



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

FOOD EQUITY COUNCIL



2023

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHO WE ARE **2**

LETTER FROM MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT **3**

LETTER FROM CO-CHAIRS **4**

FOOD EQUITY COUNCIL **5**

Urban Agriculture Workgroup **8**

BIPOC Food Business Workgroup **13**

Emergency Food and Nutrition Programs Workgroup **18**

Institutional Procurement Workgroup **23**

Retail Sprint Group **28**

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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The historic Land Acknowledgement was adopted by the City on November 17th, 2021. The City of Chicago is located on land that is and has long been a center for Native peoples. The area is the traditional homelands of the Anishinaabe, or the Council of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi Nations. Many other Nations consider this area their traditional homeland, including the Myaamia, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac and Fox, Peoria, Kaskaskia, Wea, Kickapoo, and Mascouten. The City specifically acknowledges the contributions of Kitihawa of the Potawatomi in fostering the community that has become Chicago. We acknowledge all Native peoples who came before us and who continue to contribute to our city. We are committed to promoting Native cultural heritage. This acknowledgement is offered to bring awareness and understanding of the legacy of Indigenous peoples as traditional and contemporary stewards of the local land and waterways. It is also an invitation to rethink the relationships between the city, the land, and the environment.

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# WHO WE ARE

## FOOD EQUITY COUNCIL

The Chicago Food Equity Council is a cross-sector collaboration rooted in transparency and accountability to create an equitable local food system. We work to ensure that every Chicagoan has access to healthy and affordable food and that food becomes an engine for community wealth building. Over the winter of 2020, the Mayor's Office, the Greater Chicago Food Depository, and the Departments of Public Health (CDPH) and Family and Support Services (DFSS) convened a cross-sector working group of City and community food system experts to review past food plans and discuss emerging opportunities. Through a series of five workshops, the working group collectively identified five high-impact priorities to advance. The Chicago Food Equity Agenda was released in July 2021 and in February of 2022, Mayor Lori Lightfoot signed an executive order formally establishing the Food Equity Council.

### CO-CHAIRS

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*Urban Growers Collective*

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**Angela Odoms-Young**

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**Jaye Stapleton**

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# LETTER FROM MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT

To our residents,

For too long, our city has struggled with inequities in Chicagoans' ability to access food, and those struggles were only exacerbated by the pandemic. No one should be hungry in the United States and least of all in our city.

In the wake of the global pandemic and the related crisis it caused in Chicagoans' ability to access food, Chicagoans came together to respond. While much of that effort was focused on addressing the immediate need, community food leaders, urban agriculture leaders, and public health experts also convened to think about the long-term, structural changes we need to make to have a truly equitable and just food system in our city. The result of that moment was the co-creation of Chicago's Food Equity Agenda — five policy and programmatic priorities — and the launch of the city's first ever Food Equity Council to bring a cross-sector approach to realize this vision of food equity and justice.

I am incredibly proud of what we have built since we established this agenda almost two years ago and through the launch of a Food Equity Council by Executive Order in February 2022. In deep partnership with community leaders, we have allocated \$11 million in the Chicago Recovery Plan to urban agriculture and to support food entrepreneurs and businesses, developed and introduced legislation to finally provide urban growers an appropriate business license to unlock their economic potential, clarified city procedures and policies that impact food access, and activated City communication channels to connect Chicagoans to food resources.

Perhaps most important, we have built a new way of working across City departments and sister agencies and in deep partnership with leaders across the food system towards our shared goal. Chicago is the nation's food innovation capital, and we have the opportunity to build on this strength to transform Chicago into an equitable food city — one that catalyzes wealth building through support for food businesses and has a vibrant food system regardless of zip code.

The work of building an equitable food system requires true collaboration. This work touches every Chicagoan and is bigger than any one person, organization, agency, or sector. Together we can build a food system that is thriving and equitable for all Chicagoans. I'm confident that this is just the beginning, and that the impact of this work will last for years to come.

Sincerely,



Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot

# LETTER FROM CO-CHAIRS

The Food Equity Agenda sets forth a bold vision: to reimagine Chicago's Food System as one where everyone has access to healthy and affordable food and where food is an engine for community wealth building. But this vision did not start with a piece of paper. Community leaders and residents have long advocated for changes to food policy and have yearned for a more coordinated, transparent, and accountable approach to addressing food policy, the kind of approach that would bring transformational change.

The Food Equity Council works toward that vision by leveraging the power of public and private support to reduce food insecurity as well as the economic inequities that have burdened BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities for decades. The Council is advancing a multi-year plan, crafted in partnership with a cross-section of community and City representatives, to transform the food system and deepen the City's partnership with BIPOC communities and leaders. Together we can increase food security and build community wealth.

In its first year, the Council achieved its first pillar, reducing barriers to food pantry expansion, and made significant progress toward the remaining four pillars, as laid out in this report. The Council also identified the need to address food retail access, and completed an additional landscape review on opportunities to support food retail access.

While the Food Equity Council has made great strides in advancing our shared vision of a more equitable food system, significant work remains. We look forward to partnering with the new mayoral administration to continue progress toward a just and equitable food system for all Chicagoans.





# FOOD EQUITY COUNCIL

The COVID-19 pandemic emphasized several gaps in Chicago's food system. A lack of centralized coordination in Chicago's food ecosystem presented significant challenges to implementing a coordinated, effective, emergency response to a national disaster. Long-standing racial inequities in Chicago's food system erode the City's resilience and results in disproportionate impact on BIPOC communities before, during, and after times of crisis. Food insecurity, limited healthy food access, poverty, and racism are linked. With eyes on the food system, the COVID-19 crisis created momentum for change.

Over the winter of 2020, the Mayor's Office, the Greater Chicago Food Depository, and the Departments of Public Health (CDPH) and Family and Support Services (DFSS) convened a cross-sector ad hoc group of City and community food system experts to review past food plans and discuss emerging opportunities. This cross-sector group was dedicated to unearthing and implementing the structural changes needed so that every Chicagoan has access to healthy and affordable food and that food becomes an engine for community wealth building.

Five priorities were identified by the community with the intention that priorities would evolve and be responsive to needs as they emerged.

1. Eliminate barriers to food pantry expansion
2. Market and maximize nutrition programs and benefits
3. Leverage City and institutional procurement to support local BIPOC growers, producers, and food businesses
4. Eliminate barriers to urban farming
5. Support Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) owned food businesses and entrepreneurs, especially with access to capital

To advance the work, this initial group was transformed into a formal Food Equity Council, formalized by executive order by Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, to break down silos and provide cross-sector leadership on transforming Chicago's food system. The Council established four working groups with over 80 members across the food system to advance the initial priorities. The working groups are [Urban Agriculture](#), [BIPOC Food Businesses](#), [Emergency Food and Nutrition Programs](#), and [Institutional Procurement](#). The working groups identified actionable goals where members believed significant progress could be made toward Council priorities within the next five years.

Through the four working groups, the Food Equity Council has made significant progress to advance food equity in the City of Chicago.

- ***October 2021: \$11 Million allocated to Food Equity in the Chicago Recovery Plan.***

This funding will be used over three to five years to increase equitable community access to healthy foods, while supporting local food businesses through entrepreneurship and promotion of urban agriculture. Funding for the Chicago Recovery Plan was made possible by the federal American Rescue Plan Act, federal Community Development Block Grant funds, and millions in local bond funds.

- ***February 2022: Mayor Lightfoot signed an Executive Order to formalize the Food Equity Council.***

Through this executive order, the Mayor directed city staff to convene city departments, sister agencies, and community partners around a shared goal of building an equitable and just food system in Chicago and advance the five high-impact priorities of the Chicago Food Equity Agenda.

- ***March 2022: Accomplished the First Priority of the Food Equity Agenda.***

The Food Equity Council worked with City Departments to clarify the requirements and steps to open a food pantry and shared it publicly on the Food Equity Council's Website: [Guidance on Opening Food Pantries \(chicago.gov\)](#).

