

Salt Lake City
Resident
Food
Equity
Advisors



SLCgreen

Mayor Erin Mendenhall



SALT LAKE CITY FOOD EQUITY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

Report prepared by Carbaugh Associates

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2021 Salt Lake City Resident Food Equity Advisors

***SALT LAKE CITY FOOD EQUITY
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE SUCCESS***

A summary report of the 2020 – 2021 Salt Lake City Resident Food Equity Advisors Pilot Program process, key ideas, and recommendations.



Preface

The intention of the Salt Lake City Resident Food Equity Advisor summary report is to both represent the Advisors' voices and their recommendations. Thematically, this summary report is organized around an introduction, brief program background and process, Advisor priorities, then key ideas and recommended policy, program and project implementations. Listed below as an outline, and detailed further in the report are the Advisors' results. While the key ideas and recommendations are not prioritized, nor presented in rank order, they are delivered as a full complement of realistic food equity actions that can begin immediately with the support of city officials.

1. Advisors' Key Ideas
2. Mayor Council Joint Resolution on Food Equity
3. Ensure and Expand Equitable Information Outreach and Communications
4. Continue the Resident Food Equity Advisor Program
5. Fund and Begin a Resident Integrated Food Equity Assessment and Action Plan
6. Fund and Develop a Food Voucher Program + Lead and Partner in Food Choice Pantries
7. Create a Fresh and Healthy Local Food Retail and Landscape Initiative
8. Expand Opportunity, Agency, and Access through Fresh Food Growing Policy and Programming

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Acknowledgements

This summary report is made possible because of the substantial and dedicated work of the first cohort of the Salt Lake City Resident Food Equity Advisors, as well as the supporting staff of the Salt Lake City Department of Sustainability. At the outset, the Advisors began their June 2020 service during the beginning of the SARS- CoV-2 pandemic outbreak. Despite significant barriers, including low or no technology access, all involved exhibited exceptional resourcefulness and willingness to learn and succeed together within a new online process. Throughout the 10 months of working together to improve Salt Lake City's prospects for greater food equity, this first cohort of thirteen Resident Food Equity Advisors persevered through many challenges, showing nimbleness and tenacity, as well as patience and generosity in their commitment to bringing forth excellent food equity recommendations.

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Introduction

First recommended in Salt Lake City's Community Food Assessment (2013), the need for innovative approaches to connect and empower residents in creating a more equitable community food system through collaboration, shared learning and co-decision making was recognized and championed by Salt Lake City's Department of Sustainability and Food Policy Council. In 2019, with a focus on food equity, diversity and inclusion, this recommendation would emerge as a pilot program called the *Salt Lake City Resident Food Equity Advisors (SLC RFEA)*.

Although the Community Food Assessment had helped the city make progress in improving many aspects of the local food system, rising food insecurity; especially among the city's marginalized populations, emphasized the need for a substantially more inclusive approach to addressing local food challenges. Because the ways in which any one person may come up against food hardship can be complex and varied, for the new program, Salt Lake City's Department of Sustainability wanted to confront and figure out food insecurity in a substantially different way. At its core, the essence of this new approach called for creating a new program – the Salt Lake City Resident Food Equity Advisors, whose principle purpose was to understand food hardship and identify solutions by equitably collaborating with residents whose daily lives had been, or were presently being touched by food disparity.

As a new program, the SLC RFEA was created to realistically accelerate enduring food equity pathways. By taking a people first approach, where the belief of building better communities arises from valuing the contributions of individual assets and the lived experience; the program aimed to create a place where residents with deep ways of knowing food inequity could connect, collaborate, learn together and work with the city to advance greater food equity.

The Salt Lake City Resident Food Equity Advisors Are:

Everyday people whose lived experiences are helping inform ways to reduce food barriers and improve opportunities.

Collaborating so marginalized people and neighborhoods can have healthy and relevant fresh foods.

Deeply rooted in and care about their neighborhood and community relationships.

People who can become one of Salt Lake City's most important agents for food equity change.

Working together so every Salt Lake City resident has greater food security, improved personal health and a nourishing ecological environment.

Background

Prior to the 2020 SARS- CoV-2 pandemic outbreak, the plan for the Salt Lake City Resident Food Equity Advisors program was to bring together a group of everyday residents, coming from different backgrounds and neighborhoods, to focus on food hardship. Advisors would be individuals with a deep passion for food, a willingness to share their unique food access stories and an eagerness to collaborate and learn with others. Pre-pandemic, RFEA meetings were planned to be in person, safe gatherings, where discovery, knowledge building, and sharing insights over meals would lead to recommending more equitable solutions for the city's diverse people and neighborhoods. Contributing to a more equitable process, Advisor stipends and childcare would be provided as part of the program.

