CENTER FOR GOOD FOOD PURCHASING

GOOD FOOD PURCHASING PROGRAM

The Good Food Purchasing Program:

A roadmap for the post-pandemic food system we need

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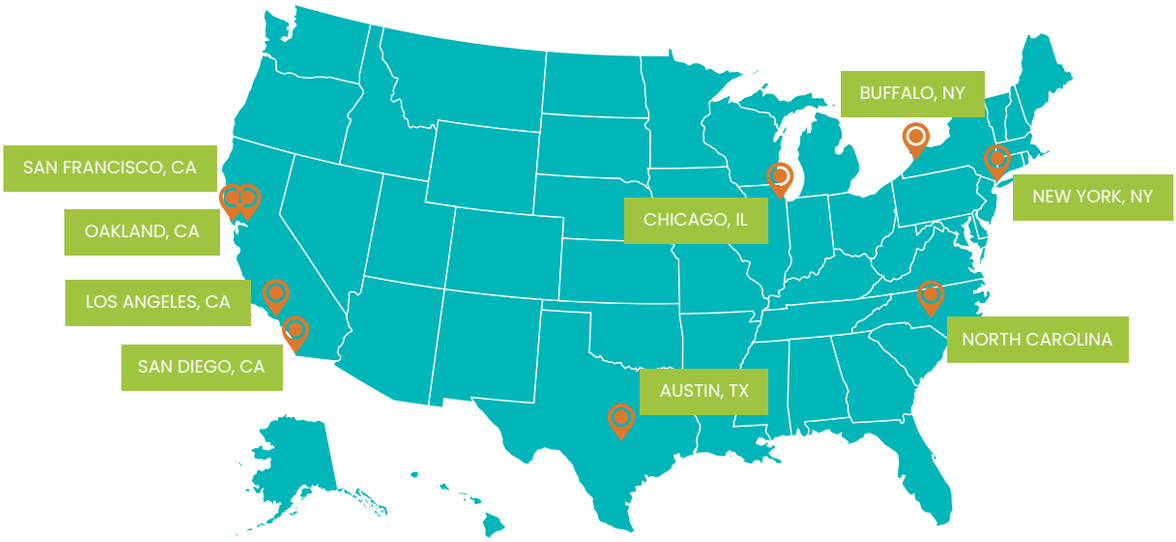

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> Finally we were entertaining solutions on the scale of the crises we face, without leaving anyone behind. The first big step was just closing our eyes and imagining it. We can be whatever we have the courage to see.
>
> — "A MESSAGE FROM THE FUTURE," THE INTERCEPT

NOW IS THE TIME

The year is 2030 and we're looking back at a decade of movement building and policy wins.

2020 feels like just yesterday. The year was memorable for many reasons, but mostly it's remembered as the moment when we decided to act. Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, uprisings for racial justice, and the climate emergency, we knew we had no other choice. It was the moment we came together and allowed ourselves to freely imagine and collectively demand the kind of world we wanted to live in. It was the moment we decided to demonstrate exactly how our food system could become a powerful tool for justice.

As more light was shed on the deep-seated problems in our food system, public awareness about how the system was failing to meet our needs grew. We saw people across the country step forward to play a vital role in alleviating the crisis—especially Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) on the frontlines of the pandemic and comprising the majority of essential workers.

The individuals, groups, and institutions feeding their communities, organizing mutual aid networks, and channeling resources towards the most vulnerable were not seen merely as a stopgap solution. Rooted in compassion and a commitment to racial and economic justice and equity, these efforts became our roadmap for a post-pandemic food system.

Together, we built the momentum for change: We moved resources away from harmful systems and invested in frontline leaders and their solutions. We centered society and the economy around our values. And we embraced solutions as large as the crises we faced, without leaving anyone behind.

How did we get there? One step at a time.

The Good Food Purchasing Values

Five equally weighted value categories drive the Program's vision and provide the basis for its procurement framework. It's the first model of its kind to use this holistic approach.

Valued Workforce

Provide safe and healthy working conditions and fair compensation for all food chain workers and producers from production to consumption.

Nutrition

Promote health and wellbeing by offering generous portions of vegetables, fruit, whole grains, and minimally processed foods, while reducing salt, added sugars, saturated fats, and red meat consumption and eliminating artificial additives.

Local Economies

Support diverse, family and cooperatively owned, small and mid-sized agricultural and food processing operations within the local area or region.

Environmental Sustainability

Source from producers that employ sustainable production systems to reduce or eliminate synthetic pesticides and fertilizers; avoid the use of hormones, routine antibiotics and genetic engineering; conserve and regenerate soil and water; protect and enhance wildlife habitats and biodiversity; and reduce on-farm energy and water consumption, food waste and greenhouse gas emissions. Reduce menu items that have high carbon and water footprints, using strategies such as plant forward menus, which feature smaller portions of animal proteins in a supporting role.

Animal Welfare

Source from producers that provide healthy and humane conditions for farm animals.

At the core of the Good Food Purchasing Program are essential principles that guide the work and underpin the Program's five value categories:

EQUITY
means that, first and foremost, good food should benefit those most negatively affected by our current food system, such as farms and businesses owned by people of color.

ACCESSIBILITY
means it's not enough to increase the amount of good food; it must also be affordable for all, physically available, and culturally relevant to diverse communities. Accessibility also means tackling barriers to markets, credit, and land that have historically prevented people of color from accessing these resources.

TRANSPARENCY
means striving to make data about food procurement and its impacts open to public scrutiny and increasing community participation in decision-making processes through hearings, town halls, stakeholder task forces, etc.

These principles provide a compass by which the Center for Good Food Purchasing, participating institutions, and local coalitions work to ensure the Program meets its potential for far-reaching food system transformation. **Cities and institutions adopting Good Food Purchasing Program policies are increasingly opting to include clear language and mechanisms around equity, accessibility, and transparency.**

KEY PILLARS FOR SUCCESS

How can we create transformational change at the scale we need to address our intersecting economic, health, social, and planetary crises?

While the path to Good Food should be flexible and adaptable to local needs and resources, there are a few key pillars to ensuring effective food system transformation. These pillars are drawn from communities involved in the national expansion of the Good Food Purchasing Program and their experiences addressing the many challenges brought upon by the Covid-19 pandemic in the spring and fall of 2020.

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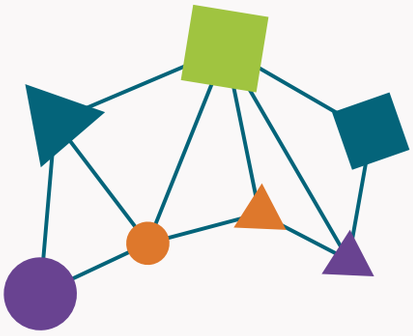
RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND INVESTMENTS TO SUPPORT CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

1 PILLAR 1: THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

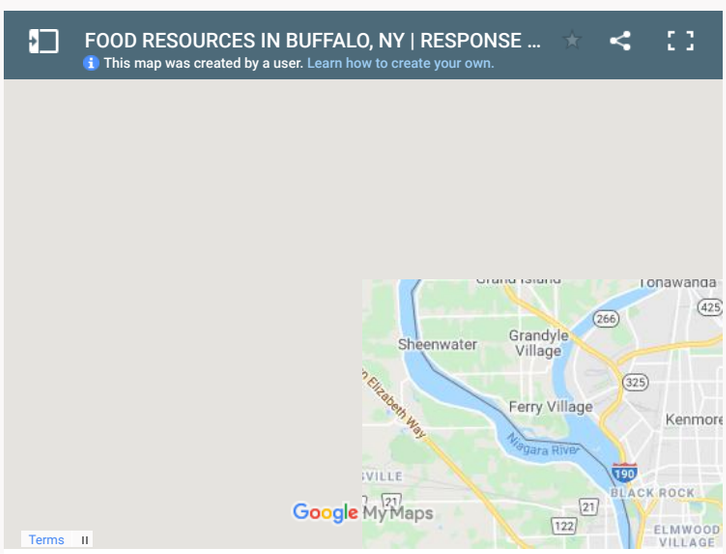
Food system transformation, through strategies like shifting public food procurement, is a long term process built on trust, relationships, and cross-sector collaboration.

