



**DATE** August 23, 2023  
**TO** Charlottesville City Council  
**FROM** Cultivate Charlottesville Food Justice Network  
**SUBJECT** *Food Equity Initiative* End of FY23 Report

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Dear City Councilors,

Thank you for your partnership in implementing FY23 of the *Food Equity Initiative* (FEI), first passed by City Council on October 18, 2018. Enclosed is our end of year report packet for July 2022—June 2023\*. The report is organized by the objectives outlined in the *Food Equity Initiative* proposal. Additional elements included in this packet are the City Departments' Food Equity Action Plans, FY23 Budget to Actual, FY24 Objectives and Budget and Food Justice Network meeting highlights. Finally, included is a separate report packet on the Food Equity Initiative *Plank #3: The Power to Grow*.

Council's *Food Equity Initiative* partnership with Cultivate Food Justice Network has supported rigorous engagement in community-based solutions to food equity challenges. Key FY23 *Food Equity Initiative* accomplishments include:

1. **Community Engagement Cohorts of 21 grassroots** residents ages 14 -67 with a combined engagement of over **6,600 of paid** advocacy hours.
2. **Food Equity Initiative Policy Platform engagement** across numerous community events with over 192 individuals and 34 organizations.
3. **City staff engagement** with the *Food Equity Initiative Policy Platform* including nine City departments, Charlottesville City Schools, and Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority.
4. Ongoing **Food Justice Network racial equity capacity building** investing in new strategic direction for infrastructure support of over 26 partner organizations as well as Cultivate internal practices.
5. Selection for and funding for our **Power to Grow Initiative** community engaged design effort to develop and advance urban agriculture in low-wealth neighborhoods with nearly \$500,000.
6. Contribution of **subject expertise** and representation of City Council's *Food Equity Initiative* at 25 presentations and 23 partner coalitions, amplifying the discourse on building a healthy and just food system.
7. Collaboration with Community Climate Collaborative and City Climate Action plan to provide recommendations on the **intersection of climate justice and food justice**.
8. **Ongoing grassroots programming** including growing and distributing 13,422 pounds of fresh produce to 645 residents, 20,000 healthy school snacks to 3,200 students, 7,200 schoolyard garden experiences, and other on the ground efforts.

We commend the City Council for your leadership in working to build food equity for all Charlottesville community members. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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\*Upon request of City Council, Cultivate is adjusting our reporting period to align with the City's fiscal year. This report covers July 2022 – June 2023 and represents the first year of a three-year agreement with council.



# Charlottesville Food Equity Initiative FY24 City Council Recommendations for Action

## FY24 City Council Recommended Action - September 18, 2023

Charlottesville’s Booker T. Washington (BTW) Park has a legacy as a thriving hub of the African American community. For decades, Black Charlottesville residents played a key role in transforming the land from a history of injustice to a history of reclamation. For example, BTW Park was once the site of a horticultural festival that boasted 200 Black grower exhibits. We aim to reignite this legacy with an Urban Agriculture Collective (UAC) farm site located at Booker T. Washington Park. The site will continue the UAC tradition of growing and sharing fresh fruits and vegetables at no cost for residents facing food insecurity.

The City of Charlottesville has included Food Equity as a priority in our City’s Comprehensive Plan and community members identified urban agriculture as one of six main areas to create a healthy and just food system in Charlottesville. This is articulated clearly in the *Food Equity Initiative Policy Platform* developed to advise council on community centered practices to build food justice.

The enclosed packet of materials, *The Power to Grow*, outlines the depth of community support, precedent, and justification for such an action.

**We urge City Council to express your hearty support for the following recommendations.**

## FY24 City Council Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Charlottesville City Council recommends dedicating land in Booker T. Washington Park for an Urban Agriculture Collective farm.

Recommendation #2: Charlottesville City Council asks Parks and Recreation to prioritize a community design for this farm site in the upcoming Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan.

Recommendation #3: Charlottesville City Council recommends explicitly including food equity goals in the City's Strategic Plan in a way that aligns with the City's Comprehensive Plan Chapter 7, Goal 4 and the Food Equity Initiative Policy Platform.



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# Charlottesville Food Equity Initiative FY23 End of Year Report Against Objectives July 2022 – June 2023

## Purpose

The Charlottesville Food Equity Initiative (FEI) brings together public, private, and non-profit partners working in unique and complementary ways to build a healthy and just community food system for all Charlottesville residents. The Initiative is cultivating community driven processes, resident leadership, and city partnerships to improve access to and quality of nutritious and affordable foods, addressing food equity barriers.

The 2022-2023 Food Equity Initiative work focused on building a foundation for our second, three-year partnership with council through intensive community engagement, racial equity capacity and strategy building across organizations, and implementation support for citywide food equity action plans. Additional focus areas this year include a) engaging with three community cohorts across food justice issues to heighten resident decision making, b) reporting on progress towards specific goals of the *Food Equity Initiative Policy Platform* through the FJN partners, c) integrating community priorities at the intersections of food justice with climate justice and zoning, and d) evaluating to reinvigorate Network structures for greater impact.

The following information includes three sections: a report against the FEI FY23 Goals, the FY23 Budget to Actual, and our FY24 Initiatives and Budget. There are several supporting attachments (listed in our cover letter table of contents).

## Activities and Progress towards Food Equity Initiative Objectives & Outcomes July 2022 – June 2023

**I. Compile and disseminate research** including an analysis of food system assessments that identifies gaps and opportunities for investment, current food access efforts, and communication strategies to engage stakeholders including community members, business owners, and elected officials.

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| <p><b>STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT</b></p> <p><b>Capacity Building</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>192 individuals</b> participated in food equity capacity building</li> <li>✓ <b>26 FJN partners</b> developed specific racial equity plans</li> </ul> <p><b>Communication Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>25 presentations</b> on food equity</li> <li>✓ <b>5 press</b> articles</li> </ul> | <p><b>A. Local, Regional and National Presentations on Food Equity</b></p> <p><b>Local</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● FJN City Food Equity Initiative -11 meetings with City Departments</li> <li>● Charlottesville City School Board – City Schoolyard Garden</li> <li>● Cville Plans Together Steering Committee –Food Justice Network</li> <li>● UVA President’s Council Public Health Group – Health Equity &amp; Food Justice</li> <li>● Community Climate Collaborative JEDI Camp -Youth Food Justice</li> <li>● VMDO Architects–Youth Food Justice Intern, <i>Why school gardens?</i></li> <li>● Know Your Farmer – Health &amp; Farm Equity -FJN</li> <li>● 100 Black Men of Charlottesville – Cultivate Food Equity</li> <li>● Food Co-op High School Summer Experience – Cultivate Food Justice</li> <li>● Juneteenth Celebration -History of Urban Agriculture in Charlottesville</li> </ul> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>198 social media</b> posts for <b>2,980, 12,900 reach</b></li> <li>✓ <b>6 FJN Blasts</b> and <b>8</b> Cultivate newsletters to <b>2,640/each</b></li> <li>✓ <b>194</b> Food Justice Network member list</li> <li>✓ <b>24 girls of color</b> engaged in I Believe In Me Girls garden event</li> </ul> | <p><b>Regional</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Utopian Seed Project Presentation - Diversity in Food and Farming</li> <li>● Virginia Festival of the Book – Eating While Black with the author</li> <li>● Virginia Foundational for Healthy Youth – Student Voice &amp; Equity in Farm to School presentation</li> <li>● I Believe In Me Girls – Youth Leadership in Urban Agriculture</li> <li>● Virginia Home Grown –Cultivate Gardens &amp; Food Justice</li> <li>● Presidential Precinct Fellows –Cultivate CATEC Farm</li> <li>● Jefferson Scholars Leadership Institute –Cultivate Charlottesville</li> </ul> <p><b>National</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● North American Food Systems Network –Cultivate Food Justice</li> <li>● Johns Hopkins Food Policy Council National Meeting: The Power of Food –Cultivate Food Justice Network</li> <li>● White House Farm Bill Advocacy- Urban Agriculture Collective</li> <li>● No Kid Hungry, Centering Equity Cohort-Cultivate Executive Directors</li> <li>● National Farm to School Network – Racial Equity Evaluation</li> <li>● USDA Community Food Projects–Cultivate Just Food Network</li> <li>● HEAL Food Alliance: School of Political Leadership – Cultivate Charlottesville, The Power to Grow</li> <li>● USDA Farm to School Conference – Healthy School Foods Initiative</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>FOOD SYSTEM ASSESSMENTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>2 key assessments</b> conducted to ensure alignment with racial equity goals and strategize to design new FJN model</li> </ul>   | <p>A. Ongoing research and practice around six tenants of Cultivate Uprooting Racism Action plan based on 6 tenants: 1. Decision-Making, Power &amp; Accountability, 2. Culture, 3. Programming, 4. Movement Building, 5. Accessibility, 6. Budget &amp; Finances</p> <p>B. Food Justice Network six-month intensive evaluation by partners to inform strategy moving forward and heighten racial equity practices in our work</p>  |
| <p><b>OUTREACH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Over 1,000 individuals personally reached and 2,800 via communications</b></li> </ul>   | <p>A. <b>Outreach</b> Maintained robust communications strategy to engage community members across the Charlottesville area in a deeper understanding of food equity issues.*See Cultivate Charlottesville Press Page for list of press pieces at <a href="https://cultivatecharlottesville.org/stories/press/">https://cultivatecharlottesville.org/stories/press/</a></p> <p>B. <b>Local Festivals</b> Healthy Streets, Healthy People, Westhaven Community Day, African American Heritage Festival, CCS Back to School Bash, Boys &amp; Girls Club Anniversary Bash, C3 Party for the Planet, AAHC Juneteenth Celebration</p>  |
| <p><b>PARTNER EVALUATIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>2 core evaluations</b> conducted to discern food justice network impact over the past 2 years with input from 26 partners</li> </ul>   | <p>NOTE: Detailed results shared in FY22 Report: Conducted to discern food justice network impact over the past 2 years with input from 26 partners</p>   |
| <p><b>II. Establish mechanisms for community voice</b> including both formal and informal meetings with oversight by community stakeholders and community members on programs and broader food access issues.</p>  |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>5 young adult &amp; 5 adult</b> resident leaders in paid community engagement cohorts</li> <li>✓ <b>11 youth food justice</b></li> </ul>   | <p>A. <b>Food Justice Apprentices</b> -Launched new community engagement cohort at the request of five young adults who were previously interns. Eight-month cohort at 24hrs/week paid to work together and engage in Cultivate programs.</p> <p>B. <b>Community Advocates</b> – Launched third round of adult community advocate cohort. Five residents living or having lived in public or subsidized</p>   |



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| <p>interns engaged in paid 6-week cohort</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>6 Virtual Food Equity Initiative</b> community meetings   <b>34 organizations</b> engaged</li> <li>✓ <b>12 CFJN Planning Team</b> meetings   <b>17 Planning Team</b> members</li> <li>✓ <b>192 combined partners</b> across FJN initiatives</li> <li>✓ <b>6 Comprehensive Planning &amp; City</b> meetings attended</li> <li>✓ <b>100+ youth</b> advocated for Healthy School Foods</li> <li>✓ <b>19 community members</b> engaged in <i>Sisters Healing Circles in the Garden</i></li> </ul> | <p>housing participated in a 6-month cohort to learn about food equity and advocate for The Power to Grow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C. <b>Hosted 6 Food Equity Initiative Policy Platform gatherings &amp; 12 Food Justice Network planning</b> team meetings for a combined 192 community members and 32 organizations.</li> <li>D. <b>Youth Voice &amp; Choice   I Believe In Me Girls   Youth Food Justice Camp</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 Food Justice Interns participated in an intensive paid, 6-week program at 20 hours/week.</li> <li>• 100+ student tastings and fresh food menu item selections.</li> <li>• 24 youth gathered at UAC CATEC urban farm site to explore Black girls and gardening.</li> </ul> </li> <li>E. <b>Women’s Initiative Sisters Healing Circles In the Garden</b> – 19 women of color gathered for two Healing in the Garden workshops in partnership with Women’s Initiative and PHAR.</li> <li>F. <b>City Climate Action Plan</b> – FJN team collaborated with C3 and the City’s Climate Action team to make recommendations on the intersection of food justice and climate justice.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>III. Plan for sustainability</b> by pursuing additional funding for long-term investment at the city, agency and community member levels.</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Charlottesville City Schools Nutrition Department Trainings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Hosted <b>four training</b> units totaling <b>93 hours</b> with Chef Antwon Brinson of Culinary Concepts for <b>50 CCS Nutrition Staff</b></li> </ul>   | <p>Cultivate Charlottesville and Charlottesville City Schools implemented 4 culinary skills training workshops with Antwon Brinson of Culinary Concepts, AB. Culinary Concepts provided the following training units. Staff were paid for each training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Competency Workshop (Jul)</b> – Equipment Skills and Culinary Skills Training</li> <li>• <b>Competency Workshop (Aug)</b> – Equipment Skills and Culinary Skills Training</li> <li>• <b>Leadership Class</b> – Leadership style test, team building, time management, kitchen Management, discovery, and discussion</li> <li>• <b>Kitchen Training</b> – Equipment demo, knife identification and skills demo, etc.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Diversified Multi-year Funding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>\$291,860</b> NCS Urban Agriculture Innovations Program grant</li> <li>✓ <b>\$180,000</b> TFN Partners for Places grant</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. <b>Cultivate was awarded a NCS Urban Agriculture Innovations Program two-year grant</b> (\$291K total) to support development of citywide urban agriculture policies, designs, and practices driven by community residents.</li> <li>B. <b>Cultivate was awarded a TFN Partners for Places 18 month grant</b> (\$180K total) in partnership with Public Works Climate Action plan for The Power to Grow</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>IV. Contribute subject matter expertise</b> to discussions on transportation, zoning, and other planning and policy development to ensure that the City, the University of Virginia, community organizations and citizens are aware of the impact of policy on food equity.</p>  |  |
| <p><b>FEI Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>11 City Department leads</b> engaged around Food Equity Initiative implementation</li> <li>✓ <b>7 of 20 Climate Justice &amp; Food Justice recommendations</b> incorporated to date</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. <b>City Department FEI Support</b> – Hosted meeting with 11 City departments to review the Food Equity Initiative Policy Platform and glean feedback. See enclosed action plans.</li> <li>B. <b>Food Equity Implementation</b> – Specific focus on the intersection of Climate Justice and Food Justice. Collaborated with C3 and City’s Climate Action Plan to make 20 recommendations for inclusion of food equity language, 7 of which have been included.</li> </ul>   |





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| <p><b>Advisory Roles and Food Equity Leadership</b></p> <p>✓ Cultivate Team engaged in Local Coalitions</p>                     | <p>A. <b>Steering Committee</b> – Cultivate staff are on the Steering Committee of the City’s Cville Plans Together working to integrate food equity priorities.</p> <p>B. <b>University of Virginia Sustainable Food System Coalition</b> is developing a multi-year sustainability plan for the university and community.</p> <p>C. <b>Move2Health Equity</b> – Engaged in the Food Access team.</p> <p>D. <b>Community Input</b> – UAC hosted weekly community markets to distribute food grown and engage in conversations on redevelopment, garden design and healthy communities, and the city comprehensive plan.</p>  |
| <p><b>V. Implement opportunities to highlight the City’s food equity work statewide &amp; nationally.</b></p>                   |   |
| <p>✓ <b>205 presentations</b> and trainings engaging a collective</p> <p>✓ <b>1,317 participants</b> at those presentations</p> | <p><b>Provided Thought Leadership</b> in conferences, panels, and presentations: Presented at twenty local, regional, state and national venues (detailed in Section I.C. above)</p>  |
| <p><b>Statewide &amp; Regional</b></p> <p>✓ Cultivate Team engaged in 3 Regional Coalitions</p>                                 | <p>A. <b>Virginia Tech Center for Community Food Systems &amp; Transformation Steering Committee</b>, Cultivate Co-Executive Director, Jeanette Abi-Nader</p> <p>B. <b>VA Farm to School Regional Planning Teams</b>, Cultivate City Schoolyard Garden Program Director, Jordan Johnson, and Farm to School Coordinator, Shamera Banks</p>  |
| <p><b>National</b></p> <p>✓ Cultivate Team engaged in 6 National Coalitions</p>   | <p>A. <b>Johns Hopkins Center for Livable Futures -Food Policy Council Racial Equity Community or Practice</b> Cultivate Co-Executive Director, Jeanette Abi-Nader, represents Cultivate on this National Learning Group</p> <p>B. <b>National Farm to School Network Equity Evaluation</b> Cultivate Co-Executive Director, Jeanette Abi-Nader serves on this national steering committee to establish guidelines for evaluating racial equity in farm to school efforts across the country, Jeanette Abi-Nader</p> <p>C. <b>HEAL Food Alliance Steering Committee</b> – Cultivate Co-Executive Director, Richard Morris, was selected to join this national steering committee, Richard Morris</p> <p>D. <b>Mother Earth News Online Fair</b> - Urban Agriculture Collective Program Director, Amyrose Foll, is a featured speaker on Indigenous Foodways, Amyrose Foll</p> <p>E. <b>No Kid Hunger</b> Centering Equity Cohort– Cultivate Co-Executive Directors, Richard Morris and Jeanette Abi-Nader</p> <p>F. <b>Rooted In Justice Cohort</b> — Cedar Tree Foundation engaging six youth food justice organizations from across the country. City Schoolyard Garden Program Director, Jordan Johnson, and Cultivate Co-Executive Director, Richard Morris</p> |