In the fall of 2019, the Salt Lake City Food & Equity Program Manager launched an outreach and referral campaign to connect with residents who held a strong interest in healthy food and a desire to help improve their community. In consultation with Carbaugh Associates and through service provider referral pathways, the Salt Lake City Food & Equity Program Manager reached out directly to residents, neighborhood organizations, and faith based communities to share information about the project and recruit participants. By using both an in person and online application process the program received over fifty applications. From those fifty applicants, a group of 16 very diverse residents were enlisted to become the first cohort of the Salt Lake City Resident Food Equity Advisors.

Although the different times resulting from the pandemic caused disruption, the Resident Food Equity Advisors program strived to go on. Assuring the program's continuation during the pandemic required 1) determining how the program might be reoriented and moved to an online meeting format, and 2) re-designing the process so it would remain equitable, trustworthy, meaningful and results oriented. With no time to waste, the work of finding a way for all Advisors to participate equitably needed to happen quickly.

During the months of April and May 2020, staying connected with Advisors during the transition from pandemic shutdown to successfully leveraging resources so the program could begin with online meetings was of the highest priority. Despite delay and uncertainty, both the program and Advisors moved forward; adjusting and transitioning so that by June 11, 2020 the first RFEA meeting could be held virtually. This was an exciting, if a bit nervous first meeting, where 13 advisors came together to begin their journey of working together to improve equitable healthy food access for Salt Lake City residents and neighborhoods.

From that first meeting and throughout their 10 months of service, the Advisors worked diligently to empower a process that began with building new relationships and always included significant amounts of pre-meeting work. Added to the unfamiliarity of being involved in a pandemic disrupted new program, personal covid and technology related challenges along with other disruptions affected the lives of the Advisors. Despite these challenges, their ongoing high level of commitment always resulted in extraordinarily focused, insightful and productive meetings. By sharing their individual lived experiences and progressively working together in discovery, co-learning, evaluating, assessing and ultimately recommending; unfailingly and despite hardships born out of the pandemic, each Advisor fully engaged and led in ways that would be considered exceptional during typical times. In these different times, to say that their work and resulting recommendations for achieving a more equitable Salt Lake City food system is remarkable would be an understatement.

The balance of this report represents the 2020/2021 Salt Lake City Resident Food Equity Advisors process and foundational beginnings, concerns, thoughts and consensus recommendations. The recommendations are delivered as equitable food system key ideas, then refined as specific policy, program and projects.

FOUNDATIONS: ADVANCING FOOD EQUITY

WHAT IS FOOD EQUITY?

Food Equity Considers Opportunity, Access and Barriers.

It concentrates on finding ways for people to become their very best. FOOD EQUITY efforts focus on getting people what they need by providing opportunities and reducing access barriers to healthy, relevant, fresh food. Equity is influenced by personal living circumstances, communities, policies and systems. Food equity is also about fairness, affordability, inclusion and opportunity.

As the Salt Lake City Resident Food Equity Advisors began their work together in June of 2020, their earliest meetings focused on:

- Building understanding around the meaning of food equity and food environments
- Sharing thoughts and experiences about their personal meaning and value of food
- Offering perspectives and dialogue about the who, where and why of food access
- Framing the future of food equity successes

Starting with this foundational beginning, the Advisors met remotely once or twice a month for 10 consecutive months. During their time together they convened in a guided process which included whole group and small group work, as well as discussions with requested guest panelists and a documentary film.

Each meeting aimed to provide opportunity for co-learning, advancing specific interest and direct opinions, while also fostering opportunities for discovery and evaluations.

From meeting to meeting, Advisors focused on developing their own food equity discovery questions

and evaluations related to the SLC CFA's food security and consumption chapters. They also learned about and discussed city and community implications and perceptions related to the concepts of food deserts, food swamps and food equity outcomes in their own neighborhoods. Guest panelists who spoke about food purchasing power, food enterprise, supply chain, grocery retail spaces and growing food options within the city created the chance to develop and refine understanding and recommendations. Further investigations led to discussions about the ways in which city leadership, planning and zoning acts as an influencer on healthy food access and personal health within traditionally marginalized neighborhoods. And, by spending time evaluating and assessing their own local food environments in greater detail, each Advisor envisioned their best food equity future and progressively developed recommendations.

One of the greatest assets each Advisor brought to the ten months of work was their personal pre-meeting preparations. From month to month, the in between meeting preparations were a critical time for Advisors to reach deep in discovering, evaluating, assessing and visioning both food equity challenges and ideas for a better future. Along with ideas which arose from meeting discussions, the advance preparations created momentum for empowering and informing successive meetings.