- ***March 2022: Expand Access to Online Shopping for SNAP Participants.***

A policy change in Illinois allows SNAP participants to redeem their benefits online, not just for in-store transactions. Options for home delivery or curbside pick-up increase access and flexibility for SNAP consumers. The SNAP online option also enables retailers to serve new consumers that previously faced access barriers. In collaboration with the Illinois Commission to End Hunger, the Council engaged food retailers to raise awareness about how to leverage the SNAP online option to serve new and existing customers and provide guidance on how to establish a program.

- ***June 2022: Support launch of Restaurant Meals Program pilot.***

In 2022, the Illinois Department of Human Services launched a pilot in four Chicago zip codes to allow certain SNAP households to redeem their benefits in participating restaurants. Older adults, people with a disability, and homeless individuals face unique barriers to shopping for food and preparing meals. The SNAP Restaurant Meals Program increases access and flexibility for those individuals. The Food Equity Council supported outreach to local restaurants and communities to encourage participation in this important pilot, which launched in early 2023.

- ***December 2022: Launched a Short-term Retail Sprint Group.***

The closing of grocery stores on the South and West Sides underscored the need to dig deeper into solutions for retail food access. In response, the Food Equity Council convened a short-term sprint group to explore the challenges in food retail access and to begin developing actionable community-driven solutions for increasing equitable retail access.

- ***December 2022: Introduction of an Urban Agriculture Business License Ordinance, co-created with Urban Agriculture Leaders.***

The introduced Urban Agriculture Business License Enhancement Ordinance will reduce barriers that exist for growers to sell their produce. With these proposed changes, community gardens and urban farms would be able to sell whole uncut, unprocessed, produce directly to community residents, restaurants, private food stores, and wholesalers from an on-site permanent produce stand. The ordinance was co-created by the Urban Agriculture Work Group and passed unanimously out of the Committee on Zoning in April 2023, and awaits action by the full City Council.

As it enters its second year, the Food Equity Council will continue to collaborate across sectors to advance a shared vision for a more equitable food system, advancing identified priorities, responding to the shifting landscape of opportunity, and uplifting the innovative solutions coming from community.







# Urban Agriculture Workgroup

## CO-LEADS

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## MEMBERS

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**Cathy Breitenbach**

*Chicago Park District*

**Max Budovitch**

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**Connie Spreen**

*Experimental Station*

**Mecca Bey**

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**Dawn Walker**

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**Micheál Newman-Brooks**

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*Little Village Environmental Justice Organization*

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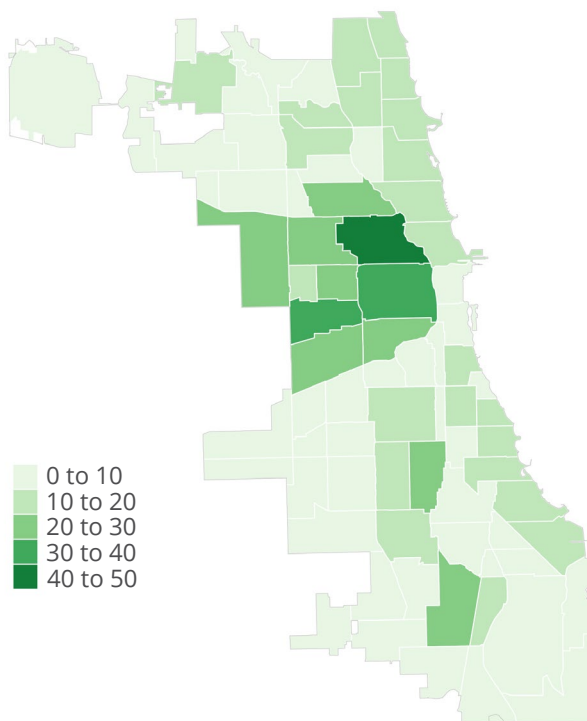
*Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events*

## OVERVIEW

Growing local produce is a pathway for community wealth building, improved health outcomes, and climate resiliency. The Urban Agriculture Workgroup is dedicated to removing barriers that exist for urban growers, especially BIPOC growers, and developing long-term solutions. In the first year, this group started the process of imagining an improved system that encourages growers who are interested in scaling up their production to increase Chicago's access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food.

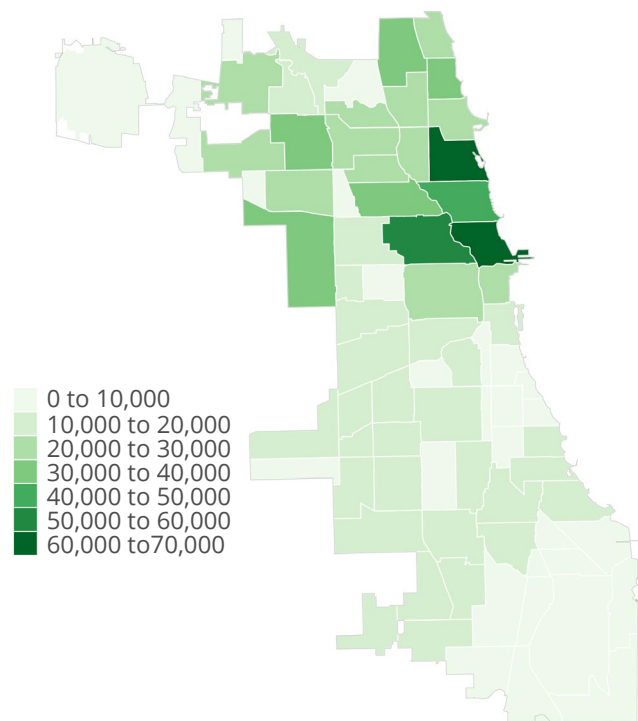
## PRIORITY: REDUCE BARRIERS TO URBAN AGRICULTURE

**Figure 1: Concentration of Urban Agriculture by Community Area**



Source: *Chicago Urban Agriculture Mapping Project*

**Figure 2: Adults reporting easy access to fresh fruits and vegetables**



Source: *2021-2022 Chicago Department of Public Health, Chicago Healthy Survey*

## WHY?

There is a strong growing community in Chicago that is committed to providing local fresh produce to its neighbors (figure 1). It is well known that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables has many health benefits such as reducing blood pressure, reducing risk for heart disease and stroke, preventing some types of cancer, and can have positive effects on blood sugar.<sup>1</sup> However, access to fresh fruits and vegetables in Chicago remains inequitable (figure 2), contributing to the health disparities seen across the city.<sup>2</sup> Promoting urban agriculture in Chicago not only has the potential to improve health outcomes by increasing fruit and vegetable access in communities where full-service grocery stores are scarce, but also promotes social cohesion, beautifies neighborhoods, and creates local jobs.

While the benefits of urban agriculture are clear, barriers exist for a diverse community of growers in Chicago. Changes were made to Chicago's [zoning code](#) in 2011 to better support urban agriculture, and there is opportunity to build on these modifications to make it easier to grow and sell produce in the city. Growers in the Urban Agriculture Workgroup highlighted the hurdles they continue to experience such as limited access to land or competing projects on land, difficulty accessing water through both temporary and permanent solutions, lack of clarity on how to navigate City policies and procedures, difficulty selling directly to community and other businesses, limited resources to support business growth and education, and unclear rules around composting. To encourage urban agriculture, this Workgroup centered growers' voices to develop solutions that will provide long-term support for urban agriculture in Chicago.