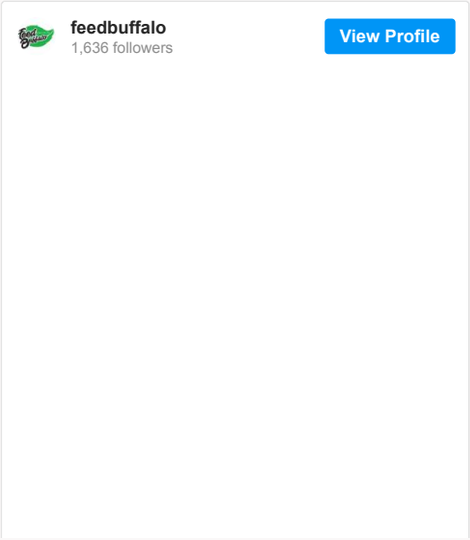
The political power needed to effect change grows through community organizing, labor organizing, relationship building, political engagement, and cross-sector partnerships across the public, private, and civic sectors. As witnessed during the pandemic, the networks and relationships that were already in place created the basis for a stronger and more coordinated response to the crisis.



COMMUNITY-BASED NETWORKS

Throughout the pandemic, the unique ability of multi-sector, grassroots networks and alliances to facilitate collaboration has been on full display as they quickly organized mutual aid networks and connected growers with emergency feeding programs and new direct-to-consumer markets. Through education, research, outreach, matchmaking, and strategic partnerships, community-based networks are driving the pandemic response.
For example, in Buffalo, NY, organizations active in the **Good Food Buffalo** coalition and their partners founded the **Seeding Resilience** initiative to respond to the heightened and growing food insecurity in the city and surrounding region as a result of Covid-19. With the aim of increasing food production through farms and gardens, creating employment opportunities in food production, tackling food insecurity, and distributing affordable food to residents, Seeding Resilience demonstrates how critical values-based partnerships are during a crisis.





These kinds of community-based networks were able to leverage their existing food policy infrastructure and relationships to advocate locally for community gardens, farmers markets, and the rights of essential food workers; offer on-the-ground knowledge and expertise to inform Covid-19 guidance on county and statewide food insecurity task forces; and connect their communities to state and federal policy advocacy opportunities, such as those related to USDA nutrition waivers, Pandemic EBT, and worker protections.

Innovative emergency response value-chain coordination emerged as a key strategy for communities. Leaders across sectors identified creative ways to divert regional food supplies to emergency distribution, using unused kitchens and hiring unemployed food service workers to help feed food insecure or housebound people. While these efforts were a response to the current crisis, food justice advocates have long championed the potential of local, regional food systems as the first line of defense for food insecurity in our communities.

One example, **Commonwealth Kitchen**, a food business incubator in Boston, and their community of food business entrepreneurs, launched **CommonTable** in May 2020 as a response to the need for healthy, affordable meals with the power of food trucks, restaurants, product companies, and farmers in the Boston area. Since launching, they have distributed nearly 100,000 meals and spent over $558,000 in their local economy.

Community based networks also recognized the value of coordination across networks in other communities. For example, early on in the pandemic as part of its Covid-19 Food Systems Rapid Response, the **Chicago Food Policy Action Council**—along with food policy councils in Midwest cities including Pittsburgh, Detroit, Cincinnati, Columbus, Eerie, and Indianapolis—began meeting regularly to share best practices, creative response strategies, policy recommendations, and advocacy opportunities. With the nimble activation of these existing relationships, crisis management was more immediately responsive and opportunities to innovate were strengthened.

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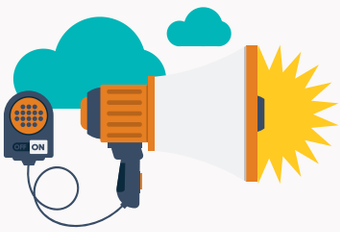
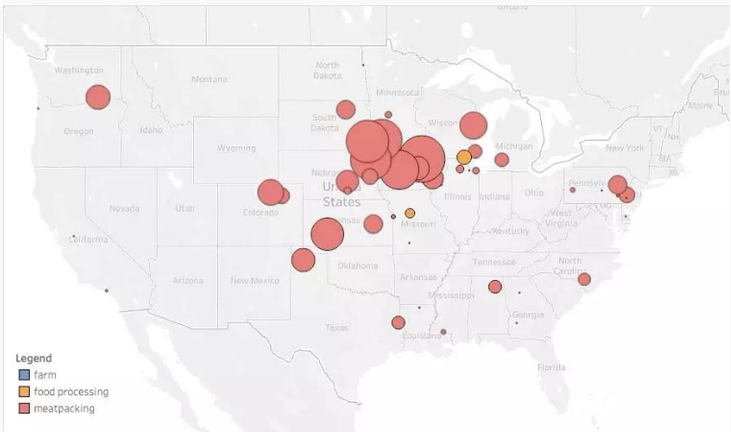
NATIONAL ADVOCACY NETWORKS

In the beginning of the pandemic, national advocates such as the **Urban School Food Alliance, National Farm to School Network,** and others quickly mobilized with calls to action to improve the emergency food response. They sought to ensure children and families in the most impacted communities would have access to the federal nutrition safety net. Food policy councils and grassroots coalitions around the country amplified these efforts by activating their local networks to make these urgent needs heard by their representatives. This coordinated advocacy helped to compel the USDA to extend flexibilities for school districts to offer free, healthy meals to all students through the end of the 2020-2021 school year.

National networks also played a critical role in advocating for the farm and food workers who put their lives on the line—even before the pandemic—to keep our nation fed. The warehouses and processing plants of big food companies, long-known as dangerous places for all workers, especially immigrants and workers of color, are hotspots for Covid-19 infections and transmission—with big meat companies among the worst offenders.



Frontline food workers, who have *always* been essential, responded to the risk of deadly working conditions due to Covid-19 with walk-outs, strikes, and other collective actions demanding personal protective equipment and paid sick time to ensure safety for themselves and their families. National organizations like the **Food Chain Workers Alliance** provided vital support and organizing infrastructure for these actions.



Mapping Covid-19 outbreaks in the food system

Food Environment Reporting Network
Interactive charts on Covid-19 outbreaks

Since April, FERN has been closely tracking the spread of Covid-19 at meatpacking plants, food processing facilities, and farms. This dashboard is home to our latest reporting on Covid-19 cases and...

Food and Environment Reporting Network / Leah Douglas / 04:41 PM

in the food system that draw from current/live data.

SEE THE FULL SUITE OF CHARTS & INFOGRAPHICS

PHOTO: FOOD CHAIN WORKERS ALLIANCE

FOOD CHAIN WORKERS ALLIANCE

The **Food Chain Workers Alliance**, a core partner in the Good Food Purchasing Program, represents over 370,000 workers who harvest, pack, process, transport, sell, and serve our food. The Alliance and its member organizations sprang into action at the local, state, and federal levels to demand strong worker protections and compensation in all federal stimulus legislation, including compelling the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to enact clear and enforceable standards to protect food workers and all essential workers during and beyond the Covid-19 emergency. They've amplified worker demands across ally networks leading to collectively pressure the five largest meatpacking companies—who supply our public institutions—to provide adequate protective gear, sick pay, and compensation for increased risk on the job in partnership with Good Food Purchasing partners, the **HEAL Food Alliance**, and other allies.