# Food Equity Initiative: **Emergency & Ongoing Food Access**

Cultivate Charlottesville Food Justice Network was a centralizing stakeholder in the food security response to the Covid-19 Pandemic in Charlottesville and surrounding areas. Over the past year we have wrapped up COVID-19 response efforts and transitioned some of the most critical emergency responses to more sustainable, long-term initiatives. While the focus of the Food Equity Initiative partnership with City Council is to develop and implement system-wide solutions to persistent hunger and food insecurity issues in Charlottesville, we also recognize the need for integrated approaches of direct food provisions, especially fresh, community grown produce. This section summarizes a few of those efforts.

| <b>Activities and Progress towards Emergency &amp; Ongoing Food Access</b><br><b>July 2022 – June 2023</b>   |   |
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| <b>A. Community-based Food Security Infrastructure:</b> Build an emergency food security response infrastructure that enables the Charlottesville community to effectively respond to expanding food insecurity.   |   |
| <b>Community Gardening &amp; Food Equity Capacity Building</b><br>✓ 7,000 spring seedling transplants distributed to local nonprofits and community members<br>✓ 7,200 student garden interactions<br>✓ 21 students totaling 720 hours participated in nutrition committees at Buford, Walker, and CHS | A. <b>Spring Seedling Give-Away</b> – Youth Food Justice Interns and Buford Urban Agriculture students worked with the City Schoolyard Garden team to continue our annual tradition of supporting home, nonprofit, and community gardens by growing and sharing spring seedlings.<br>B. <b>Students in the Garden</b> – Youth are 3 times more likely to eat food that they have grown. The City Schoolyard Garden Coordinators play an important role in engaging youth through the Charlottesville public schools in hands-on garden experiences.<br>C. <b>Nutrition Education</b> – Cultivate’s Farm to School Coordinator, Shamera Banks, worked closely upper grade students with weekly cooking classes and nutrition committees. |
| <b>Healthy School &amp; Community Meals</b><br>✓ 20,000 Harvest of the Month fresh snacks shared with 3,200 students profiling 8 local crops<br>✓ 1,000 servings of sweet potatoes grown by UACshared at the Annual Turkey give away<br>✓ 75 local meals distributed at community market gathering     | A. <b>Healthy Meals</b> – While many of the direct meal provisions that flourished during the first two years of COVID are no longer being provided, Cultivate worked with CCS and UAC partners to share fresh, healthy meals, snacks, and produce.   |
| <b>Cultivate Direct food relief-community produce market</b><br>✓ 13,422 pounds UAC grown produce<br>✓ 39 Community Market Days<br>✓ 645 Residents participate<br>✓ 87 community volunteers<br>✓ 10,000 sq ft additional growing space   | A. <b>Urban Agriculture Collective –Community Produce Market</b> Hosted 39 market days and distributed a total of 13,422 pounds of fresh, locally grown produce at no cost to residents at Friendship Court, South 1 <sup>st</sup> Street, 6 <sup>th</sup> Street, Westhaven, Midway Manor, Riverside, CATEC, and other locations in Charlottesville.<br>B. <b>CATEC Community Farm</b> -To continue to address the loss of community urban agriculture space, Cultivate UAC program partnered with CATEC to establish a 10,000 sq ft production farm on site. Students in culinary and construction engaged in onsite projects.  |





# Charlottesville Food Equity Initiative FY23 End of Year | Budget to Actual July 2022 – June 2023

| CULTIVATE CHARLOTTESVILLE FOOD JUSTICE NETWORK<br>FOOD EQUITY INITIATIVE - FY23 BUDGET TO ACTUAL<br>JULY 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2023 |                                |                    |   |                               |  |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| ACCOUNT  | FY23 FJN<br>BUDGET<br>APPROVED | FY23 FJN<br>ACTUAL | FY23 FEI<br>COUNCIL<br>BUDGET<br>APPROVED | FY23 FEI<br>COUNCIL<br>ACTUAL | COMMENTS   |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>   | <b>495,397</b>                 | <b>463,196</b>     | <b>155,000</b>                            | <b>155,000</b>                |  |
| Staff Compensation   | 319,697                        | 278,223            | 80,000                                    | 75,000                        | 40% FJN Program Director, 40% FJN Policy Advocate, 40% FJN Community Engagement Program Director 10% CO-Executive Director5 (% covered by FEI)                             |
| Program - Support  | 75,070                         | 81,000             | 55,000                                    | 62,000                        | 5 Community Advocates (20 hrs/wk)<br>10 Youth Food Justice Interns (year round)<br>Volunteer, Advocate & Intern Supplies<br>Travel - local & regional conference           |
| Program - Expenses   | 12,730                         | 19,367             | 7,500                                     | 9,000                         | Community Meetings<br>Community Advocate & Intern lunches<br>Community member gift cards   stipends  |
| Partner Support  | 35,000                         | 35,000             | -   | -                             | Funding for community partners including Charlottesville City School equipment and food, Local Food Hub, International Rescue Committee New Roots, Trinity Bread and Roses |
| Professional Services  | 22,700                         | 23,761             | 6,500                                     | 5,500                         | Racial Equity Training, Evaluation   |
| Communications & Technology  | 5,700                          | 2,500              | 1,000                                     | 1,000                         | Community Advocate Database management   |
| General & Administration   | 24,500                         | 23,345             | 5,000                                     | 2,500                         | Rent, Insurance, Office Supplies, etc.   |



# Charlottesville Food Equity Initiative FY24 Core Priorities

## FY24 Looking Forward

In the year ahead, Cultivate Food Justice Network will continue to prioritize rigorous community engagement to drive our work across the Food Equity Initiative. We plan to modify working models in response to this engagement and to further align with our goal of centering community voices and choices. The *Power to Grow* campaign to restore urban agriculture land to Charlottesville’s low-wealth neighborhoods will be a priority and we will work in partnership with Parks & Recreation as well as affordable housing partners Charlottesville Redevelopment Housing Authority, Piedmont Housing Association of Residents, and Piedmont Housing Alliance. The Food Justice Network large group will complete our analysis of the FEI Policy Platform Planks and have a midyear report to council with these results.

As we launch the final three-year phase of our FEI partnership with the city, we will be moving towards ensuring that the city has the resources to continue to build on and integrate the food equity work that Food Justice Network has been holding. We ask the city’s ongoing commitment to this work be formalized with funding a food equity position or other such city infrastructure capacity.

## FY24 Core Priorities

- 1. Community Leadership** Continuing to host and evolve the community engagement cohorts is central to our work. We specifically aim to add to the seasonal focused cohorts (Youth Food Justice Interns, Food Justice Apprentices, and Community Advocates) a long-term advisory committee of residents to cultivate community decision-making for Food Justice Network initiatives.
- 2. The Power to Grow** We are in the midst of *The Power to Grow* campaign and have secured matching funds for this project through December 2024. This year’s focus will be on compiling and integrating community feedback from intensive listening circles, developing a documentary on Booker T. Washington Park for greater public awareness, partnering with Parks & Recreation through the strategic planning process and collaborative community design.
- 3. Food Equity Initiative Policy Platform Public Education Efforts** Food Justice Network will continue to host community events to build support for and understanding of the platform planks as well as represent Charlottesville at numerous state, regional, and national spaces. By the end of 2023 we will have completed the community audit of impact across the six planks. We will solicit robust community feedback and modify as needed with specific focus on implementation needs.
- 4. City Department Food Equity Plans** During this year’s meetings with City staff, we recognize and ongoing commitment to integrating food equity into numerous city departments. But the capacity to put resources behind these goals has been somewhat limited. This year we aim to build out implementation plans and budgets for their food equity priorities as outlined in the *Policy Platform*.
- 5. City Comprehensive Plan Chapter 7 Implementation** With the city’s comprehensive plan finalized, ensuring implementation practices are included in the City Strategic Plan and ongoing department work is a priority.
- 6. REVISIT Food Equity Fund & Food Equity City Staff** Given City Council has proposed finalizing the FEI partnership with Food Justice Network at the end of this three-year agreement (June 2025), it will be critical to establish long-term resources within the City to continue this work. Launching the Food Equity Fund and establishing a position in the city that is responsible for food equity activities, including urban agriculture, (or other similar initiatives) must be part of the city’s plan for this work to continue to build.



