



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

2022 Annual Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

April 2023

In 2022, the Columbus and Franklin County community continued to answer the call for resilience and racial equity in the local food system. Building on the 2021 Racial Equity Study, the Local Food Board and Franklin County Local Food Council committed to implementing the study's recommendations. The board and council collaborated throughout 2022 on a series of racial equity workshops focused on strengthening the internal coordination and implementation structure of the Local Food Action Plan partners with a goal of centering Black and brown communities and eliminating structural racism in the food system.

The future of our food system is strong as we continue to put down roots of resiliency, center racial equity, strengthen our networks and neighborhoods, enhance our local food investments and infrastructure and source locally for long-term sustainability and food security. The Local Food Action Plan continues to be a national example of a coordinated local food system, thanks to the leadership of Franklin County Commissioner John O'Grady and Columbus City Council member Shayla Favor and the dedication of the Columbus & Franklin County Local Food Board and the Franklin County Local Food Council.

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

“Strengthening food access and supporting our local food economy continue to be high priorities for the Franklin County Board of Commissioners. We continue to be reminded that this work must be accomplished with a focus on racial and health equity and by building effective local food supply chain infrastructure. I'm grateful to our City-County Local Food Board, our partners at the city of Columbus, and the Franklin County Local Food Council for continuing to invest in this critically important work.”

- Commissioner John O'Grady, President, Franklin County Board of Commissioners

“In Columbus, almost 60% of Black households are food insecure compared to less than 25% of white households. All too often, low-income and limited resource households are located in food deserts. The Local Food Action Plan's focus on racial and health equity ensures all residents, regardless of background, have access to fresh, affordable and healthy food in our neighborhoods. The City-County Local Food Action Plan works to create a strong food system by supporting local foods while addressing the food security gap in low-income communities to enhance the health and well-being of our communities.”

- Columbus City Councilmember Shayla Favor



Key Highlights

Our communities are still experiencing the serious and destabilizing impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the downstream disruptions to the food supply. While there is a long way to go to recover from these setbacks, our community has shown remarkable resilience, collaboration and innovation in addressing enhanced local food system infrastructure and more sustainable food security through several key investments in 2022.

The **Osteopathic Heritage Foundations** approved \$3.4 million in support of its Healthy Food Access funding strategy to reduce hunger and improve health outcomes for low-income populations in Franklin County. Of this total, \$887,300 went to support four organizations (**Franklinton Farms, Mid-Ohio Food Collective, PACT, Produce Perks Midwest**) under the Healthy Food, Healthy Franklin County program, which was informed by key strategies and goals in the City-County Local Food Action Plan and developed in coordination with the City-County Local Food Team.

To meet the immediate need for food security, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners provided \$2.5 million and the City of Columbus provided \$1 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars to the Mid-Ohio Food Collective to meet the unprecedented demand for food assistance

Both Franklin County and the City of Columbus invested time and energy in 2022 to develop robust, community-informed local food system recommendations for how to spend federal American Rescue Plan Act dollars. These potential future investments would prioritize racial and health equity, expand food access, build out critical links in the local food supply chain, and support local food economies from farm to fork and back to farm. With approved funding, these efforts will support urban agriculture, strengthen farm to school activities, bolster Black and brown farmers, expand food access in disinvested neighborhoods, and create new food aggregation and processing sites.

Goal Areas At-A-Glance

Goal A: Enhance coordination and communication

Many organizations, networks and individuals championed coordination and collaboration in their neighborhoods, including **Franklinton Farms** (Franklinton), **South Side Family Farms** (South Side), **Highland Youth Garden** (Hilltop), and **Growing & Growth Collective** and **Bronzeville Growers Market** (Near East Side). These organizations focused on increasing food access, building local networks and food supply chains, and ensuring broader community and economic development in historically underserved neighborhoods. One innovative example is Franklinton Farms launching the **Community Growers Network**, a two-year initiative funded by Osteopathic Heritage Foundations, to support and coordinate urban growers who produce in and for low-income neighborhoods.

“Racism is a public health crisis and inequalities in food access continue to be defining social determinants of health in our community. Thanks to our collective racial equity work, we’ve made great strides in removing barriers to affordable and local food access in high need neighborhoods throughout our community. But our work to address food access and the other social determinants of health is far from over. The Local Food Action Plan is our community’s roadmap to building a fair and sustainable food system that benefits our economy, our environment and all people who call our community home no matter where they live.”

- Columbus Health
Commissioner Dr. Mysheika
Roberts

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

Food access and food education are foundational pillars of the Local Food Action Plan and many community partners contributed to one or both areas. Mid-Ohio Food Collective led the emergency food effort, serving 121,000 families and distributing nearly 38 million pounds of groceries throughout Franklin County. **Lutheran Social Services Food Pantry** locations provided over 1.2 million meals in Franklin County, including a weekly drive thru distribution in Linden, while **LifeCare Alliance** delivered 1.1 million meals to 6,175 Franklin County residents. Franklin County residents with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits were eligible for additional nutrition incentives provided by **Produce Perks Midwest**, which served over 1,000 Franklin County households and generated nearly \$100,000 in SNAP sales.