INSTITUTIONS

Public institutions have played an invaluable role in feeding their communities during this pandemic—and schools have been especially important. Tight under normal circumstances, school food budgets have been stretched even thinner during Covid-19 to cover personal protective equipment and hazard pay for frontline workers, increased product and delivery costs, and reduced staff capacity due to social distancing measures. These financial concerns have been further exacerbated by a "business" model that relies on uninterrupted meal participation to maintain program revenues.

Showing leadership and innovation at every turn, as they served on the frontlines of community-based food relief efforts, schools adapted quickly. Many turned to grab-and-go meals for ease of use and relied on federal programs like DOD Fresh and USDA commodity entitlements to manage costs. School districts worked in partnership with national and regional suppliers, distributors, and food service management companies to redesign, remenu, and rearrange operations almost overnight. In many areas where schools were closed and access to school food was nearly impossible, bus drivers provided food delivery services to students, as well as community members who were unable to leave their homes.

School districts worked in partnership with national and regional suppliers, distributors, and food service management companies to redesign, remenu, and rearrange operations almost overnight.

PHOTO: JOEL MUNIZ / @JOELMUNIZ_

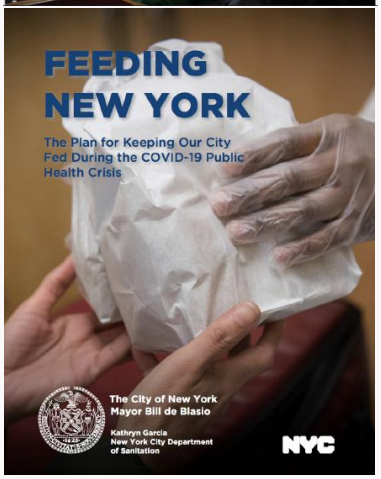
> If people are in need, we're going to address the need, end of discussion... Our inclination is to do the right thing. This is not a school meal program—it's a relief effort.
>
> **— AUSTIN BEUTNER**
> SUPERINTENDENT, LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
> IN *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

During this pandemic, we've seen how necessary it is to have clear lines of coordination and accountability along the supply chain. Scaling up values in our food system requires significant investments in "soft infrastructure": the qualified staff needed to coordinate cross-sector partnerships between the public, private, and civic sectors critical for building, maintaining, and activating strong local and regional food systems. Transparency, oversight, and robust coordination facilitate a system to serve community needs at all times—especially in times of crisis.

In **New York City**, for example, drawing from lessons learned from Hurricane Sandy, the city assembled a team of people from every city

department—as well as food banks, community based organizations, and philanthropy —to coordinate a massive effort to get food to the people who need it most. With a mandate to ensure "no New Yorker goes hungry," the effort was led by Food Czar Kathryn Garcia, appointed by Mayor Bill De Blasio on March 22, 2020. Among other efforts, Garcia helped spearhead the expansion in early April of the Department of Education's grab-and-go meal program from serving children exclusively to serving New Yorkers of any age. The Food Czar team held weekly calls with elected officials, community advocates, and agency staff to encourage transparent information sharing and facilitate rapid response as issues surfaced. While the Food Czar team served as a temporary task force, the Mayor's Office of Food Policy endures with greater legitimacy and widespread citywide support. The interagency mobilization to the crisis made visible the intersectionality and critical importance of food policy across 22 city departments and agencies, connecting dots between food security, climate change, racial equity, resiliency, economic development, labor, immigration, health and much more. This increased awareness has created an opening to comprehensively institutionalize food policy into the future.



VIRTUAL FORUM: URBAN FOOD POLICY FORUM
How Can Cities Survive and Learn From Crises That Disrupt Urban Food Systems?
Thursday, May 28, 2020

Similar to New York, in places with food policy directors embedded within local governments (including **Austin**, **Baltimore**, **Denver**, and **Washington DC**), cities were able to quickly assemble a well-coordinated emergency response because of their well established cross-sector relationships that spanned local government, community-based organizations, businesses, and policymakers.

For example, when the **City of Austin** launched its Emergency Operations Center, it tapped the Office of Sustainability's Food Team to lead the city's food access response to the pandemic. The Food Team was able to build upon and activate existing cross-sector relationships such as their Food Policy Board, to form a Food Access Task Force. As a result, farmers markets never closed, the city procured and distributed PPE to food service workers and nonprofits, diverted food from restaurants into emergency feeding operations, and invested millions of dollars into alternative food access and distribution initiatives. They also sourced from locally owned restaurant clusters to provide caregiver meals to family members picking up school meals at distribution sites for their children. The task force is looking ahead to the future, working closely with its food policy board on policy recommendations focused on: increased funding for racial justice in food systems, emergency feeding, and city food policy staff; collaborating with regional partners across Central Texas to ensure better coordination and resource sharing across local governments; and developing a long-term food resilience plan.

PHOTO: GRAB AND GO SCHOOL MEALS IN RICHMOND, CA
ARIC CRABB/BAY AREA NEWS GROUP

> As all crises do, Covid-19 makes even more clear the underlying issues that we have failed to address as a society. As I think about how to integrate our lessons learned from this pandemic response into our food planning and what is needed to build a deep resiliency from food support programs, to affordable housing, to equitable access, to healthcare and education, the key question is: Will equity be pushed to the forefront of our collective understanding of this event, as the need for climate change adaptation was for Hurricane Sandy? My hope is that shared analysis will seed solutions that truly address health equity so that all New Yorkers have access to the resources and opportunities they need to be healthy, including good food.
>
> **— KIM KESSLER**
> ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, NYC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
> CUNY URBAN FOOD POLICY FORUM, MAY 2020

PHILANTHROPY

Philanthropy rose to meet the urgency of the moment by quickly disbursing unprecedented amounts of money into food and agriculture specific emergency response and recovery funds, emergency food distribution, safe and adequate emergency housing for farm and food workers, emergency relief for displaced restaurant and hospitality workers, capital support for small and mid-sized producers, producers of color, and much more.

In Chicago, the collaborative cross-sector Good Food Purchasing network led by the **Chicago Food Policy Action Council** mobilized to establish the Covid-19 Food System Rapid Response, which provides critical connective tissue for rapid response, while holding the long term vision for a more equitable food system. The local philanthropic community responded by launching a coordinated **Chicago Region Food System Fund** as a response to hunger and business disruption by bolstering the region's communities and local food system to withstand Covid-19. With an initial investment of $4.2 million, the Fund has grown to more than $7.3 million. As of October 12, 2020, the Fund has awarded 85 grants totaling $3.97 million. While initially focused on emergency response, the fund will soon shift toward supporting long-term food systems resilience and the community's vision for an equitable food system. Other collaborative food systems funding efforts emerged around the country at the local, state, and national levels.

