

Background

The Milwaukee Food Council, which began meeting in May 2007 as a group of community members concerned about the food system, incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in 2016 and is guided by an 11-member Board of Directors. Our coalition includes community members and organizations, professionals, and government officials committed to supporting a food system that is community-driven, healthy, environmentally sustainable, and economically vibrant. We strive to incorporate diverse voices and perspectives, inclusive of all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other identity groups, and uplift youth and intergenerational exchange. Through research, education, community development, and policy, we use collective action to advance these food system goals. *More than a rigid membership body, we are just as much a movement as we are a network -- advancing culture, policy, and practice towards a healthier and more equitable food system.*

This strategic plan will serve as a guide for our collective efforts over the next 2 years, through December 2022.

Racial and Social Equity in Our Food System

We cannot achieve a healthy, equitable food system if we are not willing to do racial justice work. The Milwaukee Food Council Board of Directors is committed to leading our organization as one that is anti-racist -- one that seeks to understand and dismantle conditions that keep us from achieving true equity in our food system. We expect our network of stakeholders to join us in this work at all levels of engagement. The vision outlined in this strategic plan and the way that we collectively operationalize this work should always center racial and social equity, both internally and externally in culture, policy, and practice. Racial and social equity are expected to lead all decisions made at the board, committee, and workgroup level; anything otherwise will be considered unacceptable. As such, we must also recognize the upstream factors at the root of food and hunger inequities - such as poverty, unsafe and unstable housing, public safety concerns, and education disparities. Wherever possible, we are committed to advancing opportunities that combat these upstream factors for all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other identity groups.

Vision

Milwaukee's local food system is community-driven, healthy, environmentally sustainable, and economically vibrant; this state is achieved only when it is inclusive of all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other identity groups.

Mission

To support a locally-anchored food system that advances Milwaukee's social, economic, environmental well-being through collective action.

Collective Action

The Milwaukee Food Council strives to support collective action for social change in our food system.

Five conditions that guide our collective action are:

- A common agenda
- Shared measurement systems
- Mutually reinforcing activities
- Convening and engaging community
- A mutually agreed upon backbone support system (in this case, the MFC)

Priorities

1. Healthy, Equitable Food Access & Education

- a. **Objective:** Increase the resources and infrastructure related to healthy, local food procurement and distribution in federal, state and local programs (before, during, after school + summer meals, EBT, Senior Farmers Market Vouchers, WIC, senior dining, food banks and pantries, etc.)
- b. **Objective:** Increase opportunities for affordable, healthy food access through local agriculture

2. Food Recovery & Environment

- a. **Objective:** Reduce waste & increase recovery from food, food packaging and agriculture
- b. **Objective:** Support sustainable agricultural and business practices that protect land, water, and biodiversity

3. Food Economy

- a. **Objective:** Support economic development of businesses that sell healthy and local food in neighborhoods, particularly those that are owned and operated by Black, Indigenous, and other community members of Color
- b. **Objective:** Support a healthy, safe, and fairly compensated food system workforce

4. Resident-Centered Engagement

- a. **Objective:** Build capacity for collective action that supports healthy food systems at a hyper-local (ie. neighborhood) level
- b. **Objective:** Increase resident leadership and voice in decisions that impact their local food system

Working Groups:

The following activities will guide working groups in operationalizing our objectives:

- 1. Collect, analyze, and share data and current efforts in each priority area*
- 2. Develop relationships as the foundation for collective, collaborative action*
- 3. Research, monitor, and engage in advocacy around local, state, and federal food systems policy*
- 4. Actively work towards equity for all through relationships, practices, policy and challenge institutional and structural systems that perpetuate racial and social inequities*

Committees:

Policy

Communications

Systems Mapping Drafts:

