

To: Carrboro Town Manager, Chapel Hill Town Manager and Hillsborough Town Manager
From: Ashley Heger, Food Council Coordinator
Date: September 4, 2019

Purpose

Share information about the Orange County Food Council's history, the current work of the coordinator and future goals of the council with new full-time coordinator support.

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History

The Orange County Food Council first formed as a steering committee in 2015. This committee helped facilitate a year of community input sessions and developed a Community Food Baseline Assessment. The 2015 process helped form the council's structure, priorities and methods. In 2016, the first 15 member council was selected through an open application process. The council received its first grants and hired a part-time coordinator in November of 2016. The council's capacity has steadily grown over the past 3 years with additional funding, increased coordinator support, and growing 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 read the list of [Orange County Food Council accomplishments from 2016 - 2019](#) for a detailed summary of our work.

Scope of Work for Quarter 3 2019

With full-time coordinator support, the council continues to facilitate workgroups and projects while developing a long-term strategic plan and increasing our outreach to partners and community members. The coordinator's scope of work from July to September of 2019 includes:

- Growing outreach with food service providers in Northern Orange County, Hillsborough, Chapel Hill and Carrboro. The focus of these meetings is to determine what work is happening within each service areas/agencies and begin building relationships where collaboration across areas/agencies is possible.
- Facilitating 4 monthly workgroup meetings
- Participating on the Orange County Health Equity Council and helping design community meetings/workshops for Q4 of 2019
- Hosting a facilitation training for participants that have already attended one of our *From Charity to Justice* Community Workshops
- Working with Orange County Schools and Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools to improve farm to school activities and resources

- Distributing a survey to collect data about food waste prevention, reduction and recycling practices with local businesses and area institutions
- Engaging in farmer outreach with local child care centers (one located in Chapel Hill and another in Northern Hillsborough) to help increase the amount of local, fresh foods available to pre-school age children
- Working with Commissioner Mark Macoplos and Susan Romaine with PORCH and Orange County Living Wage to explore how a living wage can support increased food access; connecting with local businesses to better understand the support they need to provide a living wage
- Surveying residents at the Northside Community Good Neighborhood Initiative community cookout; the survey will focus on identifying foodways and gaps in food resources in Orange County

Scope of Work for Quarter 4 2019 and Future Goals

Beginning in quarter 4, the coordinator's work will increasingly focus on the development of a long-term strategic plan for the Food Council. This process will begin with a 'roadmap' document that includes a summary of methodology and process, metrics to measure progress, areas of work and intended outcomes. The roadmap will be developed from quarter 4 in 2019 through the spring of 2020. The coordinator's work extends beyond the development of this roadmap in quarter 4. The scope of work from October to December of 2019 will include:

- Developing a plan for community input sessions (individual interviews plus group listening sessions) with the Local Food Economy workgroup and the Agricultural Preservation Board
- Presenting at the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association's Sustainable Agriculture Conference; I will be participating on a panel focused on how to weave racial equity practices into policy development
- Working with a team of UNC interns to develop a research report on how living wage can improve food access and how other similar communities have used wages as a tool to improve community health and access to food
- Participating as a steering committee member of Project 40
- Participating on the planning committee for the Statewide Food Council Gathering; co-hosting a workshop on racial equity in the food system at the Gathering in December
- Designing the roadmap document that outlines a long-term strategic plan
- Launching the new website for the Orange County Food Council which will include the online version of the Community Food Resource Guide
- Continuing to facilitate monthly workgroup and committee meetings