Covid-19 has underscored how critical the investment in soft infrastructure—the people power needed to coordinate and integrate the complex ecosystem of cross-sector partnerships between the public, private, and civic sectors—is for building, maintaining, and activating strong local and regional food systems, especially during times of crisis.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND INVESTMENTS TO SUPPORT CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

- **One or more paid staff from the community to organize a local Good Food Purchasing coalition**
- **Funding for BIPOC and worker-led coalition's participation and leadership in food and economic policy spaces during Covid-19 and beyond**
- **A Food Policy Director position in city government with sufficient authority to coordinate and oversee work across city departments and agencies, as well as liaise with local community leadership, food justice coalitions, grassroots organizations, and unions**
- **A Values-Based Procurement Specialist position within agencies or institutions to oversee institutional and supply chain shifts towards values-based food purchasing**
- **Training, professional development, and educational materials for farmers, makers, and small food manufacturers, to overcome barriers to entry for institutional markets, that take into account language and cultural differences**
- **Funding for community outreach opportunities such as stakeholder listening sessions, surveys, town halls, and trainings on policy development and implementation**

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SHARED GOALS & INFRASTRUCTURE

- AGGREGATE PURCHASING TARGETS IN THE FIVE VALUE CATEGORIES
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RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND INVESTMENTS TO SUPPORT CITIES

2 PILLAR 2: SHARED GOALS & INFRASTRUCTURE

The power of partnerships is most evident when our oars are pulling together toward the same direction. That's why shared goals, measurable targets, and cross-sector coordination are so critical: the broader the coordination, the greater the impact.

AGGREGATE PURCHASING TARGETS IN THE FIVE VALUE CATEGORIES

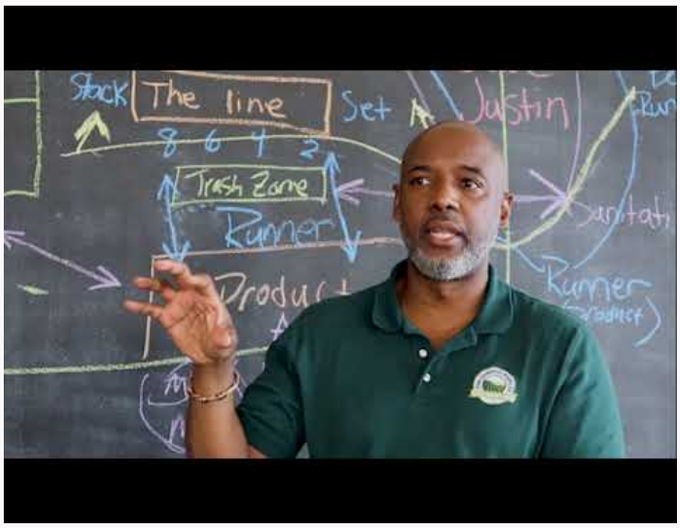
When large institutions—like municipalities, school districts, hospital systems, correctional facilities, universities, and private entities—commit to aggregate regional purchasing targets in the five value categories, their impact is amplified. Imagine the influence the largest purchasers within and across regions could have in building markets for values-aligned food producers through this type of coordination and communication.

The City and County of San Francisco Sheriff's Office and Department of Public Health have committed to shared values-driven procurement goals. Via unanimous ordinance, and with important and longstanding leadership from Supervisor Sandra Fewer, the city and county aim to transform their hospitals and jails into Good Food Providers by 2023.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS TO MEET AGGREGATE TARGETS

As cities and regions collectively set aggressive values-based purchasing targets, local and regional "hard infrastructure"—like central kitchens, storage facilities, and distribution capacity—must be strengthened to meet the increased demand for good food. With additional investment, mission-aligned distributors like food hubs are poised to scale their efforts and connect local and regional farmers, food businesses, public institutions, neighborhood markets, and community-serving organizations.

For instance, when the pandemic hit, **The Common Market** was able to pivot quickly and redirect its supply chains to areas of greatest need by leveraging federal and local government emergency food response funding and existing relationships between local growers, community organizations, local government, such as the cities of New York and Atlanta, and their regional food hubs. The Common Market is a nonprofit regional food distributor in Texas, the Mid-Atlantic, and the Southeast with a mission to connect communities with good food from sustainable family farms. Between March and August 2020, The Common Market distributed 915,000 individualized produce and dairy boxes to families most impacted by the pandemic, which included 9.5 million pounds of local food, coming from 96 local farmers.



VIDEO: Bill Green, Executive Director of The Common Market Southeast, describes how they pair communities with farmers who grow good food and what they've learned from Covid-19. (July 31, 2020)

Between March and August 2020, The Common Market distributed 915,000 individualized produce and dairy boxes to families most impacted by the pandemic, which included 9.5 million pounds of local food, coming from 96 local farmers.

> People have adapted in this moment. It's almost like we have all had to shed whatever boxes we had put ourselves in. I think that could lead to more creativity and innovation, helping us evolve in ways that we would have never anticipated.
>
> **— YAEL LEHMAN**
> EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
> THE COMMON MARKET MID-ATLANTIC

Investment through a dedicated stream of public funding for mission driven infrastructure can help to ensure more equitable distribution of food and jobs for the public good. Slated to open in the fall of 2020, **Oakland Unified School District**'s Central Kitchen opened early, on April 15, pivoting to be used as a food bank co-operated by the school district and the Alameda County Community Food Bank to meet the emergency food needs of the entire county during the pandemic. The Central Kitchen and Instructional Farm in Oakland, California, known as "The Center" was always intended to serve as a community hub. Built with a $500 million bond measure passed by Oakland residents in 2012, the Center's long-term function is to house the district-wide school food program network connecting nutrition, education, and community programs at district schools, kitchens, gardens, and produce market stands. In addition, the Center will help the district expand scratch cooking and facilitate the processing of raw products from small, local farmers to be used in freshly prepared school meals.

> We're fortunate to have a central kitchen and central warehouse, which allow us to maintain some scratch cooking over 100 percent grab-and-go items. If we didn't have a central kitchen, we would probably be looking to expand capacity in the future.
>
> **— BARBARA JELLISON**
> WEST CONTRA COSTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

We see another example of the government recognizing that food is a public good in need of public investment in Massachusetts. The **State of Massachusetts** developed a $56 million fund to address food insecurity, including $36 million for a Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program and $5 million to support local food purchasing for SNAP and HIP recipients, in response to the recommendations from the administration's Covid-19 Food Security Task Force. The program is investing in initiatives that help to ensure that residents have access to healthy, local food by investing in farmers, fishermen, distributors, and other local food producers to help mitigate future supply and distribution disruptions. Examples of awards include: renovation storage, refrigeration, packing equipment and central kitchen facilities for many school districts and food pantries; on-farm processing equipment to increase availability and safety of locally grown and raised products; expansion of farmers markets services and technology to accommodate grab and go and socially distanced sales; and delivery vehicles to delivery capacity to vulnerable populations.