SETTING PRIORITIES + PEOPLE FIRST

RESIDENT FOOD EQUITY ADVISORS PRIORITY PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES INCLUDE:

- Black, Indigenous and People of Color - BIPOC
- Traditionally marginalized people and neighborhoods
- People with deep cultural food relationships
- People living in poverty, low or moderate income
- Unsheltered LGBTQI+ youth and Queer BIPOC
- Unsheltered or informally sheltered
- People with mental health needs
- People with medical, health and dietary specific needs
- People with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- People with physical disabilities, impairments or disorders
- Veterans
- Adults 65+
- Adult students
- Toddlers, children and youth
- People of differing legal status
- Immigrants and the newly arrived
- Formerly incarcerated

From the outset, the Advisors always initiated ideas that focused attention on helping meet the needs of others. Using their unique equity committed approach, they shared personal perspectives and worked together to gain greater insight into who among the city's residents might be facing food hardship and why this is the case. Maintaining a listening and learning direction, with respectful disagreement, enabled Advisors to quickly identify gaps and needs. And, by staying committed to a people first approach they continuously complemented one another in evolving practical ideas aimed at reducing access barriers and improving opportunity.

“What's really important is for stigma and negativity to be lessened for hungry people. A lot of people get left out because they are embarrassed. We need to have more acceptance and support people when they ask for help. RFEA Quote

“I had a period in my life where I had experienced homelessness. I desired a home cooked meal. Getting to where meals were served was a challenge with belongings to carry. My knowledge of where to go was very limited since I had no device or access to internet. RFEA Quote

“I have a friend living with a terminal illness. She has meals for how and what to eat to make her disease easier to live with. However, the SNAP support doesn't always do enough for her to make nutrition needs and meals to help her illness. RFEA Quote

“Success for this group could look like both having a set of tangible priorities to suggest and have a few of them already in progress by the end of the time of our work. RFEA Quote

“To recognize certain populations needs and how to satisfy those needs and have actual policies that support this individual needs. We can help suggest tools and ways to support these needs. Not only for poor people, but for everyone. RFEA Quote

“I wonder if people would love to have a simple way to start growing food -and composting – their favorite little thing to add to their fresh food from their porch or window? Could this become a tiny start to a new kind of self-reliant food security? RFEA Quote

“How do we get more diverse options in local grocery stores?
How do we get healthier restaurant food options in the local communities?
How do we take action and provide better healthier options for our underserved communities? RFEA Quote

Advisors' Key Ideas

To help build a community around equitable and healthy food, where individuals living in Salt Lake City have many opportunities to become or continue to be their very best, the Salt Lake City Resident Food Equity Advisors recommend that Mayor Mendenhall and the Salt Lake City Council resolve to adopt the following principles:

- ❖ Support multiple pathways for traditionally marginalized individuals and neighborhoods to consistently access and grow fresh, affordable, healthy and relevant food. Doing this will help ensure all residents have enough healthy food to eat.
- ❖ Prioritize voices that have not been heard from in the past. To this end, empower and build agency by expanding inclusive and diverse food equity advising, skill building and advocacy for residents. This includes:
 - Supporting and continuing the Resident Food Equity Advisors.
 - Expanding Advisor food equity co-leadership skills around community involvement and education. New skills will also help Advisors actively support the development of healthy fresh food environments, as well as foster, strengthen and maintain food equity connections between public officials, neighbors, farmers, local food businesses, non-profits and schools.
 - Creating pathways for Salt Lake City officials and Advisors to work together and build understanding about historical and present day systemic food inequities.
- ❖ Recognize “Normal Food” is different for different people. Reducing barriers and increasing opportunity will mean committing to and supporting relevant and responsive food access. Specifically, an equitable Salt Lake City food system will create opportunities for residents to affordably and easily acquire food that is relevant to cultural and personal identity, individual health and wellbeing, religious and spiritual life and personal taste.
- ❖ Continuously work to improve food resource outreach and communications. Make food information and resources known and easily available in a wide range of places and modes. Make communications clear and accurate, respectful, multilingual and ADA accessible. Because information needs to be thoughtfully tailored for people with differing needs, it will be important to recognize that technology can be both a barrier and an asset for food equity communications and connections.
- ❖ Foster and create resilient, diverse and inclusive healthy neighborhood food environments. Focus first on neighborhoods where marginalization continues to impose fresh and healthy food barriers; making sure to include and create equitable food environments for people who are sheltered, informally sheltered or unsheltered.
- ❖ Acknowledge and be responsive to food equity challenges by developing neighborhood and city district level climate responsive food planning and design, policy and funding investments. These types of food equity actions will require long term dedication to creating food opportunity areas known as food oases; places where people, ecological food landscapes and the local economy prosper simultaneously.