## PROGRESS

- ***Proposed Urban Agricultural Business License Passed Zoning Committee***

Chicago's urban agriculture and growing community includes entrepreneurs, social enterprises, and community-based projects. The City's current license options for the sale of produce are not tailored to the specific business activities of urban growers. With a clear business license, there is increased potential for urban agriculture to build local wealth and support Chicago's local economy. Developed by the Urban Agriculture Workgroup, The [Urban Agriculture Business License Enhancement Ordinance](#) was proposed to City Council by the mayor in December 2022. The ordinance makes small changes to an existing license, the produce merchant license. If it passes, community gardens and urban farms would be able to sell whole uncut, unprocessed, produce directly to community residents, restaurants, private food stores, and wholesalers from on-site produce stands. While the license passed the zoning committee, it was deferred and published during the April 2023 City Council meeting. The Urban Agriculture Workgroup is working on the next steps to support the passage of this ordinance.

***“After 20 years of advocacy, Chicagoans who grow food now have the opportunity to build economic food sovereignty by being able to establish businesses with a legit license. Being able to sell food that is grown at the community level recognizes the importance of these economies and is a significant advancement for urban agriculture and food access, spearheaded by the Food Equity Council. We hope that this encourages local production at a time when shortening supply chains for food is good for business, the environment, and our public health.”***

— Erika Allen, Co-founder of Urban Growers Collective

- **Launch of the Community Growers Program**

The City of Chicago made a historic investment of \$2 million dollars from federal Community Development Block Grant funds. To equitably distribute this funding, the Urban Agriculture Workgroup co-created a program framework that would support the development of 10 new and 15-20 existing urban agriculture sites. The program will support growers with access to land, resources to build long-term sites, and technical support. Growers starting new projects will identify vacant lots ideal for growing produce and receive support to purchase and transform the land into a productive site, including City-owned land listed on ChiBlock builder. Existing urban agriculture projects will receive funding for capacity building projects such as permanent water supply installation, hoop houses, or refrigerated storage. To increase equitable access, the program will prioritize growers, gardeners, farmers, or neighbors with the following criteria: experience growing produce, individuals and groups who do not typically have access to support to activate their projects, projects committed to growing edible plants, and projects with the intention of long-term stewardship of the land. The program will increase equitable community access to healthy foods by creating new food access points in neighborhoods experiencing food insecurity.

In a request for proposal process led by the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protections (BACP) in late 2022, NeighborSpace was selected as the lead delegate agency of the Community Growers Program. NeighborSpace's successful application was submitted in collaboration with a collective of organizations, including Chicago Food Policy Action Council (CFPAC), Community Food Navigator, DePaul Steans Center, Grow Greater Englewood, Advocates for Urban Agriculture, Urban Growers Collective, and Windy City Harvest. Together, these organizations will provide grants and ongoing technical assistance to applicants, understand the specific needs of each project site, provide the appropriate guidance, and be responsible for managing the development of multiple urban agriculture sites on vacant lots.

The first round of applications for growers to receive assistance closed on April 1, 2023, and more than 300 growers from across the city applied. NeighborSpace and the broader collective of organizations are in the process of selecting awardees. There will be additional rounds of applications in the future.

### **CHIBLOCK BUILDER: INCREASING ACCESS TO CITY OWNED VACANT LOTS**

ChiClockBuilder is a new City program to encourage the purchase and redevelopment of City-owned vacant land in partnership with community stakeholders. Led by the Chicago Department of Planning and Development (DPD), ChiBlockBuilder streamlines the purchase of properties across the South and West Sides and increases transparency about the land sales process. The city owns over 10,000 vacant lots, most of which were acquired through foreclosures and demolition liens dating as far back as the 1950s. Almost 90% of the lots currently available for purchase are located in the 10 community areas participating in Mayor Lightfoot's INVEST South/West revitalization strategy. The city is currently in the process of completing environmental testing and selling lots through the program.

- ***Created Clarity on How to Navigate City Policies for Urban Agriculture***

Growing food intersects with multiple city departments and sister agencies in Chicago, including BACP, DPD, CDPH, AIS, Chicago Park District, Department of Water Management, and CPS. Each entity has its own policies and not one department is singularly dedicated to supporting urban growers. Consequently, growers must navigate many different entities and policies that are not clearly articulated for urban agriculture.

To understand how to transform policies, it is imperative to have a clear understanding of what policies exist for urban agriculture. The Workgroup developed a website that walks through existing policies for growers at the local level. The Navigating Urban Agriculture website can be found on the Food Equity Council's website ([chi.gov/foodequity](http://chi.gov/foodequity)) and guidance will continue to be added.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

The Urban Agriculture Workgroup will continue to remove barriers by building on the work of year one. The projects from the first round of Community Growers Program will be activated this summer and there will be additional opportunities for growers to apply later in the year. In addition to the urban agriculture business license, the Workgroup will look at comprehensive policy, investment, and programmatic priorities to further encourage food growing across Chicago.

Spring  
2022  
ChiFresh  
Kitchen



# BIPOC Food Business Workgroup

## CO-LEADS

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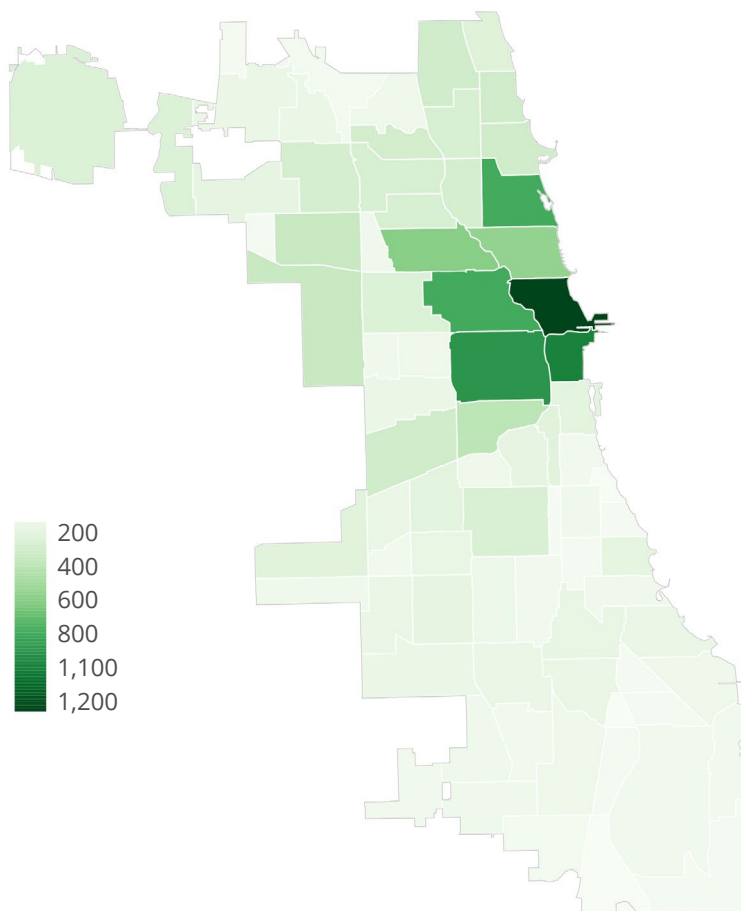
**Victoria Lakes-Battle**

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## OVERVIEW

Thriving communities have a vibrant food ecosystem with multiple food access points such as restaurants, supermarkets, small retailers, and other food businesses. Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities have a long history of disinvestment resulting in food ecosystems with limited access to healthy, affordable, and culturally resonate foods. Past efforts to locate traditional supermarket chains have often failed, and the Council recognized the need to support new strategies oriented around community needs and consumer preferences and leveraging community assets. Additionally, private and public funding and other resources to support small-format operators and entrepreneurs are often out of reach. The BIPOC Food Business Workgroup aims to support community-driven solutions that are hyper-localized, center equity, and are focused on the needs of community. In year one, the Workgroup focused on increasing access to resources and funding for BIPOC small businesses and entrepreneurs.