Columbus City Schools and **OSU Extension** collaborated on a Farm to School program that supported 78 school gardens and provided teachers with a calendar-based curriculum to enable indoor and outdoor gardening throughout the school year. OSU Extension's broad reach also included the Extension Today partnership with NBC4, which reached 2.7 million individuals with education on food production, nutrition and healthy food preparation.

Other key local partners included **Family Adolescent Child Community Engagement Service (FACCES)** (10,638 people engaged, 340,000 pounds of food distributed), **Urban Farmers Coalition** (7,000 pieces of print material and 35,000 pounds of food distributed), **Linden Fresh Market & Charitable Pharmacy** (180,000 pounds of food distributed), **Highland Youth Garden** (4,000 pounds of produce distributed), and the **OSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteers** (22,243 pounds of food distributed).

Goal C: Increase the role of food in economic development

In addition to the extensive investments made by the City of Columbus, Franklin County and Osteopathic Heritage Foundations, many local partners also invested in expanding and strengthening our local food economy. **Broad Street Food Pantry** operated the Fresh for All project, which created a local food economy that paid nine local farms to deliver \$35,694 of fresh produce to the near east side food pantry. All farms selected represented at least one marginalized identity and were located within Franklin County. **Franklin Park Conservatory's Farmers Market** also focused on supporting equitable economic development by hosting 20 local vendors who are minority-owned and facilitating over \$30,000 in sales at their market.

Regionally, **What Chefs Want!** increased produce sales from small and local farms by more than 77% and delivered over \$2.45 million in local and regional food to institutional buyers around the state of Ohio out of their Columbus-area distribution center. Finally, **St. Stephen's Community House**, in partnership with **Linden McKinley STEM Academy Urban Agriculture Career Pathway**, operated a one-acre Urban Farm focusing on STEM-based Farm to School activities. This project will create agricultural career pathways for Columbus City Schools students, contributing to a healthy future workforce in the food and agriculture industry.

Goal D: Prevent food related waste

Programs focused on preventing, recovering and recycling food waste have expanded rapidly in the City of Columbus and Franklin County. The **Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio (SWACO)** launched new Food Waste Drop-Off programs in Gahanna, Whitehall and New Albany, expanding the total to 10 communities in Franklin County. Collectively, these communities composted more than 535,092 pounds of food waste in 2022. The City of Columbus Department of Refuse plans to open five food waste drop-off sites in 2023.

At the grassroots level, **Food Rescue US - Columbus** added 30 new donors of fresh food and 21 social service agencies as food distributors while their volunteers completed over 180 food rescues per week this year. A new grant awarded from the Ohio Department of Health will allow Food Rescue to produce and administer a needs assessment that helps identify what kinds of food access and food assistance opportunities exist in the Franklinton and Hilltop neighborhoods.

Finally, the **OSU Zero Waste Initiative** launched an expanded composting program, increasing the number of campus buildings with composting service from 39 to over 120 and installing 100 public-facing green composting bins across campus. The program also created seven new drop-off locations for staff, faculty and off-campus students with funding from the SWACO Community Waste Reduction grant.

Local Food Action Plan Partners

2022 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 Foundations
- **Dr. Jill K. Clark** • Associate Professor, John Glenn College of Public Affairs, The Ohio State University
- **D. David Daniel** • Senior Vice President Operations, Mid-Ohio Food Collective
- **Tony Logan** • Managing Partner, The Renewables Space LLC
- **Amy McCormick** • Corporate Affairs Manager, Kroger Columbus (Term ended Dec.31, 2022.)
- **Michelle Moskowitz Brown** • Executive Director, Local Matters (Term ended Dec. 31, 2022.)
- **Charles Nabrit** • Vice Chair • Advanced Manufacturing Instructor, NCUS TEC; Principal, Penn Nabrit & Associates; President, Greater Columbus Growing Coalition
- **Dr. Desiree Polk-Bland** • Vice President of Student Affairs, Columbus State Community College
- **Randy Sokol** • Chair • Owner, Sokol & Associates; Co-Owner, Tee Jaye's Country Place; Ohio Restaurant Association representative
- **Adam K. Troy** • Chief Engagement Officer, Community of Caring DF; Director of Missions, New Salem Baptist Church

Thanks to Past Board Members

We extend our deepest gratitude to the community leaders who ended their service to the Local Food Board in 2022: Amy McCormick and Michelle Moskowitz Brown. We thank our former board members for their service and wish them best in their future endeavors!

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 • Franklin County Economic Development & Planning
brianestabrook@franklincountyohio.gov / 614-525-7303

Karima Samadi, MPH, CHES • Columbus Public Health
krsamadi@columbus.gov / 614-625-3958



COLUMBUS
PUBLIC HEALTH



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 its efforts. Find out how you can get involved and sign up for email updates at fclocalfoodcouncil.org or find them on Facebook at facebook.com/groups/fcolfc.

Get the Full Story

The 2022 Annual Report includes this executive summary, along with crowdsourced community updates and an interactive [StoryMap](#) with videos, photos and interviews. Scan the QR Code to see our stories come alive in the StoryMap and visit columbus.gov/LocalFoodActionPlan to download our reports and other resources.