# Charlottesville Food Equity Initiative FY24 Budget Overview

| CULTIVATE CHARLOTTESVILLE FOOD JUSTICE NETWORK<br>FOOD EQUITY INITIATIVE - FY24 BUDGET OUTLINE |                                |   |  |
|--|--------------------------------|---|--|
| ACCOUNT  | FY24 FJN<br>BUDGET<br>APPROVED | FY24 FEI<br>COUNCIL<br>BUDGET<br>OVERVIEW | DETAILS  |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>   | <b>456,418</b>                 | <b>155,000</b>                            |  |
| <b>Staff Compensation</b>  | <b>\$241,403</b>               | 80,000                                    | FJN Program Director (100%), Community Engagement Program Coordinator (100%), Community Advocate Lead (75%), FJN Program Associate (100%), 2-Co-Executive Directors (33%), Finance Program Director (33%), GEO Program Director (33%)      |
| <b>Community Engagement</b>  | <b>\$53,298</b>                | 55,000                                    | 5 Community Advocates (20 hrs/wk/8 months)<br>5 Food Justice Apprentices (24 hrs/wk/9 months)<br>11 Youth Food Justice Interns (20 hrs/wk/2 months)<br>Volunteer, Advocate & Intern Supplies<br>Travel - local & regional conference       |
| <b>Program - Expenses</b>  | <b>\$18,500</b>                | 7,500                                     | Community Meetings<br>Community Advocate & Intern lunches<br>Community member gift cards   stipends  |
| <b>Partner Support</b>   | <b>\$58,800</b>                | -   | Community Meals, Meetings & Outreach, Community Advocates<br>Funding for community partners including Charlottesville City School equipment and food, Local Food Hub, International Rescue Committee<br>New Roots, Trinity Bread and Roses |
| <b>Professional Services</b>   | <b>\$55,090</b>                | 6,500                                     | Racial Equity Training, Evaluation, Bookeeping, Audit  |
| <b>Communications &amp; Technology</b>   | <b>\$6,350</b>                 | 1,000                                     | Database management, Website hosting, Software management  |
| <b>General &amp; Administration</b>  | <b>\$22,977</b>                | 5,000                                     | Office rent and supplies, Printing and postage, Insurance, etc.  |



## Charlottesville Food Justice Network Planning Team

Jeanette Abi-Nader, Cultivate Charlottesville, Advocacy & Systems Co-Executive Director  
Theresa Allan, International Rescue Committee, Farmer Support  
Elizabeth Beasley, Local Food Hub, Interim Executive Director  
Aleen Carey, Cultivate Charlottesville, Gardens & Outreach Co-Executive Director  
Jane Colony-Mills, Loaves & Fishes, Executive Director  
Amyrose Foll, Cultivate Charlottesville, Urban Agriculture Collective Program Director  
Dustin Hicks, International Rescue Committee New Roots Americorp  
KJ Howard, Cultivate Charlottesville Food Justice Network Program Associate  
Tamika Irving, Sentara Community Health Outreach  
Jordan Johnson, Cultivate Charlottesville City Schoolyard Garden Program Director  
Cecilia Lapp Stoltzfus, International Rescue Committee, New Roots Manager Food and Agriculture Programs  
Jackie Martin, UVA Presidents Council, Department of Diversity & Community Engagement  
Tegan Medico, University of Virginia Health Services  
Richard Morris, Cultivate Charlottesville, Power to Grow Coordinator  
Todd Niemeier, Charlottesville Office of Human Rights, Director  
Kristan Pitts, Trinity Bread & Roses  
Diane Sampson, Blue Ridge Health District, Maternal & Childhood Health  
Rebecca Schmidt, Blue Ridge Health District, Population Health Manager  
Emily Smith, Local Food Hub, Food Access Associate  
Briana Stevenson, Virginia Black Farmer Directory  
Hannah Strauss, Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, Partner Services Coordinator & Network Development  
Quentia Taylor, Cultivate Charlottesville, Food Justice Network Program Director  
Barbara Yager, Community Member, Bread & Roses

## Charlottesville Food Justice Network A program of Cultivate Charlottesville

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# Charlottesville Food Equity Initiative

## FY23 End of Year Report

### APPENDICES



## Food Equity Profile and Recommendations

# Parks and Recreation

### Food Equity Vision Statement

Grassroots food production emerged as a key practice for neighborhood food access with the start of QCC Farms in 2007. More than a decade later, resident access to green space for urban farms and gardens provide food security, community gathering spaces, beautification, and a number of benefits to the environments and people engaged with them. Unfortunately, they are competing for finite space with other critical needs like improved, affordable housing as well as general development pressure.

### Food Equity Goals

- Cultivate food equity within the urban environmental sustainability space by promoting and preserving permanent land for green infrastructure dedicated to achieving community food security for low-income residents.
- Create a more equitable processes for acquiring and accessing land/garden rental space.
- Promote awareness and utilization of edible trails.

### Food Equity Initiative Recommendations for Action

1. Establish and practice a new local standard for healthy school meals that goes beyond the current USDA regulations, which CCS is meeting, and significantly increase fresh, from scratch locally sourced, and healthier meal options in the next five years.
2. Hire a Farm to School Coordinator to increase capacity for implementation of food equity practices that will lead to healthier school meal options, robust student and partner engagement, and increased participation in meal programs.
3. Work with student leadership to design healthy school food program options in a way that supports their cultural and health needs, while also educating about nutrition and healthy living skills.
4. Develop and implement a robust and well-informed outreach and feedback plan that engages students and families in school food equity practices and shares positive improvements implemented.
5. Revamp school lunch line infrastructure and central kitchen cooking equipment to create more appetizing serving lines and support the implementation of increased from scratch cooking as well as proper storage of fresh items.
6. Collaborate with partners to develop innovative strategies to meet the food needs of students outside of the CCS breakfast and lunch programs including providing a la carte and snack options, larger portions, after school meals, meals during school breaks and other food security needs to decrease in-school hunger and reduce stress for families with limited resources.



Food Equity Profile and Recommendations

# Parks and Recreation (cont.)

Food Equity Initiative Policy Platform Plank Alignment



**#1 Justice & Fairness | #2 The Power to Grow | #6 Restore Earth & Climate Justice**

## FY23 FEI Supporting Partners

- CCS Nutrition
- Cultivate Urban Agriculture Collective
- International Rescue Committee New Roots
- Neighborhood Development Services
- CATEC

Parks & Recreation Department Food Equity Initiative FY23 Accomplishments

1. Participated fully in City Comprehensive Planning Process with 65 accepted recommendations.
2. Established new partnership with Charlottesville Albemarle Technical Education Center (CATEC) to farm on site.
3. Cultivate hired new Urban Agriculture Collective Program Director to work on The Power to Grow campaign.
4. Continuing to work with Parks & Recreation to identify potential urban agriculture sites.

## Food Equity Profile and Recommendations

# Charlottesville City Schools

### Food Equity Vision Statement

We recognize that healthy school food is a strategy to build equity and provide a culture of safety, wellness, and belonging for all our students to thrive. A key piece of achieving food equity for our community, hinges upon infrastructure to advance healthier school meals. Over half (54%) of youth in our city schools are at risk of childhood food insecurity, putting a greater burden on the breakfast and lunch services provided by CCS to nourish students so they can perform at their academic and social best. Charlottesville City School Priority Two, T3, 4, 6, & S8 support this vision: Serve and promote healthy, nutritious and appealing foods and pursue suppliers offering sustainable and locally-sourced options.

### Food Equity Goals

- ❑ Intentionally transform CCS' meal program to increase participation for all students, especially students eligible for the federal meals program by utilizing student choice through taste tests and surveys, student leadership, and nutrition committees.
- ❑ Increase meal offerings of fresh, from scratch, local menu items that are healthier. Increase culturally appropriate menu items (i.e. Halal) and harvest of the month items on the line.
- ❑ Build capacity through enhanced serving line equipment and increased culinary and management training for staff.
- ❑ Continue to work with community partners to find ways to meet the broader food needs of students.

### Food Equity Initiative Recommendations for Action

1. Establish and practice a new local standard for healthy school meals that goes beyond the current USDA regulations, which CCS is meeting, and significantly increase fresh, from scratch locally sourced, and healthier meal options.
2. Hire a Farm to School Coordinator to increase capacity for implementation of food equity practices that will lead to healthier school meal options, robust student and partner engagement, and increased participation in meal programs.
3. Work with student leadership to design healthy school food program options in a way that supports their cultural and health needs, while also educating about nutrition and healthy living skills.
4. Develop and implement a robust and well-informed outreach and feedback plan that engages students and families in school food equity practices and shares positive improvements implemented.
5. Revamp school lunch line infrastructure and central kitchen cooking equipment to create more appetizing serving lines and support the implementation of increased from scratch cooking as well as proper storage of fresh items..
6. Collaborate with partners to develop innovative strategies to meet the food needs of students outside of the CCS breakfast and lunch programs including providing a la carte and snack options, larger portions, after school meals, meals during school breaks and other food security needs to decrease in-school hunger, and reduce stress for families with limited resources.