**Figure 3: Number of Current and active Food-related business licenses by neighborhood**



Source: Chicago Data Portal Accessed May 5, 2023

## TALKING ABOUT FOOD ACCESS

**Food Security** means access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.

Source: USDA

**Food Equity** is the belief that people should have equal access to the ability to grow and consume nourishing, affordable, and culturally significant foods.

**Food Sovereignty** is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations.

Source: Declaration of Nyéléni, the first global forum on food sovereignty, Mali, 2007

## **PRIORITY: SUPPORT BIPOC FOOD BUSINESSES AND ENTREPRENEURS, ESPECIALLY WITH ACCESS TO CAPITAL**

### **WHY?**

Supporting BIPOC food businesses not only increases food access but is also a wealth builder for communities. Nationally in 2022, Black families had about \$957,000 less wealth, on average, compared with white families, while Latinx families had about \$982,000 less wealth, on average, than white families.<sup>3</sup> Vibrant food businesses are a vehicle to build wealth and drive inclusive economic growth, especially in Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other communities of color. Stronger BIPOC-owned and led food businesses are an important strategy to reduce poverty and build social and economic wealth that addresses generational disparities.

There are significant barriers for BIPOC entrepreneurs to open and maintain viable food businesses. Prior to the pandemic, many food businesses (especially those operating on the South and West Sides of Chicago) experienced disproportionate challenges to accessing capital, industry-specific technical assistance, and coaching, and were less connected to the overall small business food ecosystem. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these barriers for BIPOC food entrepreneurs, as small businesses in the food and beverage industry were dramatically impacted. As a result, many small, BIPOC food businesses that were already experiencing unique barriers were further impacted by store closures, labor impacts, and food and materials cost increases during the pandemic.

Cultivation of a local food industry and support for local small food businesses creates a more resilient food system for Chicago. A thriving food ecosystem that reaches all Chicago communities will be less impacted by future challenges such as disruptions in the supply chain. Moreover, community members are often best positioned to identify the needs of their community and support the development of asset-based solutions. For that reason, members of the Workgroup are committed to supporting community-driven solutions to center the voices and needs of people who are most likely to be impacted by and benefit from food business development.

### **PROGRESS**

- ***Developed a Request for Proposal for a Good Food Fund and Food Incubators***

While there are existing funds and technical support opportunities for food businesses, not all are designed with the vision of food sovereignty. Workgroup members expressed a need for resources tailored to local BIPOC food entrepreneurs and businesses that are community centered and grounded in equity. Using the values below, the Workgroup developed a framework for two ground-breaking investments within the Chicago Recovery Plan: Chicago Good Food Fund and food incubators.



Figure 4: Values of the Good Food Fund and Food Incubators



- **Chicago Good Food Fund**

Workgroup members expressed a need for flexible funding to support local BIPOC food entrepreneurs and businesses. Securing start-up capital and credit is crucial to the success of a business. Black business owners and entrepreneurs, regardless of strong personal credit, are half as likely as their white counterparts to receive full financing.<sup>4</sup> While white entrepreneurs can often turn to their friends and family for financial support, this may not be an option for Black families.<sup>5</sup> Barriers to accessing capital result in Black entrepreneurs starting their businesses with about \$70,000 less capital than white entrepreneurs and higher levels of debt relative to revenue.<sup>6</sup>

By leveraging \$7 million allocated from the Chicago Recovery Plan, the Workgroup developed an RFP for the administrator of a fund that will support entrepreneurs and food businesses across the food system in communities with a history of disinvestment. Through the RFP process, the Food Equity Council advises the City to select an administrator of the fund that is committed to the values outlined above and also works to ensure the longevity of the fund. The Good Food Fund will provide grants to applicants and will coordinate with existing public, private, and philanthropic funds in the ecosystem. Recipients of the funding will receive coaching and business support to ensure the success of the applicants.

- **Food Incubators**

When compared to their white counterparts, Black business owners and entrepreneurs are less likely to seek professional services because of the cost, inaccessibility, and mistrust.<sup>7</sup> Despite the vast array of resources available to food start-ups in Chicago, Workgroup members noted programs are usually tailored to scaling up existing food businesses and that there is a gap in support for early-stage BIPOC entrepreneurs. Addressing this gap in resources can positively impact Chicago's economy and set an example for other cities. An investment in providing Black business owners with equitable

resources can have positive implications for the nation's economy, potentially unlocking part of the \$1 trillion to \$1.5 trillion in annual Gross Domestic Product that is untapped nationally because of the racial wealth gap.<sup>8</sup>

By leveraging an additional \$2 million within the Chicago Recovery Plan, the Workgroup developed a framework to support early-stage entrepreneurs with food incubators. Through a request for proposal (RFP) process in 2023, the City of Chicago will fund a variety of innovative programs to cultivate food business ideas in the concept or idea phase and move them into the pre-launch and operation phases. The Incubator will focus on low-to-moderate income communities in Chicago, with a special focus on communities with the greatest food insecurity and communities with emerging food corridors. With the launch of this program, the City aims to pilot a new model of hyper-specialized, sector-specific support for entrepreneurs. Grantees will service start-up businesses across the food ecosystem — from production to distribution to processing to retail. Examples include, but are not limited to, growers, small batch producers, large batch producers, restaurants, cafes, grocery stores, community markets, co-ops, corner stores, farmstands, farmers markets, and consumer packaged goods. The Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection expects to make two or three total awards, at a range of different program sizes and costs. Priority will be given to proposals that build upon other initiatives to generate food hubs, food corridors, and address historic and present-day systems that have denied communities access to nourishing and culturally relevant food options.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

The Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection plans to release the RFPs to identify the administrators of the Good Food Fund and the food incubators this summer. Once administrators are identified, entrepreneurs will be able to apply to participate in either program through the administrator. This working group will continue to identify pathways to reduce barriers for BIPOC entrepreneurs, including breaking down silos in the funding system and providing support to start-up food businesses and operations for existing businesses.



# Emergency Food and Nutrition Programs Workgroup

## CO-LEADS

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**Laurie Dittman**

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**Linda Loving**

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**Cosmos Ray**

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**Maggie Clemons**

*Chicago Public Libraries*

**Erica Farris**

*City Colleges of Chicago*

**Meghan O'Boyle**

*Chicago Parks District*

**Erin Fisher**

*Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children*

**Olga Medina**

*Illinois Hunger Coalition*

**Graciela Guzman**

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**Tyler Stratton**

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**Idalia Flores Guzman**

*Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights*

## OVERVIEW

The Emergency Food and Federal Nutrition Program Workgroup advances creative solutions to reduce barriers that deter Chicagoans from participating in food assistance and nutrition programs. Based on US Census community survey data, 26% of Chicagoans are at risk for food insecurity.<sup>9</sup> Data at the Chicago Metro Area level estimates that Black and Latinx communities and households with children experience higher rates food insecurity than white communities and households, emphasizing the racial inequities that impact food access (table 1).

With inflation and the cost of food, utilities, and housing continuing to increase, many people are facing impossible decisions to make ends meet. Programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as LINK or food stamps, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) can supplement household food budgets, leaving more room for other essential needs. Meal programs for children and older adults provide nutritious food in congregate settings. Charitable programs like food banks, pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters provide immediate nutrition assistance to individuals in need of food.

Federal nutrition programs are not only powerful and effective in reducing hunger and improving nutrition, but they also provide economic stimulus for local communities. Because individuals and families operating with low incomes typically spend all their income to meet essential needs, such as shelter, food and transportation, federal nutrition programs can put more dollars in the wallets of recipients. Research shows that SNAP increases local economic activity by up to \$2 for every \$1 dollar spent on SNAP benefits.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 1: Estimated Food Insecurity Rates In Chicago Metro Area for March 1-April 10, 2023<sup>11</sup>**

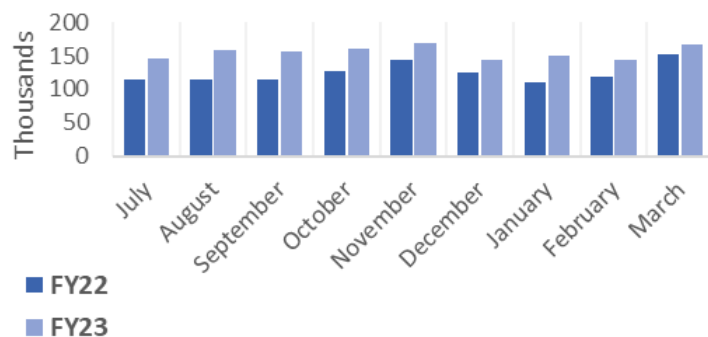
		Food Insecurity	
		Overall	w/children
Mar 1 – Apr 10, 2023	All	20%	23%
Mar 1 – Apr 10, 2023	White	15%	15%
Mar 1 – Apr 10, 2023	Black	29%	33%
Mar 1 – Apr 10, 2023	Latinx	29%	32%

## PRIORITY: ELIMINATE BARRIERS TO FOOD PANTRY EXPANSION

### WHY?

Food pantries are a pivotal access point for Chicagoans experiencing food insecurity and meet a critical need, particularly for people who are not eligible for or receiving federal nutrition assistance programs or for whom those programs fall short. With most pandemic emergency aid ending in 2023 — notably, temporary COVID-related increases to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) — and inflationary pressures, more Chicagoans are relying on food pantries for food assistance. While not inclusive of all pantries in the Chicago area, figure five shows the number of unique household visits to grocery style program partners in the Greater Chicago Food Depository's network.

Figure 5: Household Visits to Food Depository Pantry Programs



Source: Greater Chicago Food Depository

### PROGRESS

- **Clarified Zoning, Licensing, and Permitting for Food Pantries**

The Mayor's Office and the Food Depository worked with the Department of Buildings, the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP), and the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) to map the zoning, licensing, and permitting needed to open a food pantry. Through the process of mapping the requirements, the Food Equity Council confirmed that a change in zoning was not needed, but that prospective pantries and local communities would benefit from more transparency and clarity on the process. In response, all of the requirements were summarized and can now be found on the Food Equity Council's Website: [Guidance on Opening Food Pantries \(chicago.gov\)](https://www.chicago.gov/guidance-on-opening-food-pantries).

## PRIORITY: MARKET AND MAXIMIZE NUTRITION PROGRAMS AND BENEFITS

### WHY?

Grocery programs like SNAP and WIC and meal programs serving children and seniors provide critical tools to reduce food insecurity. Unfortunately, not everyone who is eligible for assistance knows that they are eligible or how to sign up. Even those who are aware of what programs are available to them face barriers to enrollment that lead to underutilization among eligible households who largely live on the city's South, West, or Far North sides. Participants are often responsible for navigating multiple different systems to participate. Underutilization of these programs leaves a significant amount of federal funding on the table for Chicago residents and communities. The Food Depository estimates around \$60.5 million annual dollars may have been left unused in the WIC program in 2019 due to enrollment in Chicago. Similarly, an estimated monthly average of \$29.5 million dollars in SNAP were left unused between July 2019 and June 2020 due to unenrollment. Through better marketing and the removal of enrollment barriers, we can maximize nutrition programs and benefits and fully leverage federal funding to support Chicago residents and the local economy.

## PROGRESS

- *Leveraged City communication channels to better connect Chicagoans to nutrition resources.*

When there are program changes, information is not always communicated in a clear or timely way. By leveraging existing City communication channels, this working group aims to coordinate messages so that programs become easier to navigate and Chicagoans have all the information to make the best decision for their nutritional needs. In 2022, the Workgroup collaborated with the launch of 211 in Chicago to provide clear instructions about how to access nutrition assistance programs and food pantries. Chicago and suburban Cook County residents now have access to a local 2-1-1 service changing the landscape for how we meet the needs of our neighbors. 2-1-1 is a free, 24/7/365 service that connects people to essential health and social service support and information during times of non-emergency crisis. The Workgroup supported the launch by providing clear messaging to 211 operators on nutrition programs.

- *Expanding SNAP online shopping access.*

In June 2020, IDHS began allowing SNAP recipients to use their SNAP Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards to purchase food from participating retailers online. Options for home delivery or curbside pick-up increase access and flexibility for SNAP consumers. The policy change was rolled out during the COVID-19 pandemic to allow SNAP recipients to safely purchase food from home. Looking forward, SNAP online reduces barriers for individuals with limited access to shop in-person at grocery stores, including older adults, people with disabilities, households with transportation challenges or people who live in communities with limited retail options.

After a year, only a small number of retailers were leveraging the policy. In collaboration with the Illinois Commission to End Hunger, the Emergency Food and Nutrition Program Workgroup engaged food retailers to raise awareness about how to leverage the SNAP online option to serve new and existing customers and provide guidance on how to establish a program. As a result of this outreach, eight more retailers signed up to offer SNAP online. Currently, a total of 19 retail chains, representing dozens of retail locations, are participating across Illinois.<sup>12</sup>

- *Increasing awareness of SNAP restaurant meals option.*

Older adults, people with disabilities, and homeless individuals face unique mobility challenges and other barriers to shopping for food and preparing meals. The SNAP Restaurant Meals Program increases access and flexibility for those individuals by allowing certain participants to redeem their SNAP benefits in authorized restaurants. Typically, SNAP policy only allows participants to redeem benefits for groceries.

In 2022, the Illinois Department of Human Services launched a pilot in four Chicago zip codes to allow SNAP households with older adults, people with a disability, or an individual without housing to redeem their benefits in participating restaurants. The Food Equity Council supported outreach to local restaurants and communities to increase awareness and encourage participation in this important pilot, which launched early 2023.

## LOOKING FORWARD

The Emergency Food and Nutrition Program Workgroup will continue to build upon the city communication channels and reduce barriers to participation to better connect Chicagoans to nutrition and emergency food resources. This includes continuing to promote SNAP online and SNAP restaurant meals program. The Workgroup is also developing a project to improve awareness of and access to WIC for families with young children.





# Institutional Procurement Workgroup

## CO-LEADS

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*Chicago Food Policy Action Council*

