

Community Engagement Work Group

Background

The Community Engagement work group seeks to build better communication between the Food Policy Council and Madison residents in order to advance equity in the food system. The Community Engagement work group is not the educational or publicity arm of the Food Policy Council. Rather, the goal is to have a large, diverse group of Madisonians connected to the FPC serving as members, giving input, or participating in programs.

Equity

The work group recognizes that the makeup of the FPC and its work groups is predominantly white, upper middle class, well-educated Madisonians. While issues of equity and food access have certainly not gone unnoticed in the work of the Council, there is more that can be done to ensure that the Council itself is more representative, every member receives ongoing equity training, every Council action is approached through a lens of equity, and better communication channels are established with city residents to ensure that the FPC is responsive to issues of food access.

Accomplishments

The work group is reviewing its Racial Equity and Social Justice comprehensive tool with other experienced community members and city staff. The final draft will be presented to the Council at the October meeting.

The work group has had a series of meetings with several local experts on equity to review the RESJ tool and discuss proposed actions of the work group. Tariq Saqqaf (who works with NRTs in the Mayor's office) and Beverly Hutcherson (new member of Dane County's Food Council) provided guidance on working with the NRT's, continuing equity training within the work group and the Council, and working directly with community members. Lexa Dundore from Dane County/UW Extension will meet with the work group in September.

Current Projects/Key Issues

- 1) Finalizing a Racial Equity and Social Justice tool on the proposal to work directly with a neighborhood on food access issues
- 2) Promoting diverse membership on the council. This includes diversity on the Council itself and potentially using the working groups as a more accessible way to get involved and train to become an official Council member.
- 3) Infusing training on equity and cultural competency into council meetings and actions taken by other work groups.

Next Steps

- Meet with Lexa Dundore (September 2016)
- Present final draft of RESJ to FPC (Oct 2016)
- Discuss process of recruitment and appointment for Council members with new Food Policy Coordinator and Mayor's Office staff. Review policies for work group membership. Review Council vacancies and any existing records of people who have expressed interest. (Oct 2016)

- Research existing tools for equity training and create a proposal for how to integrate this training into Council meetings and activities. (Dec 2016)

Participants

Work group members include Michael Bell (chair), Nan Fey, Nick Heckman, Jenna Collins, and Erica Anderson.

Invited guests include Tariq Saqqaf, Beverly Hutcherson and Lexa Dundore.