youth residing in Linden. The focus of the SSCH Urban Farm is to support a continuum of STEM-based Farm to School experiences and learning activities for children Early Childhood Education/pre-K through grade 12 in the Linden neighborhood, in partnership with Linden-McKinley STEM Academy and Columbus City Schools. Grant funding will support a full time Farm Manager as well as aquaponic and hydroponic growing systems. SSCH and Linden-McKinley STEM Academy anticipate on-site learning activities for students beginning in early 2022.

### 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.



"Together with the Charitable Pharmacy, we have been distributing prescriptions and fresh produce at no cost to those who otherwise could not afford it. We are looking forward to continuing our efforts and finding new ways to serve our community!"

– Isaac Baez, Linden Market Manager



*Volunteers from Franklinton Farms help prepare the new St. Stephen's Community House Urban Farm.*



## Local Matters Veggie Van + WIC Markets 🍏

Local Matters further expanded its efforts to increase community food access by assisting with SNAP processing at four WIC markets in July and August in partnership with the Franklin County WIC office and Columbus Public Health at the Linden Recreation Center. Local Matters' Veggie Van team also accepted WIC Farmers Market Coupons this fall through the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, allowing WIC participants access to additional fresh produce throughout Franklin County communities.



"We were able to serve so many different cultures within one community through the WIC Markets. It really showed us the importance of being in this together."

- Monique McCoy

## Mid-Ohio Food Collective and Mid-Ohio Farm on the Hilltop 🍏💰

Mid-Ohio Farm on the Hilltop harvested mixed produce from 200 vertical towers in 2021. In addition to laying irrigation systems and other infrastructure, the Farm hosted 19 tours, allowing the community to begin envisioning the future of farming and what is to come on this once empty acreage. The quarter-acre vertical growing system projections, when in full use, will feature 800 towers producing 235,000 pounds of produce, at a harvest rate of 98 percent, well above the in-ground harvest rate of 30 percent.

To best meet the evolving needs of the community, Mid-Ohio Food Collective (MOFC) is building a new 19,000 square-foot warehouse addition through the support of the Franklin County Board of Commissioners. To meet the increased demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact, beginning in 2020 and into 2021, Mid-Ohio Food Collective rented off-site storage for shelf stable and frozen foods. The addition will house a new 14,000 square foot freezer that provides more than 1,000 additional pallet positions, roughly doubling current storage and picking locations, and ensuring efficient storage and processing of food onsite. Additionally, this new space will feature a 5,000 square foot cold dock that will allow MOFC to roughly double its current freezer capacity and accept a greater variety of frozen food donations.

Between March 2020 and June 30, 2021, Mid-Ohio Food Collective distributed more than 105 million pounds of food throughout its 20-county service area, accommodating nearly 1,500,000 visits that served 218,000-plus families. Of those, over 73,700 were new customers, accessing MOFC network services for the first time, reflecting the impact of COVID-19 and business shutdowns.

## FarmsSHARE Year 2 🗨️🍏💰

The Ohio Farmers Market Network's FarmsSHARE (Farms Serving Health And Racial Equity) program completed a successful second year with continued financial support from Columbus City Council and Kroger Zero Hunger|Zero Waste Foundation. FarmsSHARE was designed to increase resiliency in the local food economy by allowing Black growers and Black-led community organizations to distribute food in predominantly Black communities.

In year two, the Ohio Farmers Market Network secured additional funding for the program, extended the distribution season, and added new participants. FarmsSHARE purchased more than \$20,000 worth of locally grown Ohio produce in 2021 and distributed that produce to over 3,100 local residents, 84.08% of whom are Black, indigenous and/or people of color. Five of the seven distribution locations had Black, indigenous, and/or people of color leadership while 50% of participating farmers self-identified as Black, indigenous and/or people of color. The produce was distributed using four different models: Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), farmers market, free distribution and pay what you can. The Ohio Farmers Market Network plans to continue the project in 2022, focusing on serving more produce to more residents.

## Franklin County Public Health Ohio Days Farm to School Program 🗨️🍏

The Franklin County Public Health (FCPH) Ohio Days Farm to School Program launched the pilot Ohio Days @ Home project, which is designed to provide Pre-K-5 students hands-on gardening experiences both in the classroom and at home. Approximately 2,240 kits containing lesson plans and gardening supplies were provided to 49 educators across 12 school buildings in Franklin County. Two additional school districts agreed to participate in the Ohio Days: My Plate, My State program as a result of the Ohio Days @ Home pilot project.

