

To: County and Town Managers, Staff and Elected Liaisons to the Food Council
From: Ashley Heger, Food Council Coordinator
Date: February 10, 2020

Purpose

Share the Orange County Food Council's accomplishments, updates from the council coordinator, and proposed scope of work and budget rationale for the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

Table of contents

- I. Accomplishments
- II. Coordinator updates for Quarter 4 2019 and Quarter 1 2020
- III. Scope of work for 2020 - 2021 fiscal year
- IV. Budget rationale

Accomplishments

After forming in the summer of 2016, the Orange County Food Council's capacity has steadily grown with coordinator support, continued funding, and increased community participation. Our role in developing a more equitable and sustainable food system in Orange County is to identify issues, build strategic partnership, and coordinate action. Please see the attached Accomplishments document for a summary list of the Food Council's accomplishments and highlights for 2016 to 2020.

Coordinator Updates: quarter 4 2019 and quarter 1 2020

- Presented at the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association Sustainable Ag Conference
- Facilitated a racial equity workshop at the Statewide Gathering of Food Councils
- Helped develop a partnership between Orange County Schools, Orange County Solid Waste, and Brooks Compost to create a compost pilot program at two elementary schools in Hillsborough
- Coordinated monthly meetings for 4 workgroups and the coordinating council
- Advised a UNC student research group to collect data about the impacts of increased wages on food security and health outcomes
- Circulated a food waste survey to gather information about practices and challenges for local businesses and institutions
- Worked with the Department of Social Services, Health Department, Orange County Schools, and Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools to develop a summary of data related to food insecurity. This data provides a snapshot of food insecurity in Orange County. An infographic with this data will be shared with all town liaisons and elected officials.
- Coordinated a Groundwater Presentation and community partner workshop with the Health Equity Council and Racial Equity Institute
- Developed a proposal with the Health Equity Council to create an Orange County community data index that will include data disaggregated by race, gender, and age.
- (*ongoing*) Participate on the GARE core team for Orange County
- Hosted a *From Charity to Justice* Community Workshop that included many of our partners working on poverty and hunger issues

- Participated on the Agriculture Summit planning committee and developed a workshop for the 2020 summit
- Convened farmers' market managers and county staff working with those experiencing food insecurity to develop partnerships to increase access to a new money matching program at farmers' markets.

2020 - 2021 Scope of Work

Develop a Food Policy Agenda to serve as a tool for each jurisdiction in Orange County to implement practices and policies to address issues of food insecurity, the local food economy, agriculture, and food waste using a systems change approach. This work will be done in phases. The first phase will focus on the development of a community food baseline assessment (gaps analysis). Phase two will be dedicated to convening partners to define a process for prioritizing issues and identifying strategies while centering lived experience. Part three will be the creation of a Food Policy Agenda using a racial equity lens. This will include a set of policy recommendations for each identified sector of the food system. Part of this process will rely on the development of a community data index. The index will include:

- Robust data for identifying issues and tracking trends
- Ability to track policy impacts over time
- Create transparency and accountability with a public data platform
- Illustrate connections between issue areas (e.g., housing cost and food security)

Budget rationale

The Food Council is requesting a total budget of \$77,553. This request represents an increase of \$5,774 from the FY2019-20 fiscal year. This increase has been requested for the FY2020-21 fiscal year to support contract services needed to develop a Food Policy Agenda. The total amount allocated for contract services in this fiscal year will be \$10,500.

- **Gaps analysis: total expected expenditure \$5,000**
Work with research staff at UNC and Community Food Strategies to create a baseline community food assessment (or gaps analysis) of the Orange County food system. The assessment will identify areas of need, opportunities for improvement, and assets available. It is difficult to find grant funding for such projects and traditional consultant firms charge 2 to 3 times the budgeted amount of \$5,250. We will leverage our relationships with UNC and Community Food Strategies to create an assessment within the available budget.
- **Racial Equity Assessment and Consulting: total expected expenditure \$5,500**
A racial equity consultant will work with the assessment team to ensure the gaps analysis process aligns with a racial equity framework. The consultant will provide additional support for identifying strategies and practices that will center racial equity and a systems change approach within the Food Policy Agenda.