**Jennifer Herd**

*Chicago Department of Public Health*

## MEMBERS

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**Jess Lynch**

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**Zuri Thompson**

*The Doula Part*



## OVERVIEW

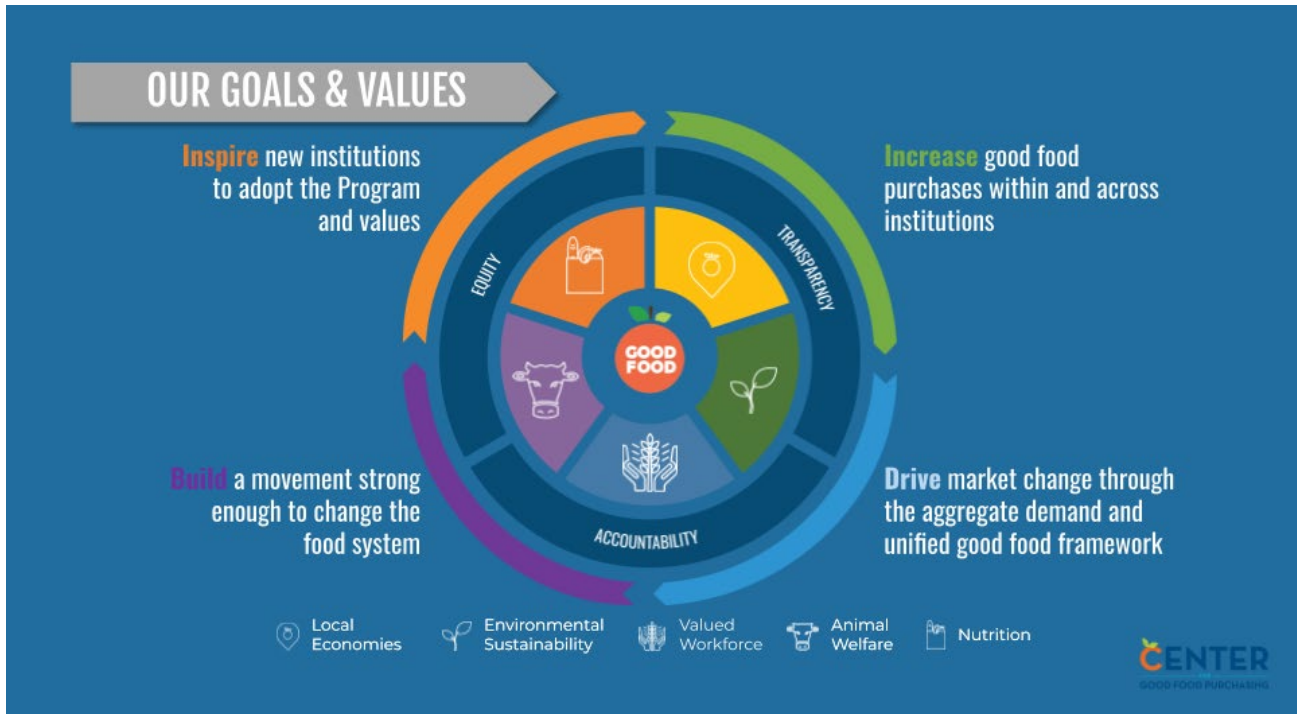
It is estimated that the City of Chicago spends \$321.86 million annually on food related contracts through its City Departments and sister agencies (table 2). The purpose of the Institutional Procurement Workgroup is to leverage the City’s meal programs to promote economic equity, sustainability, and animal welfare by establishing more inclusive procurement practices and supporting BIPOC-owned food enterprises in the local food supply chain. This work further advances the goals of Chicago’s Good Food Purchasing Policy, which was adopted as a [Resolution](#) by Chicago’s City Council in 2017.

## PRIORITY: LEVERAGING CITY AND INSTITUTIONAL PROCUREMENT TO SUPPORT LOCAL BIPOC GROWERS, PRODUCERS, AND FOOD BUSINESSES.

### Why?

Every year, public institutions across the United States — from school districts to city governments — spend billions of dollars on food purchases. There is a highly consolidated institutional food supply chain and limited economic opportunities, especially for values-aligned and small BIPOC-owned firms within that supply chain. The Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) is a tool to transform the way public institutions purchase food by creating a transparent and equitable food system built on five core values: local economies, health, valued workforce, animal welfare, and environmental sustainability (figure 2). By expanding the implementation of GFPP, Chicago is positioned to be a national leader in advancing a racially and socially equitable food system. Over the past year, this working group focused on supporting policy and operational changes at the institutional level.

Figure 6: Goals and Values of the Good Food Purchasing Program



Source: The Center for Good Food Purchasing

**Table 2: Estimated City of Chicago Dollar Spend by City Department and Sister Agency Based on Contracts As of December 2022**

Department	Chicago Department of Assets, Information, and Services	Chicago Department of Aviation	City Colleges of Chicago	Chicago Public Schools	Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events	Chicago Department of Family and Support Services	Chicago Park District
# of Meals served	750,000	105,000,000	81,205	70,318,214	N/A	6,161,322	1,043,750
Annual Food-Related Contractual Spend (Millions)	\$3.9 <sup>13</sup>	\$218.5 <sup>14</sup>	\$1.8	\$88.5	\$2.9	\$13.3	\$2.1

**PROGRESS**

- **Further implementation of GFPP in a city department (DFSS), sister agency (CPS), and private institution.**

City departments and sister agencies participating in GFPP made the following commitments:

1. Meet at least the baseline standard in each of the 5 value categories of GFPP
2. Incorporate good food purchasing standards and reporting requirements into request for proposals (RFP) and contracts.
3. Establish supply chain transparency to the farm of origin, and
4. Commitment to annual verification of food purchases by the [Center for Good Food Purchasing](#) to monitor compliance, measure progress, and celebrate success.

- **Further GFPP Implementation with Chicago Public Schools (CPS)**

Chicago Public Schools completed a GFPP Baseline Assessment for their 2018-2019 school year, which audited over \$71 million worth of food spend for the 2018-2019 school year. CPS met two baseline standards: Nutrition and Valued Workforce categories. CPS is very close to meeting its Local Economies baseline standard and is just 4.5% of total spend away from meeting the Local Economies baseline. One highlight from the baseline was CPS's continued purchasing of local, antibiotic-free chicken drumsticks every month.

CPS is developing its Good Food Action Plan, which is updated continuously for expanded goals and strategies. Key goals include continued exploration of plant-based proteins on student menus, community engagement on menu changes and updated nutrition standards, increasing vendor transparency and data collection around sourcing and pricing, and a 5% increase in whole and minimally processed foods. Additionally, CPS is working with Open Kitchens, Inc. (OKI), one of its food service vendors, on its data transparency for an updated Good Food Purchasing Progress Assessment for SY 2023-2024.

Another major goal of CPS' Action Plan is to reduce and divert food waste from the landfill. Through funding from the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the City of Chicago and the Wasted Food Action Alliance have been working with City departments and agencies on food waste reduction strategies. Additionally, CPS, in partnership with Seven Generations Ahead (SGA), received funding from the World Wildlife Funds Food Waste Warrior to complete food waste audits in 10 schools and receive technical assistance in waste reduction strategies. Project goals include collecting quantitative and qualitative data for food loss and waste, determining which reduction interventions are suitable for different school communities, and creating policy and educational materials to grow the food waste reduction work in the district.

- ***Transforming Food Service Contract Language with the Department of Family and Support Services***

The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) awarded their new food service management contracts for senior congregate meals and home-delivered meal (HDM) programs to Open Kitchens, Inc. with new stronger language regarding their compliance with the City's Good Food Purchasing Program commitments.

Workgroup members representing the DFSS updated contract language aligned with GFPP, and the Institutional Procurement Workgroup provided input on GFPP related goals for the release of a Food Service Management Company RFP for senior citizen congregate meals. DFSS, in collaboration with CPS and Chicago Park District, continues to work with OKI to collect food purchasing data for their GFPP Baseline Assessment.

- ***Rush University Medical Center Commits to Implementing GFPP***

The Institutional Procurement Workgroup partnered with West Side United, Chicago Food Action Policy Council, Cook County Department of Public Health, Illinois Public Health Institute, and The Doula Part to release an *Open Call for Hospitals to Pilot the Good Food Purchasing Program*. The group awarded the cost-sharing opportunity to Rush University Medical Center, who will begin their GFPP implementation process in 2023 with a baseline assessment and action plan developed with The Center for Good Food Purchasing.

## **COLLABORATING ACROSS THE COUNTY: METRO CHICAGO GOOD FOOD PURCHASING INITIATIVE**

The City of Chicago's commitment to the GFPP is a piece of the broader Metro Chicago Good Food Purchasing Initiative, which also includes Cook County Institutions, higher-ed institutions, and hospital systems. As a part of the broader GFPI strategic plan and as critical sites for food access in their communities, institutions can also ensure that the good food they purchase is more accessible to all; that it celebrates the growers and producers of that food while honoring the vibrant, healthy food cultures & traditions of those eating meals served by the city.

- ***Connected small vendors through buyer/supplier mixers***

With support from the Food Equity Council and CDPH, the Workgroup Co-Lead CFPAC organized a Summer Buyer/Supplier Mixer (June 2022), Fall Good Food Vendor Fair (October 2022), and Good Food & Urban Agriculture Forum (December 2022) to build relationships between local growers, local food businesses, public meal program providers, and food service management companies. The events collectively attracted over 200 unique attendees, including 45% of attendees identifying as local farmers and/or food businesses. The December forum included a partnership with, and programming from, the Illinois Department of Agriculture, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, and the City of Chicago.