FCPH also coordinates the Franklin County Farm to School Coalition, which brings together key stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated strategy for Farm to School across Franklin County. Coalition members worked together in 2021 to assess past and present Farm to School efforts across Franklin County and identify any barriers to implementing comprehensive Farm to School programs. In 2022 the coalition will utilize the results of this assessment to publish a Franklin County Farm to School Resource Guide, which will include lesson plans, fundraising opportunities, local and national program resources, and key community stakeholder contact information. Using this guide, Franklin County schools will be empowered to create a comprehensive Farm to School program that fits each district's needs and budget.

## Produce Perks 🍏💰

In 2021, the Produce Perks program experienced 73% growth in fruit and vegetable purchases in Central Ohio (Franklin and contiguous counties) and 77% growth in Franklin County. Produce Perks is a nationally recognized program supported at the federal and state level. The program empowers low-income consumers to make healthy food purchases by providing a \$1-for-\$1 match for SNAP and P-EBT shoppers to purchase fruits and vegetables from over 100 locations statewide. Jan-October 2021, the Produce Perks program has generated over \$950,000 in Produce Perks fruit and vegetable purchases. Additionally, nutrition incentive programming serves families with minor children and expecting mothers through Fruit & Vegetable Coupon and Produce Prescription programming, both active in Franklin County in 2021.

Produce Perks Midwest, a Cincinnati-based non-profit that manages the statewide program, partners with Local Matters in Columbus to administer and grow nutrition incentive programming in Franklin County and Central Ohio. Through this collective effort, low-income consumers used nutrition incentives to purchase over \$60,000 in fruits and vegetables from 16 Franklin Counties farmers' markets and Ohio owned grocery stores in 2021 and generated an additional \$71,000 in SNAP sales.

## Franklin County Local Food Council 🗨️

The Franklin County Local Food Council continues its work in coordination with the County and other stakeholders to better support the local food system through zoning recommendations and racial equity work. On October 20th the Food Council hosted a listening session to hear how the cities of Chicago (IL), Boston (MA) and Lawrence (KS) updated local zoning codes, the outcomes of these changes, and any best practices learned through the process. The recording can be found online at [https://youtu.be/38f97f6\\_xOs](https://youtu.be/38f97f6_xOs).

The Food Council also welcomed Kip Holly onto the Steering Committee, to further amplify and accelerate the action items recommended within the Racial Equity Study he published. The Food Council will be working with the Local Food Board on the recommendations to better serve racial and ethnic minorities with the Local Food Action Plan.



*Lettuce and greens at Franklinton Farms (2020)*



## 2021 Local Food Champion Award Winners

In 2021 the Franklin County Local Food Council relaunched the Local Food Champion Award after putting the award on hold throughout 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Local Food Champion Award recognizes and celebrates grassroots community efforts that support the Local Food Action Plan's vision of a fair and sustainable food system that benefits our economy, our environment and all people. The award accepts nominations across three categories:

- Youth (age 18 and below)
- Service (adults outstanding in volunteer or public service efforts)
- Technical (educators, organizers, and others outstanding in professional efforts)

The Franklin County Local Food Council recognized six Local Food Champions in 2021.

- **Te'Lario Watkins II** (Youth Category) was awarded for his work preventing food-related waste. Te'Lario is a Hunger Hero with No Kid Hungry and his hunger-ending efforts led him to volunteer with Food Rescue Columbus. As a volunteer, Te'Lario has delivered over 7,000 lbs. of food to local food banks & pantries, including 2,000 lbs. of fresh produce to the Broad Street Pantry.
- **Christine Weatherholtz** (Technical Category) was awarded for her work improving access to and education about healthy food, affordable food and local food. Christine works as Columbus City Schools' Farm to School/Nutrition Educator where she supports school gardens and associated school gardening curriculum. Under Christine's leadership the program grew from 18 school gardens in 2017 to 64 and counting in 2021.
- **Lucy Schroder** (Technical Category) was awarded for her work preventing food-related waste. Lucy coordinated the Central Ohio Food Waste Initiative, a network of hundreds of local and regional partners working to reduce food waste. Her efforts have contributed to the development of new tools and programs, including the Save More Than Food awareness campaign that helps residents and businesses reduce and divert food waste. Lucy also organized SWACO's Food Waste Champions program which works with local restaurants and kitchens to implement food waste prevention best practices.
- **Adrienne Williams** (Service Category) was awarded in recognition of the efforts of the Growing and Growth Collective to improve access to and education about healthy food, affordable food and local food. Adrienne is part of the leadership team of the food justice-oriented Growing and Growth Collective, which started during the 2020 pandemic to support community gardens, raise awareness of historic and ongoing racial injustice in agriculture, and empower BIPOC individuals to live into ecological, mental, and physical health goals.
- **Minister Aaron K Hopkins** (Service Category) was awarded for the South Side Family Farms' efforts to improve access to and education about healthy food, affordable food and local food. Minister Hopkins has been focused on food access on the South Side since April 2015 when he and his wife created the community youth engagement garden and fence project at Family Missionary Baptist Church. Since then he has created two Columbus land bank community garden sites, offering youth education experiences, and delivering hundreds of pounds of healthy food to the community. In late 2020, South Side Family Farms broke ground on two acres at a new site in Johnstown, Ohio. Minister Hopkins hopes to use this new site to grow fresh, healthy produce for the South Side of Columbus.
- **Dr. Susann Moeller** (Service Category) was awarded for her work to improve access to and education about healthy food, affordable food and local food. Following a career in academia, Dr. Susann Moeller dedicated herself to advancing healthy local food systems and is now a certified Master Gardener, Urban Master Farmer, Green Teacher, Watershed Specialist, Ohio Naturalist, and Wildlife Rehabilitator, Class I. She has served on the Ohio Farm to School Program, Franklin County Local Food Council, MORPC Greenways Committee, Central Ohio Watershed Council and the Natural Resource Assistance Council.