- ❖ Address Salt Lake City's structural role in food inequity and injustice. Food barriers, reduced access and reduced opportunity can be linked to and are intertwined with past and current policy making. A more just Salt Lake City will work to understand and address the many ways the city's land use planning, zoning, housing, environmental policy, transportation, technology access, parks and economic development are linked to food equity. One place to begin evaluating, building understanding and creating systemic change is by updating the SLC Community Food Assessment with an ***Integrated Food Equity Assessment and Plan***.
- ❖ Self-determination and dignity are essential elements of food equity. Related to this is the importance of learning about and understanding how chronic hunger and food theft may be related to inequity. Coordinated approaches for change may begin with Salt Lake City's Equity in Policing effort, the SLC Police Department itself, businesses, neighborhood organizations who focus on finding ways to assist, rather than penalize or stigmatize, those who have stolen food because of difficult or desperate hunger situations.
- ❖ **HELP RESIDENTS GROW FOOD!**

Enhance food opportunities and support agency and self-reliance by giving people what they need to grow and prepare their own food. When people can ecologically grow their own food it enhances and extends personal agency, healthy living, and may improve personal finances. Supporting and putting fresh food growing opportunity in the hands of individuals, households and schools is an asset for personal wellbeing and community building. Individual and city wide food growing which are linked to supporting nature will help build a healthier city environment. Providing financial support, expanding learning opportunities, skill building and connections will support people and communities in getting what they need to grow and prepare their own food.

Advance these opportunities by:

- Committing to a food equity resolution that moves the city towards becoming "***Edible Salt Lake City with Living Food Landscapes***".
- Partnering more closely with city libraries to enhance healthy food growing resources and programming.
- Developing a food equity academy and expanding coordination with existing nonprofits to increase food growing access and opportunity.
- Improving and expanding ways and places for people to grow food, as well as enhancing the exchange of healthy food growing and preparation knowledge for people of all ages and walks of life.
- Making sure income, housing status and other life circumstances are not barriers to growing innovative and beautiful edible gardens. Working with future Advisors to prioritize innovative funding sources, such household gardening microgrants, will assure people of all means have affordable opportunities to design and grow their own beautiful food and pollinator gardens.
- Assuring that all non-profits, companies and individuals working and serving with the city in areas related to food and gardening commit to and demonstrate food equity principles and actions for the people they serve.

Leadership for Salt Lake City Food Equity

Mayor + Council Joint Resolution on Food Equity

RECOMMENDATION:

SALT LAKE CITY JOINT FOOD EQUITY RESOLUTION

To clearly show Salt Lake City residents, visitors and business that they are fully committed to and willing to prioritize, incorporate and support food equity as vital to the city, the Resident Food Equity Advisors recommend that Mayor Mendenhall and the Salt Lake City Council immediately jointly adopt a ***Salt Lake City Food Equity Resolution***.

It is recommended that a joint Food Equity Resolution clearly states that food equity includes meeting needs by being inclusive and using innovative integrated practices. Especially important to changing food access and opportunity will be changing the way sustainable infrastructure is defined and articulated. A meaningful food equity resolution will acknowledge the need for future changes in land use planning, zoning, environmental and housing policy, water management, transportation, parks and open space, economic development, as well as community, city and k-12 school interactions.

Other US Cities with Food Resolutions

- ✓ Anderson, Indiana
- ✓ Austin, Texas
- ✓ Baltimore Maryland
- ✓ Madison Wisconsin
- ✓ Seattle, Washington
- ✓ Washington D.C.
- ✓ Some US Mayors have signed the Milan Food Pact

“ When things are inequitable, what are some steps you can take to get toward equity?

RFEA Quote

“ We need laws in place for unhealthy foods in underserved communities. They do that for money services, why not for food? RFEA Quote

“ We want to influence the long term needs of helping kids now and into the future. RFEA Quote

“ Political figures don't care as much and just push healthier options in areas that are low income. RFEA Quote

Meet Need Through Food Equity Communications

“ If I wasn't in this program, how
would I be able to find this information?
RFEA Quote

“ Communication is really important. I had no idea about
a lot of the programs that are going on. I think the lack of
communication about the programs makes it harder for
individuals.

How can we find out which programs are available in our
own areas? There would be more involvement and feedback
if it would be in multiple languages. RFEA Quote

RECOMMENDATION:

ENSURE AND EXPAND EQUITABLE INFORMATION OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS

To really improve food access opportunities and reduce barriers, the Advisors recommend that **resource information and outreach must be respectfully tailored for people with differing needs and life circumstances**. Since people understand and access information in different ways, direct contact, printed copy, audio, digital and graphic formats are all necessary approaches for reaching people in hunger. Making sure to keep equity, diversity and ecology at the forefront of all fresh and healthy food outreach and communications will increase food access opportunities for people living within the city.

To ensure and expand equitable communication:

Provide information in a way that meets the needs of a wide range of people. Those with literacy skill differences, the unsheltered or informally sheltered, whose first language is other than English, as well as people with disabilities, impairments and disorders, all have specific information processing needs. A targeted food equity outreach and communications strategy that includes first seeing and understanding how and where to communicate with food insecure residents will be barrier reducing and will improve healthy food access.

Make reports like this one, the Salt Lake City Community Food Assessment, future assessment(s) and resource materials are widely known about and easily accessible. To achieve this goal, be sure to make reports and outreach material available in all of the city's first languages and locate material in places like Salt Lake City Libraries, food pantries, schools and houses of worship.