## Food Equity Profile and Recommendations

# Charlottesville City Schools (cont.)

## Food Equity Initiative Policy Platform Plank Alignment



**#1 Justice & Fairness**



**#4 Inspire Youth Choice**

## FY23 FEI Supporting Partners

- CCS Nutrition
- Cultivate City Schoolyard Garden Farm to School Coordinator
- Culinary Concepts
- Charlottesville Community Cares

## Charlottesville City Schools Food Equity Initiative FY23 Accomplishments

1. CCS Nutrition has enrolled in the Community Eligibility Program across all nine schools allowing 100% of CCS students to receive free meals at school.
2. Cultivate Food Justice interns collaborated with nutrition staff to provide recipe options and feedback on healthy school meals.
3. Cultivate Farm to School Coordinator worked with 3 nutrition committees met six times with 72 students at Buford, and Charlottesville High School as well as a committee of students that practice a halal diet.
4. CCS Nutrition conducted a school wide survey of students to glean feedback on meal preference, meal quality, and other factors affecting meal enjoyment. (44 survey respondents)
5. Expanded Farm to School week meals to twice annually (October & April) which included a full week of 17 local fresh, from scratch, meal options.
6. CCS kitchen staff, including part-time, can participate in collective bargaining and are being offered a minimum wage of \$15/hour.
7. Cultivate Food Justice Interns (11 interns) spent 132 hours engaging around Healthy School Meals Unit.
8. Student choice meals were highlighted multiple times 55 days out of the year including student choice, halal and weekly local produce.
9. As part of the CACF Shaping Futures grant Cultivate invested \$30,000 in kitchen equipment for CCS to date to make fresh from scratch meals possible.
10. Cultivate and CCS Nutrition worked to host two years of training for nutrition and kitchen staff from Culinary Concepts Antwon Brinson including all 32 nutrition staff for 64 hours.
11. Eight Harvest of the Month crops were profiled and shared with over 3,000 students in Charlottesville elementary schools, Lugo McGinnis and others.

# Neighborhood Development Services

## Food Equity Vision Statement

The City's zoning codes and comprehensive plan are points of leverage in the development process. In order to achieve equitable food access during development, we must strive to include food equity practices explicitly in the city's comprehensive plan and zoning codes where it hasn't been considered before. By actively evaluating and planning for equitable food resources, the city will begin to address food security issues especially affecting low-resourced communities and people of color in Charlottesville.

## Food Equity Goals

- ❑ Map existing food resources to understand gaps in service and increase food access points in needed areas.
- ❑ Utilize NDS tools, such as zoning, to bring more local resources to the people. For example, make it possible for a local, affordable, grocer with fresh produce to open within the city circle.
- ❑ Continue to leverage opportunities to cultivate deeper support for minority business owners within the Charlottesville food economy by building more partnerships with organizations.
- ❑ Continue to incorporate food equity goals into local planning and policy work, including the city's upcoming strategic plan.

## Food Equity Initiative Recommendations for Action

1. Collaborate with Parks & Rec to include in the City Comprehensive plan strategic investment in preserving green space for food security purposes.
2. Continue to utilize a community-based approach that leverages public and private partnerships as well as resident leadership in conducting a bike and pedestrian pathway assessment and prioritization, especially transformation and walkability to key food resources.
3. Update zoning ordinances to encourage units to establish home gardens and edible landscapes on residential properties, as well as local food resources, by streamlining processes.
4. Amend the city's comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance to include definitions of and actions to advance food equity and healthy affordable housing.

Food Equity Profile and Recommendations

# Neighborhood Development Services

Food Equity Initiative Policy Platform Plank Alignment



**#1 Justice & Fairness**



**#2 The Power to Grow**



**#3 The Right to Good Food**

## **FY23 FEI Supporting Partners**

- Cville Plans Together
- Public Works
- Cultivate Urban Agriculture Collective
- International Rescue Committee New Roots
- Cultivate Food Justice Network

Neighborhood Development Services Food Equity Initiative FY23 Accomplishments

1. Incorporated food equity into the City Comprehensive Plan including the Chapter 7: Climate, Environment, and Food Equity.
2. Current zoning drafts include increased density and expanded small scale commercial opportunities that could be utilized for food access.
3. Engaged with local developers around community informed planning for the Cherry Street Neighborhood Plan and created zoning to make it easier for a grocery store inclusion.
4. Increased individual entrances in Kindlewood development to increase opportunity spaces for gardening and land access.

# Office of Economic Development

## Food Equity Vision Statement

The Office of Economic Development recognizes that investing in food equity and community ownership within the small and minority business space, presents an opportunity to cultivate wealth within low-income communities as it relates to food. This investment began with the Minority Business Program and the Business Equity Fund and continues with targeted efforts to increase food related business opportunities and food access. Food equity represents progress towards achieving economic equity alongside community health.

## Food Equity Goals

- ❑ Work with community partners to increase the knowledge of Charlottesville's food economy with a focus on financial challenges, relationships, community wants/needs, and feasible possibilities.
- ❑ Continue to leverage opportunities to cultivate deeper support for minority business owners within the Charlottesville food economy by building more partnerships.

## Food Equity Initiative Recommendations for Action

1. Continue to use funding opportunities and resources, such as the Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development grants (through VDACS) and others to assist local business expansion and create opportunity for increase food access
2. Utilize existing programs, resources and incentives (Business Equity Fund, GO Start Up & CIC's Training Program, GO Cook, GO Hire Program) to support and enable local community food stores, particularly in low-income communities.
3. Continue to actively support development of business plans and funding for affordable brick and mortar or mobile market options that can serve public housing residents and other low wealth communities.



Food Equity Profile and Recommendations

# Office of Economic Development

Food Equity Initiative Policy Platform Plank Alignment



**#1 Justice & Fairness | #3 The Right To Good Food | #5 Community Wealth Building**

## FY23 FEI Supporting Partners

- Community Investment Collaborative
- New Hill Development Corporation
- Culinary Concepts
- Public Housing Association of Residents
- Trinity Episcopal Bread & Roses
- Cultivate Food Justice Network

## Office of Economic Development Food Equity Initiative FY23 Accomplishments

1. Assisted in conducting research on nationwide food equity funds and developed initial overview for discussion
2. Maintained support and referral process for Business Equity Fund
3. Provided insight on the Cherry Avenue Small Area Plan including grocery store potential
4. Met with Cultivate and nonprofit partners to discuss possibility of mobile market to increase food access
5. Supported BEACON initiative with New Hill Development Corporation with matching funds for a GO Virginia grant, an AFID Infrastructure grant and a donation of ARP funds
6. Supported Bread & Roses cooler for minority owned micro-enterprises
7. Continued support of the GO Cook Program with Culinary Concepts in support of employment opportunities in the culinary space
8. Furthered a network of community businesses, including 30% in the culinary space, by conceiving and supporting the Piedmont Pitch event which granted \$15k to winning participants
9. Developed new OED Economic Development Strategic Plan with a focus on equitable entrepreneurship and pathways of opportunity which both overlap FEI areas
10. Supported Launch Pad, a partnership with the City Market, to encourage new entrepreneurs to vend at the market

# Department of Social Services

## Food Equity Vision Statement

In order to cultivate more equitable food access, it is important to evaluate the utilization and effectiveness of SNAP benefits through disparities in outcomes and user feedback. Community voice in combination with outcomes data is a powerful tool in evaluating and designing future outreach and benefits programs for low-income communities, as well as advocating for these changes to state and local legislators. DSS can use qualitative and quantitative evaluation data to take more intentional steps to increase and improve food access.

## Food Equity Goals

- ❑ Pursue food equity by reducing internal and external barriers to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits through effective outreach and communication between DSS, the benefit-eligible community, and other food assistance programs.
- ❑ Cultivate deeper inclusivity and cultural humility as an organization dedicated to serving a diverse community.
- ❑ Increase community feedback through developing equitable mechanisms to better understand the role DSS plays in the Charlottesville community through its programs and how they are affecting residents.

## Food Equity Initiative Recommendations for Action

1. Analyze and report SNAP application and eligibility determination outcomes by race.
2. Work with community partners to develop and implement strategies to effectively market DSS benefit programs including SNAP (and encouraging its use in certain places), camp scholarships, and other activities through direct, consistent interactions with low-wealth communities in order to promote program participation and self-sufficiency.
3. Work with local and state partners to advocate for available federal policy waivers to expand SNAP program eligibility and other similar benefits. One example is working with local restaurants to enroll as EBT sites.