# Local Food Action Plan Partners

## Local Food Board Members

The Local Food Board consists of 12 members appointed by the city and county who oversee, prioritize and guide implementation of the Plan. There were two vacant board member positions at the time of publishing.

- **Susan Beaudry** • Vice President, Osteopathic Heritage Foundation (*Philanthropic support for food systems expertise*)
- **Jill K. Clark, PhD** • Associate Professor, John Glenn College of Public Affairs, The Ohio State University (*Community food systems and research expertise*)
- **D. David Daniel** • Senior Vice President Operations, Mid Ohio Food Collective (*Emergency food system expertise*)
- **Tony Logan, JD** • Managing Partner, The Renewables Space LLC; Farm Owner, Logan Brothers, LLC (*Food production expertise*)
- **Amy McCormick • Chairperson** • Corporate Affairs Manager, The Kroger Co. (*Retail grocery industry expertise*)
- **Michelle Moskowitz Brown** • Executive Director, Local Matters (*Nutrition education expertise*)
- **Charles Nabrit** • President, Greater Columbus Growing Coalition (GCGC); Associate, Penn Nabrit & Associates (*Civic agriculture; Community gardens expertise*)
- **Desiree Polk-Bland** • Executive Dean Division of Student Affairs, Columbus State Community College (*Workforce development; Culinary education expertise*)
- **Randy Sokol • Vice-Chairperson** • Restaurant Owner; Ohio Restaurant Association representative (*Food-related business expertise*)
- **Adam Troy** • Chief Engagement Officer, Community of Caring Development Foundation; Director of Missions, New Salem Baptist Church (*Food and community development expertise*)

## 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.

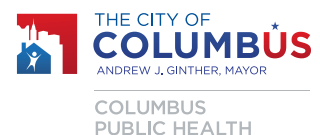
**Brian Estabrook** • Food Systems Planner, Franklin County Economic Development & Planning  
[baestabr@franklincountyohio.gov](mailto:baestabr@franklincountyohio.gov) / 614-525-7303

**Karima Samadi, MPH, CHES** • Policy Analyst - Food Systems, Columbus Public Health  
[krsamadi@columbus.gov](mailto:krsamadi@columbus.gov) / 614-625-39587

## Thanks to Past Board & Team Members

We extend our deepest gratitude to the community leaders who ended their service to the Local Food Board in 2021: Ty Marsh (2017-2021) and Laquore Meadows (2017-2021).

The work of the Local Food Action Plan takes an entire community, but the successes achieved thus far were made possible by the hard work and commitment from former Columbus City Council Member Priscilla R. Tyson and outgoing Columbus Public Health Local Foods Strategies Coordinator Cheryl Graffagnino. It has been over five years since the City and County partnered to adopt the Local Food Action Plan and while we celebrate our shared accomplishments we recognize that the need for a stronger and more resilient local food system remains an urgent challenge and a promising opportunity. We thank both former Council Member Tyson and Cheryl Graffagnino for their service and wish them best in their future endeavors!



## Get Involved

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. Find out how you can get involved and sign up for the Council's email updates at [www.fclocalfoodcouncil.org](http://www.fclocalfoodcouncil.org) or find them on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/groups/fcolfc](https://www.facebook.com/groups/fcolfc).