Understand that current and future Resident Food Equity Advisors are an asset and a great information hub; program co-learning and increase skill building around food equity connections and community conversations as part of any future Resident Food Equity Advisors group.

Help expand food information access and build community collaborations by evaluating the development and funding of a **Salt Lake City Active, Healthy and Fresh Foods** mobile app. Information shared through such an app could include features such as, locations of grocers where SNAP is accepted, free or reduced healthy meal sites, food pantry sites, food growing skills and tool sharing, and even a credit bank where residents and businesses might connect, trade and share services.

⚠ Because individuals who do not have digital devices are unable to meet their food access needs through this type of resource, a comprehensive food equity outreach and communications strategy must remain inclusive, diverse, equal and equitable for all city resident's. To this end, examining and addressing inequities related to the connection between food disparity and technology access is needed.

Continue the Resident Food Equity Advisors Program

“ My community needs to have representation in this very important conversation.
RFEA Quote

“ Local community members need to have open space for dialogue and active participation about food equity.
RFEA Quote

“ How can this project continue robustly into the future after we are done?
RFEA Quote

“ I grew up in Poplar Grove and still live in the community. I live two blocks from where I was raised. I am really invested in my community and want to see it succeed. RFEA Quote

“ We need an ongoing Advisors board to work more closely with restaurants, schools and other organizations.
RFEA Quote

“ We need a space for all voices to be heard and work towards this shared objective. RFEA Quote

“ I've lived in this city. For 16 years and I've seen it change so much. I am interested in having a voice in how it changes.
RFEA Quote

“ Maybe down the line there could be a RFEA on every block and we could be connected into a bigger collaboration.

There is a difference between north and south parts of the city, not just east and west. RFEA Quote

RECOMMENDATION:

Continue to Fund and Support the Salt Lake City Resident Food Equity Program:

- Build forward from the visions, successes and lessons of the first cohort of the Salt Lake City Resident Food Equity Advisors
- Continue to enlist and empower food equity knowledge based on lived experiences. This will assure that those most impacted by food inequity can substantially affect change at both the neighborhood and city level
- Elevate the voices of residents affected by food challenges in ways that continuously improves their opportunity for direct involvement, power sharing and decision making around food equity planning, policy and programming
- Enhance each Advisor's ability by developing a ***Salt Lake City Fresh Food Equity Academy***. The Academy will be a place for resident empowerment, learning and co-leading in areas such as knowledge about city budgeting and joining participatory budgeting, food education, food environment planning and development and community outreach.

Advance a Food Equity Assessment and Action Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

Fund and Begin a Food Equity Assessment and Action Plan

During their 10 months together, the Advisors provided thoughts on the value and effectiveness of the 2013 Salt Lake City Food Assessment (SLC CFA). Initially unaware that such an assessment existed, they found value in the SLC CFA, sharing that it needs to be made more apparent and available. Related to the SLC CFA, the Advisors said that written content must always express dignity and respect.

Additional feedback on the SLC CFA included: 1) the report is out dated and cannot fully support current and future equitable food environment change, 2) not enough recommendations were acted upon, and 3) it needs to be updated in the form of an ***Integrated Food Equity Assessment and Action Plan***.

In thinking about the future, the Advisors' recommend that any future food and equity assessment must be approached differently than the previous research and analysis based CFA. Within a new assessment framework, food environment diagnostic terms and thinking like food desert or food swamp - which tend toward limitations, blaming and barrier building in describing neighborhoods, would be discouraged. Instead, the direction of the recommended equitable assessment would aim to identify and create ways to build innovative and accessible community food environments.

Crucial to this recommendation is that the effort must deeply engage and empower community in helping shape innovative food environments which benefit both people and nature. To take hold, an Integrated Food Equity Assessment and Action Plan should focus on the goal of creating "Edible Salt Lake City with Living Food Landscapes". And, by putting the needs of marginalized areas first, the assessment will be able to identify "food priority zones" where policies, plans and funding support the development of "food oases" - not simply identify food deserts or food swamps!

To reduce barriers and create broad food access and opportunity, the new assessment and action plan must be committed to:

- Supporting community agency and creating channels for ongoing community food equity dialogue.
- Demonstrating how Salt Lake City is improving food equity.
- Clearly connecting people, ecological foodscapes, air, water and soil resources to citywide resolutions, goals, policies, plans and programs.

If a new assessment and action plan moves forward, the ability of the city to deliver timely, visible and relevant change is very important to the Advisors. If a new assessment and action plan cannot lend itself to demonstrating near term and long lasting equitable food environment change, several Advisors expressed strong reservations about advancing such an effort.