- ***Increased transparency of City supply chain by mapping of existing city contracts: Kumu map***

The process of navigating City food contracts is challenging on many levels. There are multiple access points to participate in distributing food throughout the city: a food service provider, subcontractor vendor, producer selling to a local vendor, etc. To increase transparency, access points, and to create an on-ramp to engage with city food procurement, existing contracts and food service providers and vendors were mapped along with their corresponding departments and/or agencies. The interactive Kumu map includes information about city departments, agencies, food service management companies, food distributors, contract timeframes, contract size (in dollars), and the type of contract. This map is a living document that requires hands-on data management and will be updated on a quarterly basis with feedback from city departments and sister agencies.

- ***Leveraged policy by beginning the process of co-creating nutrition standards for City served foods***

The Institutional Food Procurement Workgroup developed a strategy for creating and implementing nutrition standards for City served foods that established three goals:

1. Help the City of Chicago leverage its purchasing and procurement power to support local economics, nutrition, a valued workforce, environmental sustainability, and animal welfare.
2. Increase access to nourishing meals, snacks, and beverage options.
3. Ensure the City's definition of "good food" centers culturally resonate options and utilizes a culturally humble approach to implementation.

With support from IL Public Health Institute and the Roosevelt University Policy Research Collaborative, an engagement plan was created to cultivate feedback on nutrition standards language and usage. Focus groups will be held with a variety of stakeholders, including institutions with City contracts for food, city departments and sister agencies impacted by the standards, local producers, food service directors, and other smaller vendors. The nutrition standards will include a culturally responsive toolkit that will provide community surveys, sample menus, recipes, and snacks to help inform how to make the food that is offered more culturally resonate with Chicagoans being served.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

The Institutional Food Procurement Workgroup will continue to deepen the City's commitment to the Good Food Purchasing Program and create pathways for local BIPOC growers and producers to compete for city contracts. This includes reconvening the Chicago Good Food Purchasing Task Force, a cohort of city departments and sister agencies with food contracts that provides a platform for peer-to-peer learning and support with navigating GFPP implementation. In fall of 2023, the Workgroup will release final nutrition standards for city served food. Additionally, the Workgroup will continue to collaborate with Rush as they complete their baseline assessment in 2023 and develop an Action Plan with the Center for Good Food Purchasing for GFPP implementation.

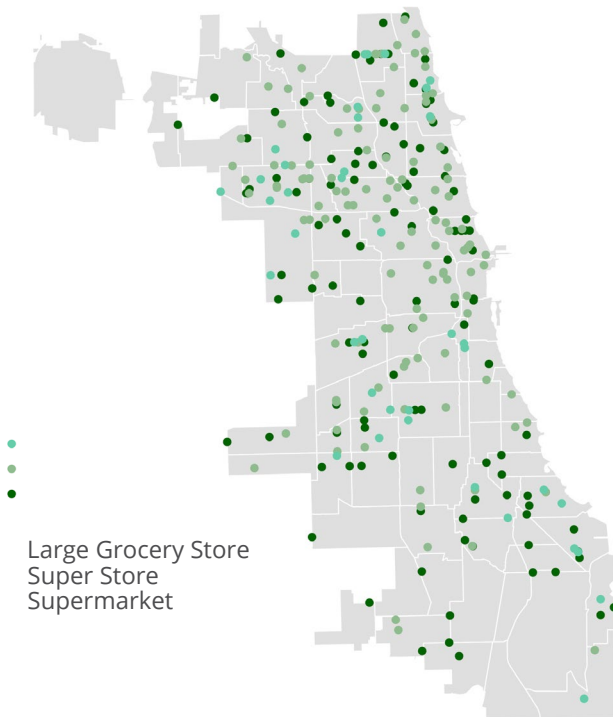


## OVERVIEW

The concentration of grocery stores across Chicago is inequitably distributed (figure 7), and the closing of over six grocery stores by retailers on the South and West sides between October 2021 and May 2023<sup>15</sup> further exacerbated an already dire situation. One of the many consequences of historic disinvestment, inequitable retail access has been a persistent issue for decades and is one of the many factors contributing to the disproportionate levels of food insecurity in BIPOC communities.

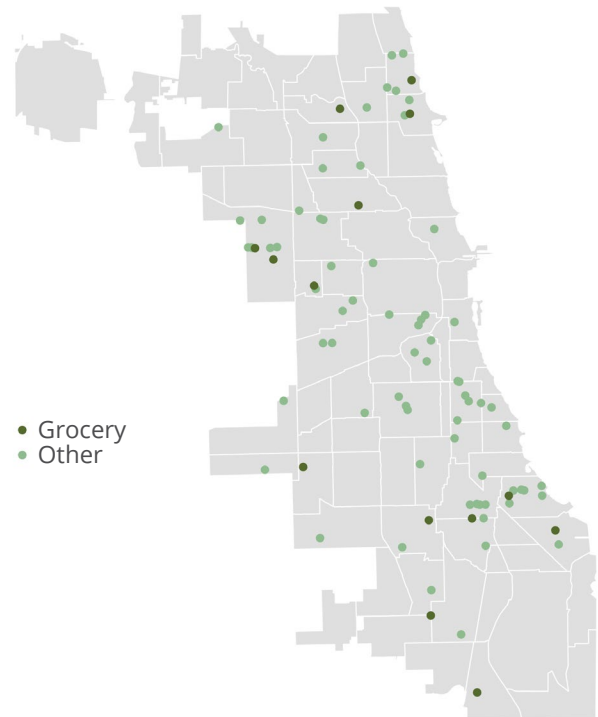
The impact of inadequate food retail reaches beyond food access. Grocery stores serve as anchors in communities by employing community members and acting as an anchoring business for nearby commercial activity.<sup>16,17</sup> There is a “retail gap” in many BIPOC communities, which results in a leakage of millions of dollars in local residents purchasing power that could have been invested in their local community but end up supporting retail stores in other parts of the city<sup>18</sup>.

**Figure 7: Large Retailers Accepting SNAP**



Source: USDA SNAP retailer locator, January 2023

**Figure 8: Grants Awarded to Food-Related Projects**



Source: DPD, April 5, 2023

The last decade has seen several efforts to improve food retail access directly and indirectly. Examples include direct funding to grocery stores, coordinated development along emerging corridors and transportation hubs, direct recruitment of retailers, healthy corner store initiatives, and small business supports. While there are many efforts happening across the city to improve retail access (appendix), the Food Equity Council saw an opportunity to integrate disparate efforts into a more cohesive strategy to improve food retail access and to center the needs and assets of community in that strategy.

As a result, in December 2022, the Food Equity Council convened an ad hoc short-term sprint group to explore what the City and community partners could do to expand the availability, resiliency, and quality of food retail in Chicago. Membership of the sprint group included a diverse set of perspectives including small and large retailers, entrepreneurs, Community Development Financial Institutions, investors, and food equity advocates.

The retail sprint group convened five workshops examining the current state of food retail access in Chicago and identifying potential opportunities that would: 1) increase equitable access to retail options for healthy and culturally relevant foods, 2) support innovative retail options that center on community assets and needs, 3) create wealth-building opportunities for community members, and 4) build on efforts already happening in City departments and communities that address inequitable food retail access.

## LOOKING FORWARD

Over the next year, the Food Equity Council will review the findings of the retail sprint group and develop a workstream within the structure of the Council that will specifically focus on food retail access.

## WHY NOT “FOOD DESERTS”?

The term “food desert” is often used to describe a geographic area where people lack access to healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables, and approaches that use this framework to increase retail access ignore the relationship between the lack of food access and racially motivated systemic disinvestment in communities.

