

Good Food for All

Vision and initial strategies to address food insecurity in the greater Milwaukee area through collective impact collaboration of the Milwaukee Food Council and its partners.

Problem Statement

Not enough people have enough good food. Food insecurity is not just lacking immediate access to food, but sustainable, long term access to good food and nourishment. Food security is directly related to social determinants of health, including but not limited to access to resources, income, transportation, housing, education, and health care.

Food insecurity disproportionately affects communities of color and people living in poverty. The same groups that suffer from occasional lack of access to food also suffer health effects such as diabetes from calorie-dense nutrient poor diets. Social and cultural values of food and agriculture are lost in homogenized and industrialized food systems serving these communities.

Our Aspirations

We focus on positively influencing the policies, networks, activities, and organizations in the food systems to reduce food insecurity, to promote local & sustainable agriculture and food processing, to ensure fair wages and profits for all food system workers and entrepreneurs, and to increase understanding of how individuals, organizations, businesses, lenders, agencies, and institutions can improve food security in all its aspects. **Values** of personal and community health, ecological sustainability, economic vibrancy, equity, and food culture guide our work; these are detailed in the operating principles of Milwaukee Food Council (MFC).

Our Approach

We seek to coordinate and harness the collective impact of many people and organizations addressing food insecurity and community food systems.

We are **not** direct programming organizations. The MFC will identify issues, connect partners, share data, identify and refer resources, evaluate impacts, promote research and education, and communicate stories of successes and challenges. This collective impact collaboration will catalyze and guide activities by the many organizations that are members of the Council and our partners.

Strategies

Our strategies are focused on improving the **affordability, desirability, and geographic accessibility** of food. These three priorities shape our approach to advancing impact. Using these priorities, five initial focus areas were identified by a planning team that have high potential for impact and strong stakeholder interest (table).

Our approach to supporting community change is to document the current state of food systems in the Milwaukee area, and support activities, programs, and policies that can advance impact toward a shared goal. Joint work groups will be convened to refine and consider the current situation, identify current and potential efforts and activities, and develop action plans to advance goals. A mechanism for collaboration among and between the MFC board, collective impact work groups and our partners will

MFC Collective Impact Group: Our vision is that everyone has access to affordable, desirable food.

be developed. Their charge will include deliberations about roles, responsibilities, and activities, and the continued identification and refinement of collective impact goals and focus areas.

Focus Area	Current State	Efforts & Impacts	Draft Shared Goal(s)
Promoting programs that work: media, nutrition education, story sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding influences access to and interest in good food • Low awareness of problem • Lack of voice for those affected 	<i>Scope TBD by work groups. See Appendix A for early ideas.</i>	Promotion: popular press and social media disseminate ideas and actions; Education: change in attitudes, food beliefs, consumption patterns Awareness: size and scope of food insecurity in Milwaukee
Economic development, food processing, distribution, and marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High unemployment, especially among African-American males • Food deserts are a market failure in terms of access 		Livable wage jobs; New food businesses; Dismantling grocery store inequity; Expanding community-based and/or co-operatively owned enterprises
Food access – focus on chronic food shortage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 15-17% of food insecure being reached • Punitive public assistance laws 		Align food system to improve access and reach of good food; Policy reforms so poverty isn't punished
Local food production, urban farms and gardens, composting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of food activities and programs in communities in need • Land access, tenure, and contamination issues • Excessive food waste 		Inventory of available land and facilities (also part of mapping); Support for production and processing in low income communities; Small to large scale composting
Gathering, mapping, and convening the food system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmented, multiple, and competing food systems • Lack of awareness of existing resources 		Food systems stakeholders aware of existing resources, opportunities available

Our Capacity

The MFC has been convening bi-monthly since 2007 and is completing its process to formalize as a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization in 2016.

This recent formalization provides an opportunity to define new and complementary roles for the organization. In broad terms, MFC is a community-based organization oriented to *networking* and *advocacy* and has built momentum and trust in the community as an open table to share resources, ideas, and build partnerships.

MFC Collective Impact Group: Our vision is that everyone has access to affordable, desirable food.

Signs of Progress

Building on previous work identifying metrics to observe food system change, the MFC collective impact workgroup has developed a matrix for action (strategic thinking area, desired outcomes, associated metrics, and associated strategies). Using the matrix and this strategic plan, the principles and practices of collective impact will be extended to other MFC workgroups (Equity and Justice, Food Culture, Policy Change and Advocacy, Sustainable Food Ecology and Vibrant Local Food Economy). The collective impact goals will be imbued in the other workgroup activities and products, and reciprocally, the other workgroups will help refine and expand the focus areas described above.

Next Steps

- Get endorsement of Milwaukee Food Council participants and members to pursue activities and support for this initiative;
- Convene advocates and leaders in each focus area to develop detailed action agendas and alignment strategies with current and projected MFC and CIUAN workgroups and activities;
- Continue asset mapping – people, organizations, on-going activities, existing and potential resources;
- Identify near-term opportunities for high profile successes;
- Identify stories and metrics to document and disseminate successes;
- Develop *ideas and actions pitches* for advancing each focus area to potential funding agencies and organizations;
- Develop a long-term business model and funding plan.