“ The Community Food Assessment is important, but it's out of date. It was done when Mayor Becker was in office. We need to give people new tools and new knowledge. RFEA Quote

“ One thing this term food desert brings up is that if you see a low income area and someone else comes into it, there can be a wall – a detachment- for the outsider, and that limits what the outsider can see about how people live and thrive in an area. RFEA Quote

“ Food deserts and swamps – implies that these food inequities are a natural occurrence, what we know is that black and brown bodies are systemically -on purpose - put into these positions by people in power, particularly white people. This problem is from a variety of inequities, not naturally occurring. RFEA Quote

Support Relevant and Dignified Food Choice

Food Vouchers + Client Choice Pantry

“ How can we be looking at this holistically and think about addressing the issues from the source? How can people have input and not from outsiders coming in? How can we put choice in the hands of people? RFEA Quote

RECOMMENDATION:

DEVELOP A FOOD VOUCHER PROGRAM + LEAD AND PARTNER IN CREATING FOOD CHOICE PANTRIES

Improving healthy and relevant food opportunity with integrity and agency was often in the hearts and minds of the Advisors. Because of their personal and professional experiences, the Advisors had an awareness that emergency and school foods were often being discarded. This both raised concern and fueled a desire for change. In thinking about hunger, the health needs of others and unnecessary food waste, they identified two pivotal factors contributing to this situation. First, many times emergency and school foods miss the mark in meeting cultural or dietary needs. Second, the recipient(s) may be uncertain or unable to prepare the provided food. Dedicated to reducing barriers and maximizing opportunity for getting people what they need, the RFEA aimed for solutions.

Time and again, the RFEA's emphasized that getting people the food they need, especially traditionally marginalized people, must include relevant choices. They also explained that the need for food assistance should not come at the expense of being forced to abandon important cultural food traditions, risk personal health, infringe on worship or dietary practices, nor result in consuming personally unpalatable food.

In thinking about the future of food equity, including how dignity and choice improve opportunity, the RFEA's recommend that Salt Lake City develop a food voucher program, as well as lead and partner in developing city based client choice food pantries.

VOUCHERS

- + Have qualifications and limits
- + Are sometimes funded by cities through taxes, like soda or other sugar taxes
- + May be temporarily funded the 2020 US CARES Act or 2021 American Rescue Plan Act

AND THEY:

- + Put relevant food choice in the hands of individuals
- + Respect the dignity and time of hungry people
- + Add to dietary diversity
- + Increase fresh food buying and consumption
- + Foster changes in planning and zoning
- + Reduce waste and spoilage
- + Benefit local markets, restaurants and supermarkets
- + Reduce logistics

⚠️ Vouchers do not replace food pantries

WHAT IS A CLIENT CHOICE FOOD PANTRY?

" The client choice model allows clients to participate in choosing for themselves which foods they will take home. Well operated client choice pantries are similar to a grocery store; a full array of available goods is displayed and client are able to browse and "shop for what they need."

Second Harvest Food Bank

Fresh and Healthy Corner Markets + Healthy Carts

Plan – Zone – Incentivize – Attract

RECOMMENDATION:

CREATE A NEIGHBORHOOD CORNER MARKET AND FOOD CART TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVE:

From unhealthy food choices to unclean conditions, the Advisors shared and described food retailing inequities experienced in and around their neighborhoods. To make healthy changes in their neighborhood food environments, the RFEA recommend that the city begin working with local corner markets, food carts vendors and supermarkets to take steps and deliver a ***Salt Lake City Fresh Food Corner Market and Food Cart Initiative***. To do this the RFEA recommend the following:

- Stop unhealthy and predatory food retailing from being predominantly located in traditionally marginalized neighborhoods. Through interdepartmental evaluations, initiate food equity measures that protect the health, safety and welfare of residents.
- Focus on improving neighborhood streetscapes around local markets.
- Create a model ***Fresh Food Retail Best Practices Toolkit***.
- Develop incentive based policies and programs that help motivate and support fresh food retailing. Incentives may include: 1) Permitting priorities, 2) Recognition programs such as free publicity for markets and carts that meet healthy food choice criteria, 3) Financial incentives including providing zero interest funds, design assistance and healthy food vending education for store front improvements, healthy food displays, advertising healthy food choice, buying new equipment, and offsetting operating costs.

Other Healthy Corner Market Programs

- ✓ Denver Healthy Corner Store Initiative
- ✓ Healthy Navajo Stores
- ✓ Camden Healthy Corner Store Network
- ✓ LA Grown Guide to Selling Good Food
- ✓ Philadelphia Healthy Corner Stores
- ✓ Seattle *Healthy Foods Here*

“ Do you have any thoughts on what the city and citizens can do for small businesses to help keep them afloat? RFEA Quote

“ The Community Food Assessment shows there are not really any grocery stores in Poplar Grove that are in walking distance. I was really surprised to see that not much has changed since the data in 2010. Since the city did this study, why hasn't anything changed? RFEA Quote

“ I have gone into stores where I live and there is no healthy food. I wondered why people will eat junk food and then I realized maybe they didn't want to but, in other neighborhoods there is more healthy food and the people there build a community around it. How can we create a healthy community of food for areas that are currently not that way? RFEA Quote