Food Equity Profile and Recommendations

# Department of Social Services

## Food Equity Vision Statement



**#1 Justice & Fairness** |



**#3 The Right to Good Food**

## FY23 FEI Supporting Partners

- Virginia Employment Commission
- Community Sponsored Re-entry Initiative
- UVA Health System
- Charlottesville City Schools
- Child Inform Community Network
- Thomas Jefferson Area Coalition on Homelessness

## Department of Social Services Food Equity Initiative FY23 Accomplishments

1. DSS encouraged electronic applications by including a message on digital signatures and having regular physical presence in public housing communities and at the Haven day shelter for persons living in homelessness.
2. DSS continued to push out messages about expanded assistance during COVID and program changes enacted since the end of the public health emergency.
3. DSS staff completed a minimum of 12 hours of cultural humility training per year.
4. Active participation in the Trauma Informed Community Network.
5. Blue Ridge Area Food Bank is our regional lead for the Hunger Action Coalition (HAC). DSS has been collaborating with HAC partners to: increase benefit re-enrollment, create a digital map of food access sites, host SNAP trainings
6. Distribution of 10,000 reusable bags in collaboration with food access partners.

# Charlottesville-Albemarle Transit

## Food Equity Vision Statement

In Charlottesville, 27% of those utilizing public transportation are at or below the federal poverty line and 28% are of a minority population (CAT). While Charlottesville Area Transit is increasing its capacity to address the population and employment density growth, routes are not yet designed based on consumer demand (CAT). Charlottesville residents have expressed interest in alternate transportation routes (City). As a provider of mass transit, it is CAT's goal to serve the needs of the entire city. Understanding that we serve as a lifeline to low-income neighborhoods and public housing, CAT continually seeks to improve service in these areas

## Food Equity Goals

- ❑ Increasing community input in transportation plans to eliminate barriers for transit especially among low-income populations.
- ❑ Increasing general utilization and participation in Charlottesville transportation services including among youth, elderly, and low-income populations.
- ❑ Build and develop routes with intentionality, including giving consideration to food access stops and associated challenges.

## Food Equity Initiative Recommendations for Action

1. Adapt/change routes to include specific spaces including grocery stores, food access markets, parks, and specific sites (ex. GoodWill), etc. that have already been identified as points of interest.
2. Raise funds to ensure free rides extend beyond the current 2026 plan. If unsuccessful work to establish a new travel bus pass at free or subsidized rates for low-income residents that qualify for SNAP/ WIC.
3. Revamp the CAT and NDS feedback process to include and increase community input through diverse frameworks including, a formal application or submission of comments online as well as informal avenues such as community-based events or Town halls.
4. Conduct ride analysis of food access routes including trip duration, distance to walk to stop (especially from BRAFB and other pantries), comfort, and safety.

Food Equity Profile and Recommendations

# Charlottesville-Albemarle Transit

Food Equity Initiative Policy Platform Plank Alignment



**#1 Justice & Fairness**



**#3 The Right To Good Food**

## **FY23 FEI Supporting Partners**

- Neighborhood Development Services
- Parks & Recreation
- Human Services
- Loaves and Fishes
- Cultivate Charlottesville Food Justice Network

Charlottesville-Albemarle Transit Food Equity Initiative FY23 Accomplishments

1. Free public transit for three years due to federal relief funds.
2. CAT included a community feedback survey as part of their current strategic planning process.
3. Routes have been updated based on analysis for community needs such as grocery stores. A plan is in place and will start to roll out this fall.
4. Secured funding to do Quick Builds - Neighborhood Transportation Solutions. There is \$100K/year to put towards quick projects to improve safety around intersections. Right now a lot of that is being aimed at schools.
5. Developed a position to evaluate bike and pedestrian programs by how well they are reaching people and collect community feedback.

# Human Services & Community Attention

## Food Equity Vision Statement

The Charlottesville Human Services Department provides services and programs that improve and support the resilience, health and well-being of youth, families and community organizations. Food Equity is a critical component of health and well-being and as such we envision a community where all Charlottesville residents have access to quality, affordable, accessible, and culturally appropriate food and the time and resources to be nourished. We support advancing food equity in Charlottesville.

## Food Equity Goals

- ❑ Act as a liaison to Cultivate Food Justice Network in the Food Equity Initiative partnership with City Council
- ❑ Advise the City Manager on food equity policy initiatives to meet City Goals especially those outlined in the City Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 7, Goal 4
- ❑ Work to implement social policy initiatives to the City Council that promote food equity across.
- ❑ Work to implement food equity practices within Human Services programs such as foster care, community-based services for youth and families, and the community connector umbrella.
- ❑ Human Services will continue to explore Food Justice Network partnerships to increase neighborhood food access points to fresh and shelf stable foods.

## Food Equity Initiative Recommendations for Action

1. Act as an advocate to incorporate food equity goals in the FY24 City Strategic Plan, specifically considering economic prosperity (self-sufficiency and infrastructure) and partnerships.
2. Ensure Charlottesville City Manager is aware of the Food Equity Initiative partnership and amplify FEI goal alignment with City goals where appropriate.
3. Incorporate emergency food access information to Charlottesville residents involved with DHS services including the Urban Agriculture Collective Community Markets.
4. Continue to advocate for public transportation consideration of food access points stops including Blue Ridge Area Food Bank as well as others.
5. Utilize Vibrant Communities Fund to support food equity initiatives across the city.



Food Equity Profile and Recommendations

# Human Services (cont)

## Food Equity Initiative Policy Platform Plank Alignment



**#1 Justice & Fairness**



**#2 The Power to Grow**



**#3 The Right to Good Food**

### FY23 FEI Supporting Partners

- Local Food Hub
- Blue Ridge Area Food Bank
- Charlottesville Redevelopment Housing Authority
- Cultivate Charlottesville Food Justice Network
- Cultivate Charlottesville Urban Agriculture Collective
- Emergency Food Bank
- City of Promise
- Loaves and Fishes

## Human Services Food Equity Initiative FY23 Accomplishments

1. Renewed funding for Cultivate Food Justice Network to implement the Food Equity Initiative for a second, three-year term from FY23-FY25.
2. Provided connections to new City Staff, especially in departments with working Food Equity Action Plans.
3. Engaged CAYIP interns in food system related placements to build job skills and training for Charlottesville youth.
4. Westhaven Care Center has been collaborating with the Local Food Hub, BRAFB, and local churches to create a food pantry providing increased neighborhood food access for residents facing food insecurity.
5. Community Resource Hotline provides resource connection to callers who are experiencing food insecurity through information provided on The Street Sheet.
6. Assist Emergency Food Bank with monthly deliveries to the 6th Street Community Neighborhood.
7. Teens Give service-learning program works with food system related service sites, such as Loaves & Fishes and Urban Agriculture Collective farm sites. Also providing Teens Give participants with healthy food options during snacks and lunch.

# Public Works Climate Protection

## Food Equity Vision Statement

As Charlottesville redevelops and looks to the future, it is necessary for the City to understand how low-income and vulnerable communities connect with food. Preserving and strengthening these connections through protection of urban agriculture is critical to building climate resilience in our community.

## Food Equity Goals

- ❑ Increase the presence and participation of community voices in climate protection conversations, especially those from marginalized and/or vulnerable communities.
- ❑ Make climate protection services as well as resources to enhance community resilience equitably accessible to all residents regardless of race or income.
- ❑ Collaborate with partners to cultivate a deeper understanding of the importance of food equity to community resilience.
- ❑ Cultivate a shared understanding of our community climate challenges and work across a diverse coalition of voices to co-design strategies for climate adaptation and resilience.

## Food Equity Initiative Recommendations for Action

1. Identify food equity in the Climate Action Plan as a prioritized vulnerability to the effects of climate change, so that the City can prioritize Collaborate with partners to ensure progress on key actions related to food equity in the City's Climate Action Plan.
2. Prioritize food equity and access in climate adaptation and resilience planning; develop specific strategies to enhance and sustain our local food systems.
3. Participate in the Just Food, Just Climate project which aims to increase sustainable urban agriculture space in the City of Charlottesville's public land in a way that enhances climate protections and prioritizes grassroots community leadership, specifically for BIPOC growers.
4. Research and work to advance residential, business, and institutional composting opportunities, with a priority on Charlottesville City Schools.
5. Utilize a community-based approach that leverages public and private organizations as well as resident leadership in understanding how community needs connect with the City's environmental priorities.
6. Cultivate deeper partnerships with Charlottesville Food Justice Network Partners in order to develop food equity practices and frameworks for advancing climate protection for local food system resilience.