Deserts are naturally-occurring thriving ecosystems. Deserts are supposed to be a part of the global ecosystem, neighborhoods with inadequate food access are not. Moreover, the term “food desert” implies that a neighborhood is barren, which does not depict the vibrancy of communities across Chicago.

To address the long-term systemic disinvestment, solutions must take a holistic approach and address root causes. Food apartheid is not accidents, or natural, and with intentional action and collaboration, there are ways to support a community in creating long term, sustainable points of food access.

# APPENDIX

## EXISTING CITY EFFORTS SUPPORTING FOOD RETAIL ACCESS

Initiative	About	Departments Involved
<a href="#"><u>INVEST South/West</u></a>	<p>INVEST South/West is an unprecedented community development initiative to marshal the resources of multiple City departments, community organizations, and corporate and philanthropic partners toward 12 commercial corridors within 10 South and West Side community areas. Through this collaboration, the City has aligned more than \$2.2 billion in public and private investment as of fall 2022. The initiative is providing support for small businesses, creating public realm improvements, restoring historic buildings, and fostering equity and resilience where it's needed most.</p>	Multiple
<a href="#"><u>Equitable Transit Oriented Development and the Connected Communities Ordinance</u></a>	<p>The Connected Communities Ordinance advances equitable development and thriving neighborhoods near transit, developed in partnership with Elevated Chicago and over 80 stakeholders by the Mayor's Office and the Departments of Planning and Development, of Housing, and of Transportation to reflect Chicago's Equitable Transit Oriented Development (ETOD) Policy Plan and inclusive growth goals overall.</p> <p>This ordinance, adopted by City Council in July 2022, will attract reinvestment and create jobs by encouraging and creating predictable standards for equitable development near transit. It will support Chicago's economic recovery and foster thriving neighborhoods across the entire city so that every Chicagoan is able to live in a vibrant, healthy and affordable community that connects them to transit and makes it easier for them to get to what they need — from jobs and schools to services and more. Additionally, \$10 million in funding was allocated to support pre-development and Equitable Transit Oriented development projects.</p>	DPD/ Mayor's Office
<a href="#"><u>Community Development Grants</u></a>	<p>Through ARPA funding, the city invested in catalytic local development, expanding upon DPD's existing investments and support. Recipients were provided grant funding to support local commercial, mixed-use, and light manufacturing development. Prioritization was provided to projects in areas of Chicago where there is a history of disinvestment or limited private investment were.</p>	DPD

<p><u>Small Business Support</u></p>	<p>The Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) supports the small business ecosystem of Chicago, and promotes economic development, through its Small Business Advocacy division composed of three units: Economic Recovery, The Encouraging Diversity, Growth and Equity (EDGE) Program, and Neighborhood Strategy.</p>	<p>BACP</p>
<p><u>Neighborhood Opportunity Fund</u></p>	<p>In 2016, the City of Chicago revised the Zoning Code to leverage funds generated by new development in and around the Loop to catalyze investment in Chicago’s West, Southwest and South Sides. The Neighborhood Opportunity Fund uses these funds to support commercial corridors in Chicago’s underserved neighborhoods. Business and property owners may apply for grant funding to pay for the construction or rehabilitation of real estate and projects that support new or expanding businesses or cultural assets.</p> <p>The Neighborhood Opportunity Fund (NOF) awards grants to projects that have a catalytic impact on the neighborhood and lead to the construction or rehabilitation of new and existing, publicly accessible, commercial spaces (e.g. grocery stores, retail establishments, or restaurants) or cultural establishments. NOF does not award grants for the construction or rehabilitation of residential uses, manufacturing uses, industrial uses, or places of worship that do not identify commercial as the primary use of a project.</p>	<p>DPD</p>
<p><u>Support for maintaining, recruiting, and expanding retailers</u></p>	<p>World Business Chicago has the vision of making Chicago the most business-friendly city in the world by becoming a role model for truly inclusive economic growth, ensuring that all Chicagoans prosper through equitable economic development. Collectively, the WBC team works to achieve this vision through the following priority initiatives: Business Development, Foreign Direct Investment and Global Strategic Investment, innovation and venture, community impact, talent and workforce, global strategic initiatives, and public sector investment strategy.</p>	<p>World Business Chicago, Mayor’s Office</p>
<p><u>Community Wealth Building</u></p>	<p>Community Wealth Building is an approach to economic development that promotes the local, democratic, and shared ownership and control of community assets. The City designed the Community Wealth Ecosystem Building (Community WEB) Program to invest in the organizations that start, sustain, and scale CWB models. The Community WEB program will fund an interconnected network of advisors to provide high-quality, specialized, and culturally-relevant technical assistance services at no cost to eligible non-profit and for-profit start-up and operating businesses leading CWB models such as worker cooperatives, limited-equity housing cooperatives, community land trusts, and community investment vehicles. \$15 million in funding from the Chicago Recovery Plan is dedicated to provide grants for panning, pre-development, and large scale pilots.</p>	<p>Office of Equity and Racial Justice/ DPD</p>



# ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> "Vegetables and Fruits," *Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health*, <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/vegetables-and-fruits/>.

<sup>2</sup> To learn more about the health disparities seen across the city and how the Chicago Department of Public Health is working to address them, read [Healthy Chicago 2025](#).

<sup>3</sup> Racial and Ethnic Household Wealth Trends and Wealth Inequality, *Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis* <https://www.stlouisfed.org/institute-for-economic-equity/the-real-state-of-family-wealth/racial-and-ethnic-household-wealth>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> In a survey conducted by Pew Charitable Trusts, most Black families said that they didn't know anyone who could lend them \$3,000.

<sup>6</sup> Building Supportive Ecosystems for Black-owned US Businesses, *McKinsey & Company* <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/building-supportive-ecosystems-for-black-owned-us-businesses>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> 2017-2021 US Census American Community Survey 5 year Estimates.

<sup>10</sup> The Case for Boosting SNAP Benefits in Next Major Economic Response Package, *The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities* <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/the-case-for-boosting-snap-benefits-in-next-major-economic-response>

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach analysis and prediction of food insecurity levels using the Food Security Supplement to the Current Population Survey and U.S. Census Household Pulse Survey food sufficiency responses for the Chicago-Naperville-Elgin region, March 1, 2023, to April 10, 2023

<sup>12</sup> Retailers in Illinois accepting SNAP Payments Online can be found on the [USDA](#) website.

<sup>13</sup> Estimate is based on 80% of vendors selling food; avg 30% of revenue spent on food.

<sup>14</sup> Estimate is based on 80% of vendors selling food; avg 30% of revenue spent on food.

<sup>15</sup> Aldi closed its store in West Garfield Park in October 2021. Whole Foods in Englewood announced closure in April 2022 and closed in November 2022. June 2022, Aldi in Auburn Gresham closed. In April 2023, Walmart closed stores 3 stores in Kenwood, Little Village, and Chatham.

<sup>16</sup> Grosso, Anthony. n.d. "Council Post: Why Grocery-Anchored Real Estate Has Become so Attractive to Investors." *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2021/06/25/why-grocery-anchored-real-estate-has-become-so-attractive-to-investors/?sh=780d10d68e1d>.

<sup>17</sup> Grosso, Anthony. n.d. "Council Post: Why Grocery-Anchored Real Estate Has Become so Attractive to Investors." *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2021/06/25/why-grocery-anchored-real-estate-has-become-so-attractive-to-investors/?sh=780d10d68e>

<sup>18</sup> South Shore Corridor Study: Retail Market Technical Report, *PLACE Consulting/ The City of Chicago* [https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/zlup/Planning\\_and\\_Policy/Publications/south\\_shore\\_study/ss\\_retail\\_tech.pdf](https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/zlup/Planning_and_Policy/Publications/south_shore_study/ss_retail_tech.pdf)

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