“ Expedient food isn't healthy food. I have to walk everywhere I go and don't have healthy food near me. Every new housing development should have a healthy market built near it. RFEA Quote

GROW FOOD FOR MULTIPLE BENEFITS

INCREASE OPPORTUNITY FOR AGENCY, HEALTH AND FINANCIAL WELLBEING

“ Make sure we’re including those with disabilities and children in our food growing visioning. Make sure it’s accessible to those with different needs, and include different traditions and cultures. RFEA Quote

“ Focus on landscape and regeneration and requiring housing complexes to have gardening for their residents. RFEA Quote

“ Ecologically speaking, we have the ability to grow much of our food while enriching the land around us, assuming we understand and follow somewhat seasonal diets. Biologically speaking, this way of eating can contribute great benefits to our body’s health. Psychologically speaking, the garden is therapeutic; our minds are put at ease and operate more clearly and peacefully after time spent in the garden. RFEA Quote

“ Could schools have a small greenhouse to focus on how the food is grown and such? RFEA Quote

“ My kitchen would have an herb garden. Outside the yard would have a solarium and place to grow food year round outdoors. Easy to grow produce....Plenty to share with friends and the community. RFEA Quote

“ I envision many inner city food forests scattered throughout the valley, planted at schools, parks, open fields and designated areas. This allows not only for people to have access to eat fresh, local produce...but also for them to be active stewards and participants in nourishing and cultivating soils in their local habitats RFEA Quote

RECOMMENDATION:

TO EXPAND OPPORTUNITY AND ACCESS FOR GROWING FRESH FOOD:

- Develop an ***Edible City for All*** resource toolkit that shows how individuals, neighborhoods and school communities can plan, create and ecologically grow their own beautiful, biodiverse food and pollinator gardens in differing space and living circumstances.
- Evaluate, align and expand food garden learning and growing opportunities throughout the Salt Lake City Public Library system.
- Uplift the recommended ***Salt Lake Fresh Food Academy*** by including ways for diverse cohorts to learn about growing food, health and budgeting, as well as sharing knowledge and expanding community food equity through cultural cooking classes and wellness programming.
- Help meet nutritional need and financial security by awarding individual households food growing microgrants and gardening know how classes.
- Fund and develop a ***Fresh & Healthy Foods Ambassador*** type training and skill building program. This FREE program will focus on outreach and engaging others around food opportunity, autonomy, dignity and ecological gardening, like permaculture.
- Require contracted gardening organizations to demonstrate inclusivity and diversity within their organizational structure and external programming.
- Partner with neighborhoods and others to grow orchards on city park lands, vacant lots, school sites, new housing developments and other locations throughout the city.
- Work closely with school districts to enhance and strengthen food growing and healthy eating at schools and outside of the classroom.

Conclusion

This report highlights the undertakings of the 2020 / 2021 Salt Lake City Resident Food Equity Advisors Pilot Program. Each of the key ideas and specific recommendations developed by the group possesses the ability to appreciably hasten Salt Lake City's trajectory in broadening and accelerating fair food access and opportunity. Together, these recommendations aim to support and greatly expand food security progress for many individuals, including those who are sheltered, informally sheltered or unsheltered, marginalized neighborhoods, the broader community and within the governing structure of the city itself.

Uplifting the process throughout its entirety were the thoughtful and caring contributions of the Advisors. The time in which they spent collaborating and making their way to formulating key ideas and recommendations during an unprecedented global pandemic has come to an end, and so their service for this first phase is complete. After the Advisors have had a chance to talk with Salt Lake City Mayor Mendenhall, a full evaluation of the key ideas and recommendations by the Mayor, the Salt Lake City Department of Sustainability Director, as well the Department of Sustainability Food & Equity Manager is warranted. Further review of the results of the Advisors work will allow these, and other elected officials and city staff time to develop a more complete understanding of the counsel shared by this group.

Each Advisor came into the program with unique ways of knowing and living with food challenges; accordingly, this in and of itself lends significant credibility to their insights, key ideas and recommendations. Because of their ways of knowing food hardship, special consideration should be given to their opinions and the details of their guidance. The gift of their recommending is that it grew out of personal circumstance, experience and knowledge, deep caring for community, and the everyday lives they lead in and around Salt Lake City. In total, the RFEA recommendations provided in this report have the ability to greatly accelerate and expand the city's future food equity policy, programs and projects.

ENDNOTES

To support and empower the Resident Food Equity Advisor's in areas of expressed interest during the 10 month engagement, the below listed documentary film and best practice case studies were provided as resources for building shared knowledge and advancing discussion around food equity.