# Public Works Climate Protection

## Food Equity Vision Statement



**#1 Justice & Fairness**



**#6 Restore Earth & Climate Justice**

## FY23 FEI Supporting Partners

- Community Climate Collaborative
- UVA Equity Center
- Charlottesville Food Justice Network
- Community Advocates & Food Justice Interns

## Public Works Climate Protection Food Equity Initiative FY23 Accomplishments

1. The City adopted its first community Climate Action Plan as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan in January of 2023. The City added two positions to the PWD Environmental Sustainability Division Climate Program to add capacity for implementation of the Climate Action Plan. Council also allocated \$1M in funding for climate-specific initiatives.
2. PW Climate Program hosted community listening sessions as well as 1-1 collaboration sessions with groups including Cultivate Charlottesville for input on the Climate Action Plan.
3. Cultivate conducted outreach across the network glean feedback on Climate Action Plan recommendations and eventually to sign on to C3's comprehensive letter of recommendations compiled by the Community Climate Collaborative
4. Approval of 2021 Comprehensive Plan Chapter #7 on *Climate, Environment and Food Equity* which Cultivate reviewed and offered recommendations and measures
5. The 2023 Funders Network Partners for Places Planning grant award – Partnership with Cultivate Charlottesville, City of Charlottesville, *Just Food, Just Climate is a collaborative partnership to cultivate relationships, skills, and action at the intersection of food and climate justice in Charlottesville.*
6. The City is embarking on a collaborative climate adaptation and resilience planning effort in partnership with Albemarle County. Community engagement for the *Resilient Together* project will kick-off in Fall 2023.

# Office of Justice, Equity, & Inclusion

## Food Equity Vision Statement

Food is a basic need and the Office of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion believes in the importance of cultivating food equity in our city both internally among staff and in the community. We aim to collaborate with partners and commit to a human centered division of needs.

People who contact the Office of Human Rights for assistance with a question about discrimination are often experiencing other difficulties like homelessness, substance use, and mental health challenges, which may also have an additional impact on their ability to access fresh, nutritious, and familiar foods. The Office of Human Rights is committed to providing person-centered, holistic support for our visitors, which includes connecting people to food resources.

## Food Equity Goals

- ❑ Integrate the emergency shelter system of care with consistent access to food that is nutritious, accommodates people with differing dietary needs, and is locally sourced
- ❑ Consistently offer quality snacks (high protein, nutritious) to guests as evidence of commitment to servicing the whole client and all of their human needs.
- ❑ Remain aware of and engaged with community food resources in order to make appropriate referrals for people seeking assistance.

## Food Equity Initiative Recommendations for Action



**#1 Justice & Fairness |**



**#3 The Right to Good Food**

Food, shelter, and a sense of connection are basic human needs. A change or deficiency in one affects the stability of the others. The Office of Human Rights is tasked with protecting people in Charlottesville from unlawful discrimination. While people's ability to access food is not a protected human right, when people experience discrimination in activities like employment, housing, or access to public spaces, their ability to access and enjoy food is compromised.

# Charlottesville Redevelopment Housing Authority

## Food Equity Vision Statement

The Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority (CRHA) is a resident-centered organization committed to excellence in providing affordable quality housing, revitalizing communities, supporting resident involvement and promoting upward mobility and self-sufficiency through partnerships in the public and private sectors. We recognize the critical connection between food equity and housing. We aim to create partnerships that amplify food equity for our residents. We align with Cultivate in the belief that working together to grow and share food and power, and advocate for just food systems -cultivates a healthy for all.

### FY23 FEI Supporting Partners

- Cultivate Urban Agriculture Collective
- Cultivate Food Justice Network



**#1 Justice & Fairness**



**#2 The Power to Grow**



**#3 The Right to Good Food**

## Food Equity Goals

- Partner with Cultivate Urban Agriculture Collective to create urban agriculture spaces at public housing sites so that residents can be engaged in collaboratively growing food.
- Partner with Cultivate UAC to provide spaces and resources to host weekly no-cost community markets throughout the growing season where residents can share in the harvest.
- Engage resident youth in gardening and growing that builds a connection and deeper understanding of where our food comes from.
- Create systemic solutions to current food access barriers including grocery stores in and for CRHA residents.
- Support residents with access to food programs including WIC, SNAP, etc.

Cultivate Charlottesville | Food Justice Network  
 FY23 Evaluation Feedback  
 October 2022

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### Evaluation Purpose

As part of Cultivate Charlottesville’s effort to build a culture of inquiry and improvement, we implemented two evaluation efforts for the Food Justice Network’s FY23 year. We hosted two focus groups for eleven Food Justice Network (FJN) planning team partners who shared their perspectives on how being part of the team has impacted their work. We also sent a survey to the full FJN Team with 17 respondents.

### Results

#### A. FJN Large Group Survey

Overall, most respondents felt that Cultivate was an effective facilitator and leader of the Food Justice Network, that Cultivate upholds FJN values, and that Cultivate keeps FJN focused on its goals. Additionally, respondents felt that participating in FJN positively impacted their organization’s focus and efforts on food justice while providing significant networking opportunities surrounding food justice.

The majority of respondents felt that FJN has been effective in increasing food justice in our community by transforming systemic barriers to food equity, utilizing an equity approach to confront racism, and building stronger relationships with communities facing food injustice. Respondents agree that FJN has increased understanding of the intersection of food equity and other factors such as housing, transportation, economic development, and climate.

Each question contained a multiple-choice selection and a space for narrative responses. Responses were cleaned and grouped into themes. Respondent data:

#### Overall Experience of FJN

- 88% agree (77% strongly) that Cultivate is an effective FJN facilitator and leader
- 94% agree (77% strongly) that Cultivate upholds the FJN values
- 88.2% agree (42% moderately) that Cultivate keeps FJN focused on its goals

1. Cultivate Charlottesville is an effective facilitator and leader of Food Justice Network.  
 17 responses

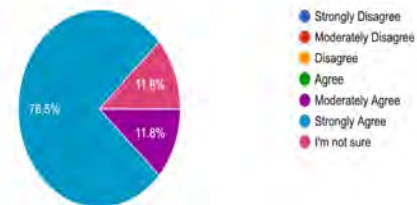


Figure 1

### Impact of FJN on Organization

- 94% agree (47% strongly) they have learned new things about food justice at FJN
- 89% agree (71% strongly) they have had more opportunities to engage in food justice at FJN
- 93% agree (53% strongly) they experience a strong sense of diverse community at FJN
- 76% agree (53% strongly) FJN has helped their organization to make a greater impact
- 76% agree (53% strongly) that they have engaged or shared resources with other partners at FJN

### Completion of FJN Goals

- 82% agree (41% strongly) FJN has successfully utilized an equity approach to confront racism
- 82% agree (41% strongly) FJN has helped to transform systemic barriers to food equity
- 65% agree (30% strongly) FJN has cultivated stronger relationships with community facing food injustice (35% unsure)
- 71% agree (53% strongly) FJN has strengthened inter-sector collaboration (30% unsure)
- 72% agree (59% strongly) FJN has increased understanding of the intersection of food equity and other factors such as housing, transportation, economic development, and climate
- 71% agree (29% strongly) FJN has help build power, resources or skills for food security

2. As a participant in Food Justice Network I have had more opportunities to engage in conversations about food justice.  
17 responses

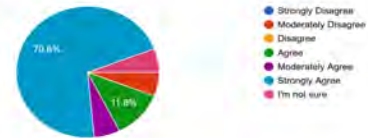


Figure 2

7. Because of Food Justice Network there has been an increased commitment to food justice practices in the broad Charlottesville community.  
17 responses

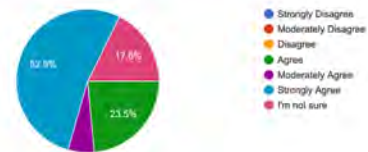


Figure 3

1. In this past two years, I believe Food Justice Network has been successful in using an equity approach to confront inequity in our local food system.  
17 responses

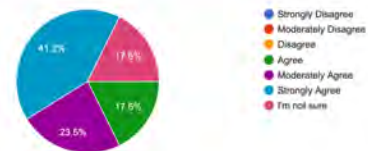


Figure 4

## B. Planning Team Focus Group

The focus group was made up of eleven FJN partners who belong to our FJN Planning Team. The participants were asked questions via two Zoom breakout rooms and invited to provide their feedback.

Overall, respondents felt that participating in the Food Justice Network provided them with significant networking opportunities that allowed participants to participate in food justice work within our community. Furthermore, respondents indicated that FJN has positively impacted their own organizations' food justice efforts.

We also received growth feedback from the focus group participants. Respondents communicated an interest in more direction from Cultivate and clearer opportunities to contribute to FJN work. Additionally, respondents echoed the Large Group opinions both that staffing changes have impacted the direction of FJN and that virtual meetings and COVID have hindered work "on the ground."

Responses were cleaned and grouped into themes. Respondent data:

### Overall experience of Food Justice Network:

- FJN provides significant networking opportunities
- FJN allows members to participate in food justice
- Cultivate could do more to highlight individual members / FJN is too Cultivate heavy

### Impact of Food Justice Network on Partner Organization:

- Participating in FJN had positively impacted organizations' food justice efforts
- Partner organizations would like more support / direction and clearer opportunities to contribute
- Cultivate should set aside times to meet with members from the larger organizations to get everyone engaged at the same time

### Completion of Food Justice Network Goals:

- Staffing (both within Cultivate and at the individual orgs) have impacted FJN direction
- Virtual meetings/COVID have hindered networking opportunities & work "on the ground"



**Conclusion.** The feedback we received from the Food Justice Network partners demonstrated that respondents value Cultivate Food Justice staff leadership of the network, feel their own organizational food justice efforts are improved, and appreciate personal and community benefits as a result of FJN engagement.