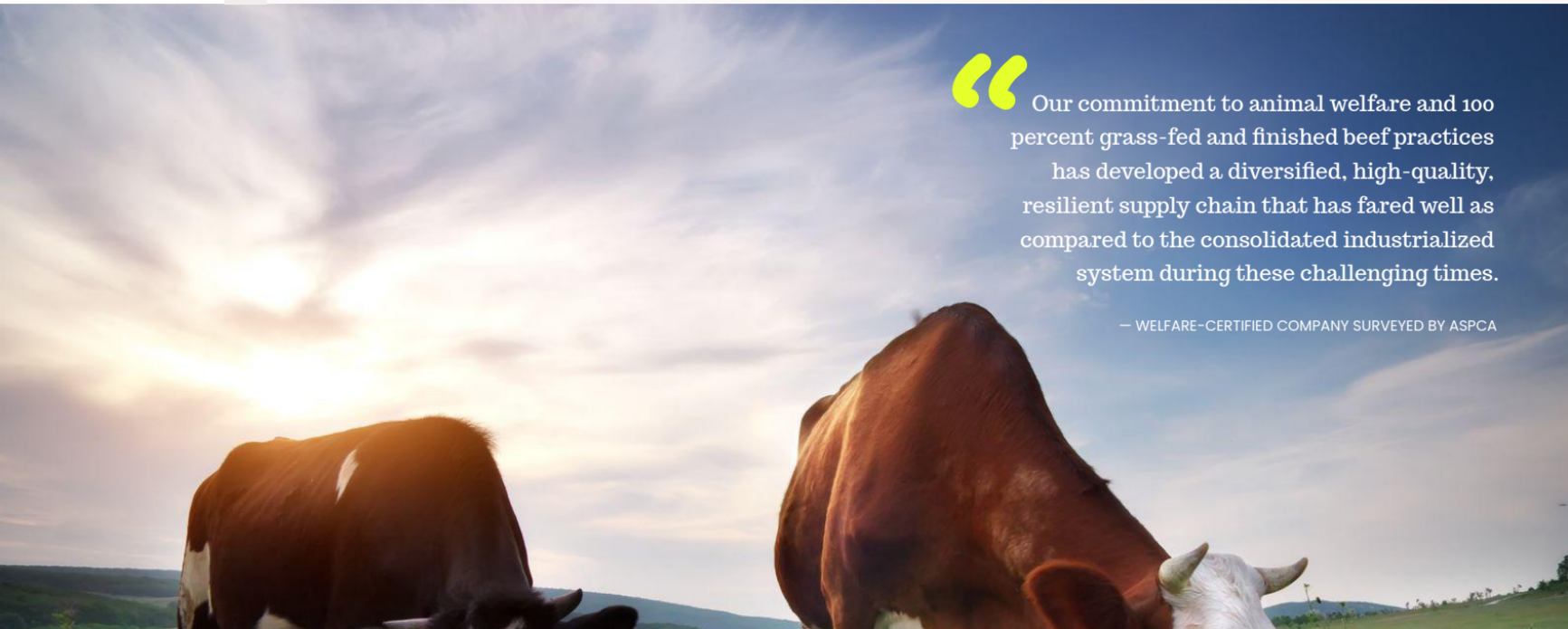
The State of Massachusetts developed a $56 million fund to address food insecurity, including $36 million for a Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program and $5 million to support local food purchasing for SNAP and HIP recipients, in response to the recommendations from the administration's Covid-19 Food Security Task Force.

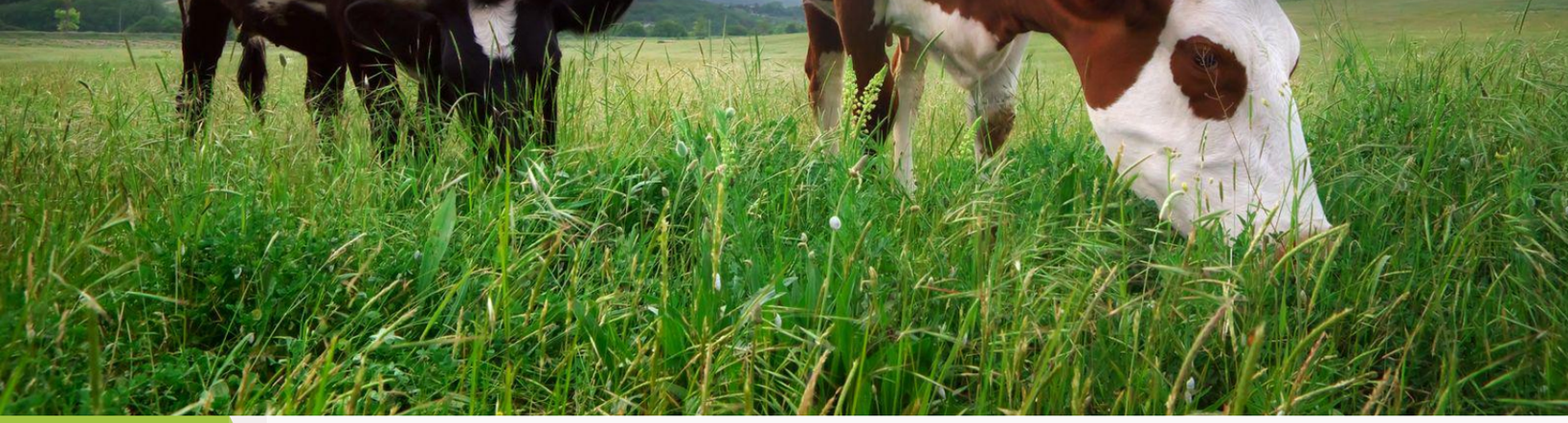
These types of public and private infrastructure investments can extend to localized and decentralized meat, grain, and produce processing facilities that support local ranchers and growers to scale their operations. According to the USDA, there were roughly 800 plants processing beef and pork and 250 processing chicken as of January 2019 compared to the more than 9,000 that were open in 1967. While smaller-scale and pasture-based farmers and the processors they work with have proven more resilient than their industrial counterparts during the pandemic, their capacity to meet increased demand is hampered by limited processing infrastructure and access to credit for expansion. In North Carolina, in an effort to bolster local meat processing capacity, the **North Carolina Local Food Council** was influential in the legislative creation of a $20 million grant, using CARES Act funding, to support small and independent local meat and seafood processors.

Impact Areas of the North Carolina Local Food Council's Response During the COVID-19 Pandemic

COORDINATE THE RESPONSE ACROSS MULTIPLE SECTORS	ENHANCE COLLABORATION ACROSS THE FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN	FACILITATE DATA COLLECTION AND MESSAGING
• Developed teams across local food councils to work directly with farmworkers, fisheries, cold storage, and food recovery efforts • Secured the placement of 2 food council members to contribute to the state Food Supply Chain Emergency Task Force • Conveyed multi-sector challenges to the Governor's task force	• Connected migrant farmworker organizations with support for culturally appropriate food and PPE for farmworkers • Connected unused refrigerated trucks for food banks and food hubs across the state • Facilitated receipt of a USDA CFAP Food Box contract award • Increased support for emergency food distribution for marginalized communities	• Collected experiences and evidence to support farmers markets and seafood retailers to stay open • Shared messaging around critical needs for emergency food providers • Contributed a guest newspaper column about the resiliency of local food systems • Administered surveys to understand food waste, quantify the demand for NC seafood, and cultural preferences for emergency food

Source: Cruz, A. E., Ammerman, A. S., Creamer, N. G., Nash, B., Phillips, E. J., Przysucha, M. M., & Hege, A. S. (in press). "Cultivating community resilience: How North Carolina's food council is facilitating an effective response during COVID-19." *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development.* Commentary accepted for publication.





TRANSPARENCY, PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY & REPORTING ON AGGREGATE TARGETS

As cities and regions set aggregate measurable targets and develop infrastructure to help scale the supply of good food through public and private investments, we must ensure that public institutions are held accountable to their commitments through contractual changes with vendors; third party tracking and verification; transparency and community-based accountability through public reporting on progress and opportunities for community input on goals and targets; and continuous improvement each year towards the collective regional goals.

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES TO PAY THE TRUE COST OF FOOD & MEET AGGREGATE TARGETS

In addition, cities and regions, with the support of state and federal government, have the opportunity to shift the current paradigm and account for the true cost of food. For example, local, state, and federal governments can establish policies that address affordability by adjusting food prices to reflect the full societal cost (e.g. reflecting the additional cost of producing a strawberry in a manner that doesn't harm the environment or workers). Financial incentives, combined with public reporting and accountability mechanisms for such publicly funded partnerships, would enable greater purchasing power to support suppliers that provide fair wages along the food supply chain, as well as climate friendly food production practices (such as soil health management and water conservation), and high animal welfare practices.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND INVESTMENTS FOR CITIES

- **Adopt aggregate purchasing targets in the five value categories of local economies, environmental sustainability, valued workforce, animal welfare, and nutrition.**
- **A dedicated, long term stream of public/private investment in value-chain infrastructure for well-staffed kitchens, storage facilities, and processing and distribution capacity.**
- **Commit to transparency and verification, public accountability, and annual reporting of progress towards aggregate purchasing targets.**
- **Financial incentives for public institutions to procure local, sustainable, fair, and humanely produced, nutritious foods, building on the pioneering local food**

incentive models established in Michigan, Oregon, and New York.

