

# Pandemic Recovery, Job Creation, and an Equitable and Resilient Local Food Economy

[The Food In Neighborhoods \(FIN\)](#) Community Coalition supports community efforts to build a just, healthy, and sustainable food system in Louisville. We call on Metro Council and Louisville's decision-makers to invest the American Rescue Plan funding into building back bolder by creating a more equitable, secure and resilient food system in Louisville.

**Background:** COVID-19 thrust the inequities of our current food system into the forefront of the national conversation. Throughout the pandemic, we saw empty shelves, mile-long food pantry lines, and [increased food prices](#). Investing in an equitable, secure and resilient food system will support farmers, food chain workers, eaters, and the environment.

Louisville's history of institutional racism, segregation and redlining continues to have negative impacts on neighborhoods and on the health and wellbeing of the populations within them. The Center for Health Equity's 2017 Health Equity Report indicated the average life expectancy of a West Louisville resident to be 12 years less than that of a neighbor living in East Louisville.

Residents in South and West Louisville neighborhoods face severe food insecurity; grocery stores and other fresh food options are scarce while unhealthy eating options dominate the food landscape, making low-cost, calorie-dense, low-nutrient foods and beverages readily available for residents of all ages.

Investing in building a food system that provides equitable and secure access to fresh and healthy foods can be a catalyst for improved community health for residents experiencing multidimensional poverty.

**Participatory Process:** Through a series of virtual and in-person community meetings and conversations with key stakeholders, FIN has developed four critical areas of investment for Louisville's food system. Our proposal prioritizes nonprofits, businesses and initiatives that center equity in the food system, especially BIPOC-run groups which are and have historically been under-resourced.

The examples given below are to highlight specific needs in each of the four sections. Final numbers will be based on careful needs assessments and gap analyses.

**Accountability:** Our first step will be to establish a Louisville Food System Advisory Committee composed of community food system stakeholders and neighborhood residents. This body will establish the criteria, processes, and mechanisms for allocating ARP funds for this initiative. The funds will be administered through a community-advised fund of a local foundation.

## **Proposal Sections:**

- 1. Food Policy Council Development, Governance & Community Participation**
- 2. Economic Development, Food Supply & Infrastructure**
- 3. Food Access, Farm-to-Institution & Farm-to-People**
- 4. Education and Training**

### **1. Food Community Advisory Council Development, Community Participation & Accountability [\$700,000]**

### **2. Economic Development, Food Supply & Infrastructure [\$11,201,700]**

- A. Strengthen local food and agriculture infrastructure in Louisville and surrounding counties (e.g., capital, business development, processing, storage & refrigeration, distribution, and composting & food recovery) [\$7,687,500]**
- B. Support existing food and agriculture businesses and nonprofits, with priority on BIPOC and zip codes impacted by food apartheid [\$3,514,200]**
  - Scale up urban and rural food producer businesses and farms [\$3 million]
  - Common Earth Gardens [\$394,200]
  - Americana Community Garden Program [\$120,000]

### **3. Food Access, Farm-to-Institution & Farm-to-People [\$17,015,000]**

- A. Increase the number and size of farmers markets, Fresh Stop Markets, CSAs, corner stores, and markets in/near areas impacted by food apartheid throughout Louisville. Support and build capacity of existing nonprofit organizations and markets to increase affordable access to healthy, especially locally and regionally grown food. [\$16,700,000]**
  - Garden Girl Food Markets [\$2.2 million]
  - Block to Block Corner Stores [\$2.4 million]
  - Louisville Association for Community Economics (LACE) & the Louisville Community Grocery [\$5 million]
  - New Roots Fresh Stop Markets [1.5 million (\$500K per year for 3 years)]
  - Black Market Ky [\$600,000]
  - Feed the West [\$5 million]
- B. Policies and Capacity to Increase Local Food Availability [\$105,000]**
- C. Farm-to-Louisville [\$210,000]**

## 4. Education and Training [\$4,815,450]

**A. Provide education, training and technical assistance to all citizens about growing, preparing, and consuming locally grown food. There are many existing community organizations and programming that need additional financial support to fulfill the current and future needs surrounding food system education. [\$4,815,450]**

1. Food Literacy Project [\$1,411,000]
2. Americana Children's Garden [\$120,000]
3. Play Cousins Collective [\$418,000]
4. Children Shouldn't Hunger [\$261,150]
5. The Harmony Project [\$605,000]
6. Jefferson County Extension [\$500,000]
7. Jefferson County Soil & Water Conservation District [\$500,000]
8. JCPS community garden program [\$500,000]
9. JCPS school-based garden program [\$500,000]

**Conclusion:** American Rescue Plan funding presents our city with a unique opportunity to address the underlying causes of multidimensional poverty that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted. FIN believes that by investing in all aspects of a robust local food economy, we can improve health outcomes for neighbors and build wealth for small businesses. We believe that the foundations of a food system lie in these four areas outlined above; development of a food policy council; economic development of our food supply and infrastructure; food access, farm-to-institution & farm-to-people and education & training.

Access to nutritious locally grown food is a basic human right. Locally grown and sold nutritious foods build resilient communities able to support current and future citizens to make Louisville a thriving community for all. FIN calls on Metro Council and Louisville's decision makers to invest the American Rescue Plan funding into building back bolder by creating a more equitable, secure, and resilient food system in Louisville.