Overall, Food Justice Network partners believe that participating in the FJN has taken strategic and tangible actions to affect food justice in our community. Partners feel that participation in FJN has allowed their organizations to better understand the food equity challenges experienced by our community and provides opportunities to collaborate intersectionality.

The key challenges articulated for FJN are the need for a strong and consistent staff and clearly defined roles and expectations for partners. Internally, Cultivate will continue to work with FJN partners on this. We believe that, with our recent onboarding of new employees, having an expanded and dedicated FJN team at Cultivate will help to alleviate some of these challenges.

Additionally, some partners have expressed interest in bringing in more representatives from communities affected by food justice. We believe that our Power to Grow campaign and relationship-building with community members of PHAR and R3 will provide additional opportunities for FJN to connect with impacted communities in more meaningful and direct ways.

Finally, FJN partners feel that virtual networking has hindered both networking and FJN work “on the ground.” Partners have expressed a desire to meet in-person. We are exploring in-person meetings with virtual options for those who are uncomfortable with or unable to meet in-person.

## Appendix A: Methodology

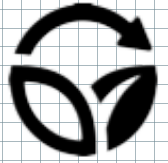
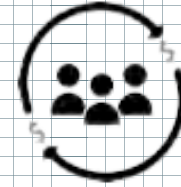
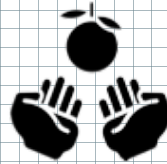
In August 2022, Cultivate sought feedback from both groups within the Food Justice Network:

- FJN Large Group Survey
  - Survey was separated into two parts
    - At the individual organization level
    - About the FJN as a whole
  - Survey responses
    - Pre-defined multiple choice
    - Longer narrative responses
- FJN Planning Team Focus Group
  - Cultivate asked group 7 open-ended questions
    - 5 questions gauging effectiveness of FJN
    - 1 free-response question
    - 1 question about building relationships between partner organizations

We compiled the data from both groups and pulled themes from the narrative responses of each group. Responses were cleaned and grouped into themes.

- FJN Large Group survey
  - After cleaning the narrative responses (total N=149), we were able to remove 45 responses. We then qualified the remaining feedback (N=104) into themes. The most frequent groups of responses are below:
    - FJN implements a diversity of functions / facilitates diverse partnerships (N=15): 14%
    - FJN takes strategic and tangible action to highlight inequities (N=9): 9%
    - Cultivate is an effective facilitator (N=8): 8%
    - Cultivate needs to have clearer goals (N=7): 7%
    - (Participation in) FJN amplifies issues in the community (N=5): 5%
    - Cultivate has strong leadership / It's important to have Cultivate as a backbone org (N=5): 5%
- FJN Planning Team Focus Group
  - The focus group provide more growth points for the future direction of the FJN.
  - After cleaning the narrative responses (total N=82), we removed six responses. Among the remaining feedback (N=76), we noticed similar recurring themes as the Large Group Survey:

- Staffing changes have impacted FJN's direction (N=14): 18%
- FJN needs to have clearer goals / direction (N=11): 14%
- FJN provides significant networking opportunities (N=10): 13%
- FJN allows members to participate in food justice (N=9): 12%
- FJN should bring more people to the table in food justice discussions / engage more with communities (N=6): 8%
- Finding time to participate in FJN meetings is challenging (N=6): 8%
- o Additionally, all respondents (N=7) to the final, relationship-building question indicated that they would be interested in participating in a mentoring approach to partnerships and/or onboarding new members.



Where are we now?

## FEBRUARY 22 FOCUS



### FOOD EQUITY AND JUSTICE

ADVANCING SYSTEMIC CHANGE & COLLECTIVE MOVEMENTS



In order to build equity in the Charlottesville food system so that all community members have access to fresh, affordable, culturally relevant food—food equity and justice must be considered as a core strategy for community health and safety. Partnerships with grassroots organizations, youth leaders, and resident advocates are critical.

SPRING 2021



1. City of Charlottesville added a Climate, Environment, & Food Equity Chapter to the Comprehensive Plan with 65 FJN recommendations.

2. City Council renewed 3 year Food Equity Initiative partnership with Food Justice Network.

3. Multiple FJN partners are integrating racial equity capacity building into their strategic development.

4. BRAFB is shifting to see food insecurity work in the justice space and forming multi-sector collaborations like the Hunger Action Coalition.

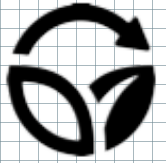
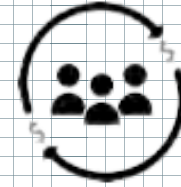
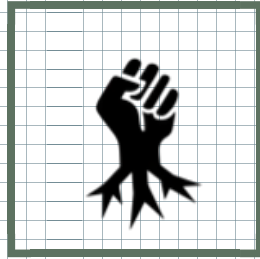
5. City of Charlottesville Office of Community Solutions new department focused on city's affordable housing initiatives.

6. Cultivate launched a new community engagement cohort for young adult apprentices. Continues the stairway to leadership.

7. IRC New Roots is working with Parks & Rec to secure viable land Azalea West.

8. Albemarle County office of Equity and Inclusion is working to open pathways for justice work.





## APRIL 26 FOCUS:

## Where are we now?

1. Urban Agriculture Collective program of Cultivate working to replace urban agriculture space on public housing sites that have been lost over the past three years.

2. IRC New Roots program offers 100 community garden plots for rent in Charlottesville and supports refugees facing food insecurity through gardening, nutrition, and education.

3. Market Central and Charlottesville City Market accept Food Stamps and VA Fresh Match coupons to purchase seeds and plants for growing and produce from local growers.

4. The Haven hosts a kitchen garden at its day shelter in downtown Charlottesville.

5. Piedmont Housing Alliance is working with residents and builders to ensure an urban agriculture site is included in the new resident-designed Kindlewood neighborhood.

6. Loaves & Fishes added demonstration container gardens at the pantry, gave out food plants for neighbors to grow, and source as much fresh produce as possible.

7. Livable Cville, Charlottesville Redevelopment Housing Authority, and Piedmont Housing Alliance of Residents are all working to advance affordable housing and value the intersection with urban agriculture and food access equity.



## THE POWER TO GROW

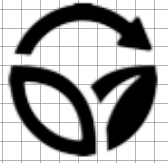
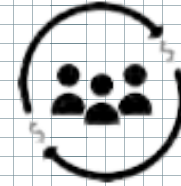
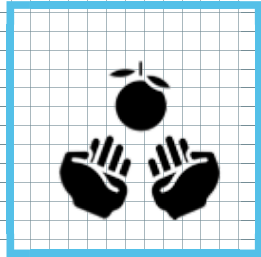
ADVANCING AFFORDABLE HOUSING & URBAN AGRICULTURE



In pursuit of restoring the power to grow for every community, an equitable investment in urban agriculture is needed to counter impacts of necessary housing redevelopment on decreased food access and environmental health. When families have the power to grow, land is liberation.

SPRING 2021





## Where are we now?

## JUNE 28 FOCUS:



### THE RIGHT TO GOOD FOOD

ADVANCING TRANSPORTATION & NEIGHBORHOOD FOOD PATHWAYS



In pursuit of the right to good food for every community member, measures should be taken to expand eligibility to programs, cultivate ownership of affordable markets, and develop stronger transportation avenues to food resources.

SPRING 2021

 CULTIVATE  
CHARLOTTESVILLE

1. Charlottesville Climate Protection Program (City) works to identify tangible co-benefits between climate and food justice. For example, prioritizing food access pathways when planning expanded transit routes and foot/bike infrastructure.

2. IRC New Roots program supports refugees facing food insecurity through gardening, nutrition, and education. Other farms (Resolution & Bell Air) are donating fresh produce to various markets and pantries.

3. Market Central and Bread & Roses received a Virginia Food Innovation Access Grant to provide support for growers and food entrepreneurs selling at farmers markets and are emphasizing BIPOC producers.

4. The Haven hosts a kitchen garden at its day shelter in downtown Charlottesville.

5. Piedmont Housing Alliance is working with residents and builders to ensure an urban agriculture site is included in the new resident-designed Kindlewood neighborhood.

6. Local food banks and partners (BRAFB, LFH, L&F) are working to reduce the burden of transportation by having pop up markets & also provide information to visitors about SNAP enrollment.

7. City Schoolyard Garden & Charlottesville City Schools are working on a five year healthy school meals plan to increase fresh, from scratch, foods in all the schools and will have 100% free student meals in the 2023-2024 school year.