"It always seems impossible until it's done."

— NELSON MANDELA

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PILLAR 3: TRANSFORMATIONAL POLICIES

- EXAMPLES OF COVID-19 POLICY PLATFORMS DEVELOPED BY LOCAL PARTNERS

> Climate justice is racial and economic justice. Cities have tremendous power to lead the charge, and we must recognize this moment as a call to action.
>
> — BOSTON CITY COUNCILOR MICHELLE WU

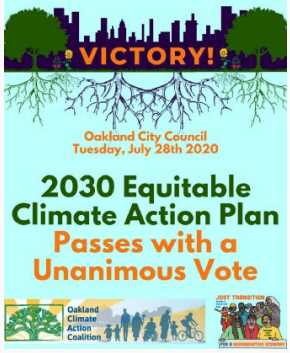
During a crisis, it can be hard to see the forest for the trees. The Covid-19 crisis has revealed how dangerous a food system, which prioritizes efficiency, growth, and profit over values, has been for people and the planet. However, during this crisis, we also saw the value of the workers in the food system as an essential service, and saw how necessary it was for our governments to manage food distribution equitably and for the public good.

This visibility has brought the urgency of our collective work for food justice and transformation to a broader set of stakeholders, enabling new cross-sector collaborations and expanding the universe of possibility for systemic change. As many local government officials have said: we have a chance now to build back better. One of the areas of public policy ripe for transformation is the need for public investment in the equitable distribution of food that is produced in ways that are respectful of people and the planet.

Overhauling a system as entrenched as our food system requires national and international leadership, strategy, and coordination. Local-level change builds momentum for national action—building the proof points we need to compel state, national, and international action.

Local governments across the country, undergirded by community input and support, are drawing on the knowledge gained during the emergency response to create ambitious, comprehensive, and holistic food plans rooted in equity, sustainability, resiliency, and inclusive economic growth. Cities actively engaged with the Good Food Purchasing Program like **New York, Austin, Oakland, Denver, Boston**, and **Chicago** are developing first of their kind multi-year, community-driven food plans for advancing a portfolio of integrated food policies, programs, strategic partnerships, and investments that can accelerate the building of more equitable and resilient regional food systems.

Many Good Food Purchasing coalitions and other community-based networks responded to the emergency with Covid-19 specific short and long-term policy recommendations for their local governments, grounded in support for worker justice, racial equity, environmental sustainability, and transparency.



The City of **Oakland's Equitable Climate Action Plan**, for instance, calls for the "adoption of a climate friendly food policy such as the Good Food Purchasing Policy with a racial justice lens, ensuring that all food purchased by the City, on City property, or at City events, has limited carbon emissions and maximum health, equity, and local economic benefits." In Boston, **City Councilor Michelle Wu** released a city-level **Green New Deal and Just Recovery** framework for using the full reach of municipal authority to mitigate the threat of climate change, address economic inequality, close the wealth gap, and dismantle structural racism.

Cities also doubled down on their commitment to the Good Food Purchasing Program, as a policy tool to ensure public food dollars align with public values, especially in times of crisis. For example, during the summer of 2020, the **City and County of San Francisco**, with leadership from **Supervisor Sandra Fewer** and a grassroots coalition led by **SPUR**, and **Escondido Union School District** Board of Education, with campaign leadership from the **San Diego Food Systems Alliance**, both formally adopted the Good Food Purchasing Program.

Many Good Food Purchasing coalitions and other community-based networks responded to the emergency with Covid-19 specific short and long-term policy recommendations for their local governments, grounded in support for worker justice, racial equity, environmental sustainability, and transparency. Notably, a key recommendation across policy platforms is the creation of a dedicated position or positions within city government to focus on integrating food systems work across agencies and developing and enacting a comprehensive food vision and plan, grounded in community.

EXAMPLES OF COVID-19 POLICY PLATFORMS DEVELOPED BY LOCAL PARTNERS INCLUDE

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

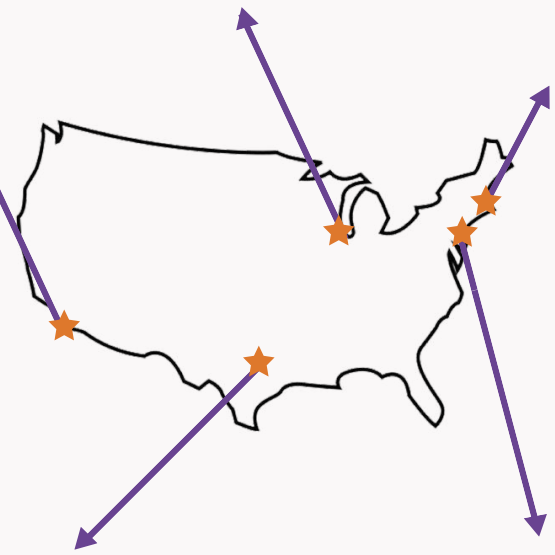
Chicago Food Policy Action Council, its partners, and community members call on Mayor Lightfoot to commit long-term funding to racial justice in food, health, and quality of life.

READ MORE

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

San Diego Food Systems Alliance outlines a set of policy priorities to support critical food system needs during the Covid-19 pandemic, including food and farm workers, food businesses, farms and fisheries, and food security.

SEE POLICY PRIORITIES



BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Food Justice Agenda for a Resilient Boston, produced by the Office of City Councilor Michelle Wu, outlines five priority areas: investing in food chain workers; supporting restaurant and food economy; expanding residents' access to fresh nutritious food; leveraging public procurement to drive broader food systems change; strengthening food justice coalitions.

SEE THE AGENDA

AUSTIN & TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

Austin Travis County Food Policy Board, Covid-19 Food System Response Recommendations recommends key policies, programs, and funding that respond to the on-going pandemic

NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

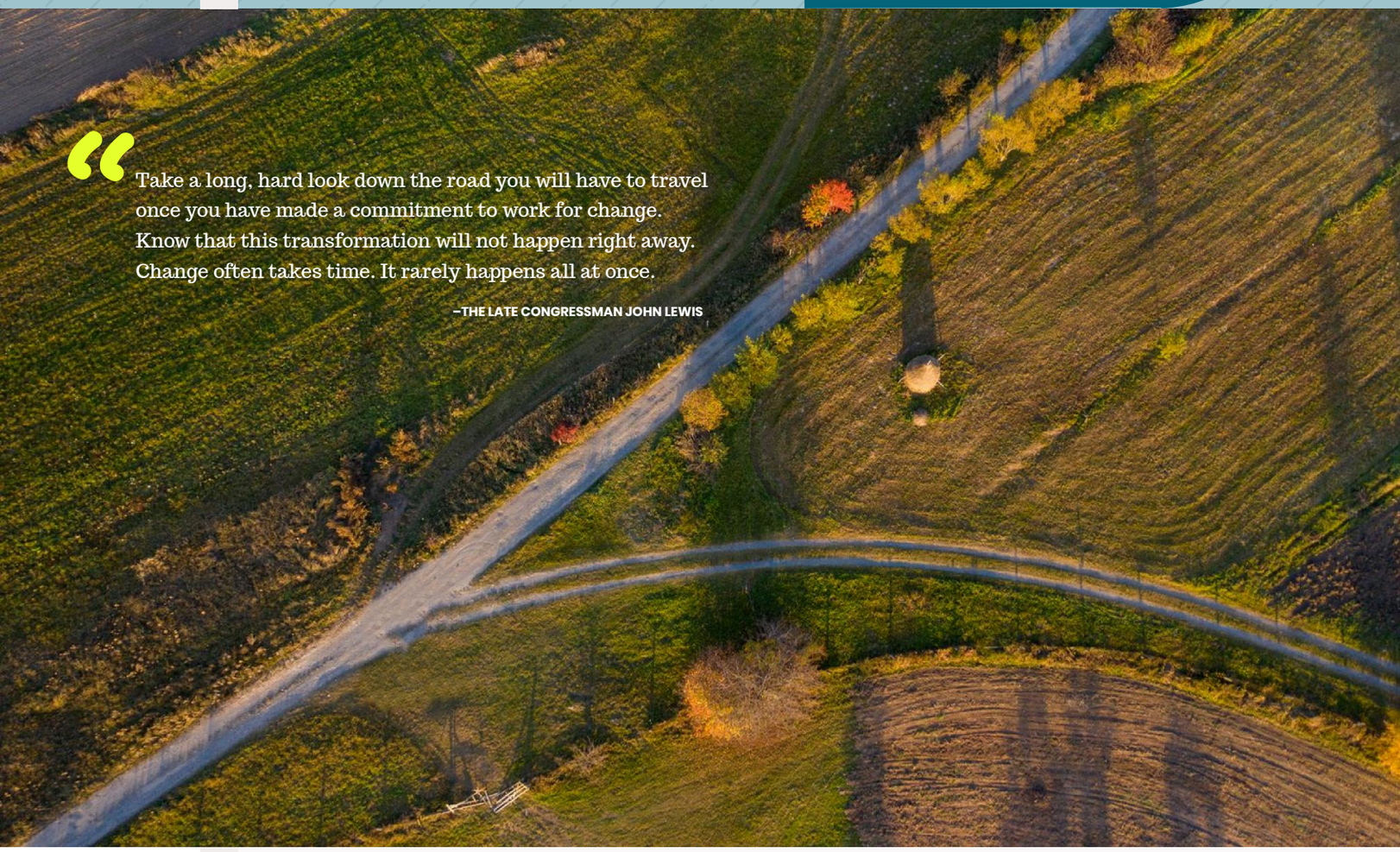
NYC Good Food Purchasing Coalition, led by Community Food Advocates, Food Chain Workers Alliance, and CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute, outlined a comprehensive set of circumstances and their impact on the local food system and food insecurity in the short term, as well as shifts sufficient resources to reshape our local food system with economic and racial equity at its core.

SEE THE RECOMMENDATIONS

policy recommendations for how the City of New York can ensure Covid-19 emergency measures contribute to our vision of a just, healthy, equitable, humane, and sustainable food system and help to secure the stability of our nation's food supply.

SEE THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Notably, a key recommendation across policy platforms is the creation of a dedicated position or positions within city government to focus on integrating food systems work across agencies and developing and enacting a comprehensive food vision and plan, grounded in community.



"Take a long, hard look down the road you will have to travel once you have made a commitment to work for change. Know that this transformation will not happen right away. Change often takes time. It rarely happens all at once.

–THE LATE CONGRESSMAN JOHN LEWIS

Simultaneously, at the federal level, food and farm advocates advanced recommendations for long-term, structural reforms, and comprehensive support for workers, vulnerable communities, and small and mid-sized producers with Covid-19 financial relief packages, which are poised to inform future federal policy. Since the pandemic began, forward looking policymakers have joined with food and farm advocates to advance ambitious federal food policies —strong worker protections with enforceable standards and hazard pay for essential food workers; combatting agricultural consolidation; phasing out "concentrated animal feeding operations" and investing in farmers to help transition away from factory farming to higher welfare, pasture-based production or to transition to growing fruits and vegetables; policies to facilitate access to land, credit, and other resources for farmers and food producers who have been historically displaced and discriminated against; and universal school meals for all students are just a few examples.

People can organize locally, regionally, and nationally turning the power of relationships into policy wins. Around the country, we are seeing it happen. An impressive level of coordination has emerged in the United States, with an eye to more formally align coalitions and collaborations to amplify and synchronize collective action toward lasting systems change. The pandemic's relentless illumination of the interdependence between social, environmental, and economic justice has highlighted the overlapping priorities of partner networks, creating a unique opportunity to leverage our collective voice with the power to influence municipal, state, and federal policy over the long-term.

PHOTO: HEAL FOOD ALLIANCE

HEAL FOOD ALLIANCE

Among the leading national coalitions is the **HEAL Food Alliance**, a multi-sector, multi-racial, 50 member coalition working toward transformation of food and farming systems. The membership includes rural and urban farmers, fisherfolk, farm and food chain workers, rural and urban communities, scientists, public health advocates, environmentalists, and indigenous groups. The HEAL Food Alliance's ten-point platform, published in 2018, represents a range of strategies that have cohered in the last several years around the needed direction for food system reform by asserting that values including sustainability, climate justice, just transition, worker protections, animal welfare, racial equity, and good food for all are moral imperatives of society at large—not niche programs or elitist initiatives limited to the most well-resourced institutions.

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A FOURTH PILLAR: IMAGINATION

PHOTO: JOEL MUNIZ / @JOELMUNIZ_

> Through adversity and hardship come real solutions. The difficult Covid-19 environment has increased the need for feeding and conservation solutions that we had not even considered before... We are part of the solution.
>
> **— GAIL GOUSHA**
> ESCONDIDO UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
> NUTRITION SERVICES DIRECTOR

Let's return again to the dream we started out with—the image of the future we want to see. We outlined above some of the steps that could lead us there. If we step out onto this path—guided by courage, conviction, and a shared vision—we will find ourselves looking back on a decade of movement-building and policy wins that centered values and justice in our food system.

WHERE WE ARE — **TODAY** — **2023** — **2025** — **2030** — **WHERE WE'RE GOING**

BY **2023**

The United States expanded its school lunch program to include all children.

In response to a coordinated mobilization of grassroots activists, policymakers, and civic leaders from communities across the country—and adapting successful models from around the world—the Universal Free School Lunch Program was created. This new Program ensured that all public funds spent on food aligned with community values, making the national school lunch program one of the greatest tools for advancing social justice and environmental sustainability at the national scale in the history of our country.

VIDEO: Honoring School Food Heroes—a glimpse into the frontline efforts in school districts across the country to keep students and communities fed. Produced by Chef Ann Foundation.

As this commitment became a reality and more and more students sought out high quality meals, schools across the country were able to invest revenue from increased program participation in making sure all children received healthy, delicious, abundant, and culturally-appropriate meals. Schools increased purchasing from local BIPOC farmers, worker-owned cooperatives, and businesses prioritizing sustainable production practices, safe and fair working conditions, and high animal welfare standards. As a result, more people were thriving—with dignified wages, healthy environments, good food, and meaningful jobs in their communities.

Policymakers came to view this effort as a good jobs strategy: public dollars for the public good could ensure that frontline food workers were paid a living wage, benefits, a voice on the job, and opportunities for career advancement.

At the same time, the federal government, along with state and local leadership, recognized that in order to offer all children and our most vulnerable populations the highest quality meals they deserve, they must invest in the necessary infrastructure: well-staffed kitchens for scratch cooking, storage, packing, processing, distribution, washing, and waste management facilities. Facilities were funded through federal, state, and local public finance mechanisms.

BY 2025

PHOTO CREDIT: REBEKAH WILLIAMS, GOOD FOOD BUFFALO

Cities and regions large and small across the United States had committed to setting regional Good Food targets across their public institutions.

Inspired by the leadership of school districts and grassroots and BIPOC-led organizations, cities saw that Good Food procurement could be a powerful tool to serve their constituencies. This dramatic expansion in the demand for Good Food—along with dedicated business development support from local economic development departments—created a new and steady market for small and mid-sized farmers and food businesses of color, historically excluded from institutional supply chains.

