

Orange County Food Council accomplishments May 2016 - January 2020

Highlights are listed in chronological order

- Created a [Community Food Baseline Assessment](#)
- Hosted 2 community forums with over 150 attendees to share the baseline assessment and gain community participation on the Food Council's workgroups.
- *(ongoing)* Facilitate 4 workgroups that function as communities of practice and a place for developing strategic actions: Food Access, Local Food Economy, Food Waste Recovery, and Racial Equity.
- Developed a first draft of a racial equity scorecard for the Orange County food system
- Local Food Economy Workgroup developed a policy proposal for an Agriculture Trust Fund for reinvestments in the local food economy. This proposal was developed in partnership with the Agricultural Preservation Board.
- Food Access Workgroup created a Community Food Resource Guide (English and Spanish versions attached). The guide was created in response to service providers sharing the need for all the resources to be in one place instead of multiple guides being distributed by various providers. The guide is updated twice annually.
- Hosted an REI Groundwater Presentation that was catered by [Traditional Kitchens](#) and helped fundraise for [Sankofa Farms](#).
- Advocated for SNAP/EBT program to remain in the 2018 Farm Bill - received over 40 signatures from community partners, worked with the town councils of Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough to pass resolutions of support, and participated in a roundtable discussion with Rep David Price and Rep Alma Adams.
- Passed an MOU with the County, Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough to jointly fund a Food Council Coordinator position.
- Shared a policy brief on food access with the Orange County Board of Health.
- Shared a policy brief and resources for urban agriculture ordinances with the Carrboro Board of Aldermen.
- Food Waste Recovery Workgroup developed relationships between Orange County Solid Waste and small businesses like Joe Van Gogh (JVG). JVG now participates in the County's composting program and sits on the workgroup with other partners including Compost Now, UNC Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling, and Ungraded Produce
- Developed a food waste prevention survey that is being distributed across Orange County to assess the current practices and needs that can help reduce waste in our local food system.
- Hired a racial equity coach to help embed equity in the Food Council's practices, policies and culture.
- Hosted 4 community workshops focused on charity and justice approaches to human needs with our partners at Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness and the Family Success Alliance.
- *(ongoing)* Participate on a regional foodshed project (Project 40) with partners that include Community Food Lab, the Triangle J COG, Working Landscapes, Duke World Food Policy Center, and Green Rural Redevelopment Organization.

- *(ongoing)* Developing partnerships with food service providers and those experiencing food insecurity across Orange County to consider ways food access can be improved and reduce overlap in services.
- Hosted several workshops and presented at conferences including the North Carolina Farm to School Summit, North Carolina Gathering of Food Councils, and the CFSA Sustainable Agriculture Conference.
- *(ongoing)* Organized a food insecurity report for the County Commissioner's board retreat; report includes summary data from nutritional and food assistance programs, non-profit resources, and school meals. This initial report was provided as a presentation at the board retreat. The Food Council Coordinator will continue working in collaboration with county departments and community partners to better understand the available data and provide recommendations for what additional information is needed to improve Orange County's responses to addressing food insecurity.
- Facilitated a partnership between Orange County Schools, Orange County Solid Waste, and Brooks Compost to develop and implement a compost pilot program at two elementary schools in Hillsborough. The pilot is being modeled after the successful program at Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools. CHCCS has been supporting this work as a partner by sharing information and lessons learned.
- Organized a school garden tour with Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, elected officials, and Food Council members to share information about the importance of school gardens and how these gardens currently operate in the CHCCS district. The Food Council shared additional resources about the connections between school gardens and students choosing more healthy, fresh foods during lunch and snack time.
- *(ongoing)* Hired a racial equity consultant to lead an assessment for two programs: Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program and Lands Legacy Program. The assessment will identify each program's practices and impacts using a racial equity lens. The findings will be shared with both programs and the Agriculture Preservation Board. The assessment findings will be used to inform a proposal for an Ag Trust Fund. The fund proposal is being developed collaboratively with the Agriculture Preservation Board.
- Coordinated a meeting between farmers' market managers and county departments working with those experiencing food insecurity. The farmers' markets and Rural Advancement Foundation International received a 3 year grant to increase the market matching dollars program at Chapel Hill Farmers' Market, Carrboro Farmers' Market, and Eno River Farmers' Market. The purpose of this convening was to create collaborative partnerships where more community members experiencing food insecurity can be made aware of the matching program and the farmers' markets can recruit those with lived experience to an advisory council that will oversee the use of the grant funds for the next 3 years.