1. *Hearts of Glass*, (Jen Ten Films) follows the tumultuous first 15 months of operation of Vertical Harvest (VH), a multi-story, state-of-the-art hydroponic greenhouse that grows crops while providing meaningful, competitively-paid jobs for people with disabilities. The film weaves the story of VH's launch with the personal journeys of several employees with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Innovation and inclusion create a fertile environment for people and plants to grow. *Hearts of Glass* is an intimate portrait of social entrepreneurship at the intersection of disability rights and sustainable, local food production. Jackson Hole, Wyoming -
2. *Healthy Food Resolution*. Anderson, Indiana
3. *Salt Lake City Electrified Transportation Resolution*. Salt Lake City, Utah
4. *Food Access Boston*. Boston Massachusetts
5. *Abundance Boston*. Food Access Mobile App. Boston Massachusetts - <https://www.abundanceboston.com/>
6. *FoodKeeper* mobile app, a collaboration of the USDA, Cornell University and the Food Marketing Institute
7. Minneapolis Food Plan. State of Minneapolis
8. Measuring Food Equity Report. Michigan State University, Michigan
9. Food Metrics Report. New York City. New York City, New York
10. A 10-YEAR FOOD POLICY PLAN FOOD FORWARD NYC, The City of New York Mayor Bill de Blasio. New York City, New York
11. D.C. Greens Program, Washington D.C.
12. Baltimore Resident Food Equity Advisors, Baltimore Maryland
13. *The Salt Laker Cards*, Salt Lake City, Utah <https://www.slc.gov/mayor/tag/salt-laker-cards/>
14. *Food Vouchers Seattle*. Seattle partnered with Safeway and QFC to provide vouchers to families in need to cover groceries. The program provides \$100/week for 8 weeks, to help families through crisis. Seattle has contributed \$5 million, providing 8 weeks of groceries for 6,250 families in need. With the United Way of King County, the city is raising an additional \$15 million to support the grocery needs of 25,000 families, Seattle Washington
15. *Fresh Buck's*. Emergency food voucher funded by Seattle soda tax. Seattle Washington

ENDNOTES

16. *Herriman Buck's*. All residents received a \$10.00 voucher to spend at grocery stores, markets, restaurants and other locations, Herriman, Utah
17. *Complete Eats* for EBT Users. Purchase \$10.00 of fruits and veg and receive a \$5.00 coupon for more fruits and vegetables. USDA
18. *Baltimore Maryland Vouchers*. Any resident of Baltimore City may request a voucher, includes clients with no I.D. household size determines the number of vouchers provided. If you need a voucher but don't have transportation to a Family Investment Center, transit tokens can be authorized by the BCDSS department. Baltimore Maryland
19. Houston Food Bank – Client Choice Handbook. Houston, Texas
20. Second Harvest – Making the Switch A Guide for Converting to a Client Choice Food Pantry. Ohio Association of Second Harvest Food Banks
21. *Check Out Healthy Retail*. Change Lab Solutions
22. *Health on the Shelf*, Change Lab Solutions
23. *The Edible City*. United Nations
24. *Urban Ag Ambassador Program*. Somerville Massachusetts. <https://www.somervillema.gov/urbanag>
25. Helen's Neighborhood Garden and Orchard, Salt Lake City, Utah
26. A Guide for Growing in Nashville, Nashville Tennessee
27. School Garden Toolkit, Grow and Share the Harvest, Community Food Initiative. Appalachia, Ohio

ENDNOTES

2020 -2021 Salt Lake City Resident Food Equity Advisors Meetings

June 11, 2020	Welcome and Introductions: RFEA Program Goals, Food Is?, Favorite + Passed Down Foods, Equality vs Equity, Concerns About Food Equity in Salt Lake City
July 09, 2020	What Is Your Food Equity Environment? RFEA, What Are Causes for the Lack of Food + What Is Success?
August 13, 2020	Food Environment: Understanding, Impressions and Consequences of Food Deserts, Food Swamps, Changes for Food Opportunity & Abundance
September 17, 2020	Salt Lake City Community Food Assessment: Equity /Inequity, the Thrifty Meal Plan, Emergency Resources and Real Life
October 08, 2020	Is Your Neighborhood Food Secure? RFEA Analysis of the Salt Lake City Community Food Assessment and More Equitable Ways for Change
November 12, 2020	Exploring Fresh and Healthy Food for All: Complete the Review and Analysis of the Salt Lake City Community Food Assessment
December 10, 2020	Grocery Store Panel, Abed Abouhassan, Local International Corner Market and Restaurant, and Aubrianna Martindale, Smiths/Kroger
January 14, 2021	Current Community Food Growing Programs: Health, Wellness and Opportunities: Salt Lake Public Library, Mobile Moon Food Co-Op, Rikki Nadkarni-Longino and Wasatch Community Gardens, Ashley Patterson
January 28, 2021	Hearts of Glass Discussion + Meaning and Purpose of Salt Lake City Policy, Programs and Projects Debbie Lyons, Salt Lake City, Deputy Director of Sustainability
February 11, 2021	Culminating Visions for the Future
March 25, 2021	RFEA Key Ideas + Recommendations

The End