With commitments to equity, transparency, and accountability front and center, people were able to hold institutions accountable to their commitments and ensure that taxpayer dollars were invested for the public and planetary good.

At all levels of government, there was a recognition that food systems should restore and promote public health, equity, and sustainability—not illness, exploitation, and pollution. And they knew that to do this, public institutions needed more investment to pay the true cost of producing, distributing, and preparing food. They began to apply true cost accounting principles, identifying, measuring, and valuing the positive and negative externalities of food and agriculture systems to better assess the environmental, social and health impacts of the food system. Plans were put into motion to incorporate true cost accounting in the food systems into business analyses, corporate accounting, dietary comparisons, farm typologies, policy analyses, and administrative decision making at all levels of government. This led to better decision making in regulatory and trade systems, as well as in public and private finance and investment.

The necessary funds were committed to purchase foods that align with community values and this allowed institutions to invest their billions of taxpayer dollars into companies that paid their workers a living wage, provided health benefits, and worker protections; food producers that protected our soils and waterways; and much, much more.

BY
2030

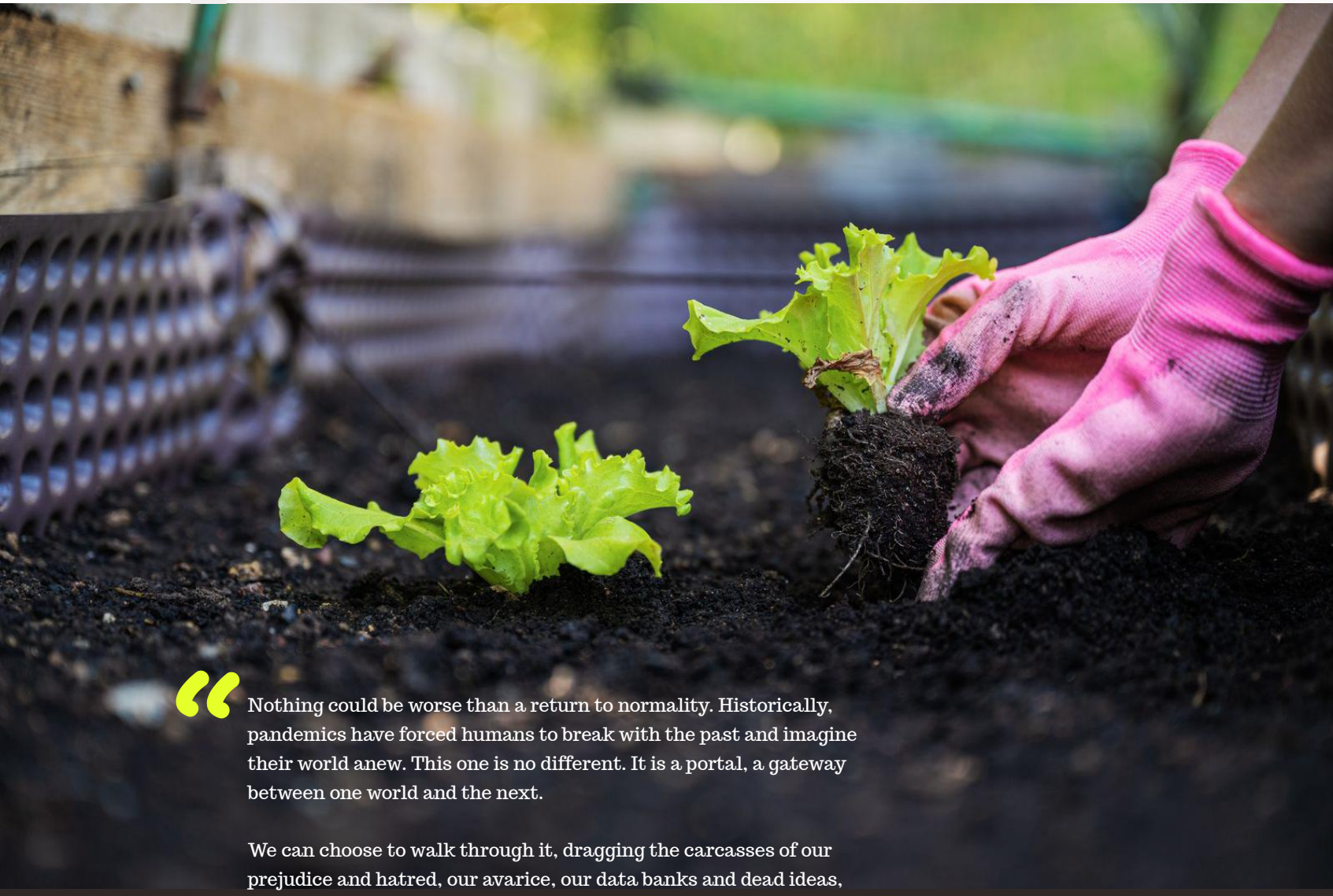
All public institutions across the country were committed to investing taxpayer dollars in a food system that fosters health, equity, and wellbeing.

This radical transformation was occurring all while advocates were organizing and winning landmark legislation at all levels of government related to:

- **opportunities for BIPOC farmers to flourish** through enhanced **access to resources like land and credit**;
- **immigration policy reform** that recognizes and **values the critical role immigrants play** in bringing food to our tables;
- **dismantling racist policies that resulted in food apartheid** in urban and rural communities;
- **mandatory protections and dignified working conditions and wages** for all workers in the food system;
- **swift and meaningful action to address the climate emergency**; and
- **the dismantling of the factory farm model** that causes so much pollution and animal suffering.

In addition, the US Farm Bill substantially increased its support for local and regional food systems, funding research and implementation for diversified, sustainable agriculture and aquaculture systems and access to land and credit for BIPOC and beginning farmers. Soil health was prioritized and targets were set for drawdown of greenhouse gas emissions. In partnership with and support of the USDA and the Farm Bill, local governments were able to build the infrastructure support for a Good Food System. Regions across the country set and achieved targets of at least 25 percent in a Good Food system, which helped cities rebound from economic uncertainty and create a buffer against crises and climate change. Universal rights to healthcare, meaningful work, education, housing, and (of course) good food became the norm. There were still many challenges, but our overarching commitment to equity, wellbeing, and a sustainable future inspired us to continue tackling them with courage.

We know the struggle is long, and filled with unexpected challenges. But our imagination can give direction to our actions during these turbulent times. What else are you dreaming of? **Where can our imagination take us if we let it guide our path and fuel our collective power?**



> Nothing could be worse than a return to normality. Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next.
>
> We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it.
>
> — ARUNDHATI ROY

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & CREDITS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Roadmap reflects the insights, observations, and themes gleaned from our communications with communities and institutions involved in the national expansion of the Good Food Purchasing Program and their experiences addressing the many challenges brought upon by the Covid-19 pandemic between the spring and fall of 2020. We remain inspired and grateful for the leadership, innovation, and resourcefulness demonstrated in every community across the country. In particular, we are proud of and grateful for our network of local and national partners all over the country committed to building a more equitable food system together.Thanks also to Jennifer Gaddis, June Jeon, Naomi Klein, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and The Intercept for inspiring some of the visioning for this report.

We are grateful for our work teams at the Center for Good Food Purchasing and Real Food Media who came together and channeled the personal and professional challenges of this stressful time into a message of hope.

Lastly, the Center for Good Food Purchasing would like to thank its funders, whose vision and commitment make this vital work possible: The Rockefeller Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, The 11th Hour Project, Panta Rhea Foundation, ASPCA, and Dr. Bronner's.

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