



2026 Policy Platform

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Introduction

The Jefferson County Food Policy Council is a diverse and collaborative group of community members, youth, activists, farmers, food businesses, nonprofit organizations, local governments, and policymakers. Our mission is Influence policy to increase equitable access to healthy, local and affordable food and support a sustainable community food system in Jefferson County, Colorado.

The Jeffco Food Policy Platform guides our advocacy and organizing. These issues were gathered by Council members during one-on-one conversations, group discussions, and Council meetings. The Policy Platform is a living document that is updated every two years to reflect the changing challenges and opportunities in our local food system. The issues presented here demonstrate the food system challenges and opportunities identified by our communities and organizations.

The Council will act to support policies and actions that promote the issues in the Jeffco Food Policy Platform. We also lead advocacy campaigns centered on the top priority issues, as decided by our members and when aligned funding opportunities arise.

To learn more about the Jefferson County Food Policy Council and get involved in our work, visit jeffcofoodpolicy.org.

ARTICLE I. ROOT CAUSES OF HUNGER

- A. We support organizing and advocacy for solutions to the root causes of hunger. This includes affordable housing, affordable childcare, fair wages, equitable transportation, access to equitable education, access to healthcare (including mental healthcare), and dismantling systemic racism and oppression.
- B. We support housing as a right and policies that preserve accessible housing and support the prevention of gentrification and displacement.
- C. We support language justice.
- D. We support policies that help and protect people and communities with different immigration statuses.
- E. We support equitable access to technology and the internet, especially for historically underserved and marginalized communities.¹
- F. We support the rights of historically underserved and marginalized communities.
- G. We support food sovereignty, especially for Black and Indigenous communities.
- H. We support the integration of food as medicine into healthcare policies and programs.

ARTICLE II. FOOD ACCESS

- A. We support the fair and equitable pricing of food, especially during periods of rapid inflation; in historically underserved and marginalized communities; and in areas of food apartheid².
- B. We support the reduction of stigma in the emergency food system through community leadership³, volunteer engagement, education, mutual aid, cultural appropriateness, empathy, and treating people with dignity.
- C. We support increased access to and awareness of food resources, especially in historically underserved and marginalized communities and areas of food apartheid.
- D. We support maintaining and increasing funding of all food assistance programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Double Up Food Bucks (DUFBS), National School Lunch Program, and Medicaid.
- E. We support the elimination of barriers to access for all food assistance programs, including reducing the benefit cliff⁴, eliminating SNAP restrictions (such as restricting eligible foods or eligible participants, including for immigrants and refugees), creating local food assistance programs, expanding certified online SNAP and WIC retailers, and supporting small retailers, especially brick and mortar stores, in SNAP, WIC, and DUFBS certification and implementation.
- F. We support policies that promote equity and justice in all food assistance programs.
- G. We support the elimination of food restrictions in all food assistance programs.
- H. We support dietary awareness⁵ and support within schools.

¹ Historically underserved and marginalized communities include people living in rural areas; refugees and immigrants (regardless of immigration status); Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC); women, people with disabilities, veterans, queer individuals, and older adults.

² Food apartheid is a system of segregation that divides those with access to an abundance of nutritious food and those who have been denied that access due to systemic injustice.

³ Community leadership refers to the ability of individuals directly impacted to create positive change within the food system.

⁴ The benefit cliff is a sudden decrease in public benefits that occurs when a person's income increases.

⁵ Dietary awareness is the conscious, proactive, and informed management of food ingredients to ensure safety and inclusivity for individuals with medical, ethical, or lifestyle dietary restrictions.

- I. We support efforts to educate, mitigate fears, and clarify rights to historically underserved and marginalized communities, especially among immigrants and refugees regardless of status, in order to promote their fair and equitable access to food assistance programs.
- J. We support sustainable funding of the work of communities and community-led organizations, including new or small to mid-size organizations, to provide access to nutritious food and nutrition education such as SNAP-Ed, especially for historically underserved and marginalized communities.
- K. We support funding, incentivizing, and building transportation infrastructure and retail food stores to provide consumers access to markets with quality, nutritious, local and affordable foods, especially in historically underserved and marginalized communities and areas of food apartheid.
- L. We support free, healthy, culturally appropriate, and locally-sourced food made with fresh, quality ingredients in school meals.
- M. We oppose the promotion and sale of ultra-processed food⁶, especially in institutions, including hospitals, skilled-care facilities, food banks, prisons, and schools.
- N. We oppose the targeted marketing of ultra-processed foods to historically underserved and marginalized communities and SNAP recipients.
- O. We support municipal policies that promote healthy beverage consumption and that are designed with equity as a priority.
- P. We support nutrition programs that focus on a healthy relationship between food and individuals, including the topics of cultural foods and eating disorders.

ARTICLE III. LOCAL FOOD CHAIN

- A. We support strengthening funding and support for the local food supply chain, including local procurement and processing; small and beginning farmers; farmers from historically underserved and marginalized communities; and small food retailers especially in historically underserved and marginalized communities and areas of food apartheid.
- B. We support food procurement from local farmers and processors, small farmers and processors, and farmers and processors from historically underserved and marginalized communities by institutions, including schools, hospitals, skilled care facilities⁷, and government.
- C. We support the development of shared food infrastructure, including local food hubs, cold and dry storage, waste disposal, shared resource databases, and cooking facilities to strengthen and diversify food businesses and the local food supply chain.
- D. We support sustainable funding for the local food system to be prioritized by all funding sources, including government and foundations.
- E. We oppose changes to food system funding and programs that are not informed by the community and/or happen rapidly causing systemic and household-level emergencies.
- F. We support the explicit inclusion of food systems and clear methods of funding into city and county level plans, including master plans, comprehensive plans, housing plans, public health plans, and climate plans.

⁶ Ultra-processed food and beverages are industrially manufactured products made from food or organic compounds not used in home cooking, such as sugars, additives, preservatives, colorings, or flavorings. These products are designed to be profitable, convenient, and sometimes addictive.

⁷ Skilled care facilities provide long-term, in-patient medical care. This includes rehabilitation centers, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities.

- G. We support the reduction of regulatory barriers for food organizations, including food pantries, mobile markets, farm stands, small retailers, and food processors.
- H. We oppose targeted code enforcement, especially for small organizations and community members.
- I. We support the development of technology and collaborative efforts to increase coordination, capacity, and resilience for local food supply chains.
- J. We support the elimination of barriers to food business ownership for people from historically underserved and marginalized communities.
- K. We support increasing pay, benefits, and protections for frontline food workers, including school cafeteria staff, food pantry staff, unpaid food pantry volunteers, retail employees, and farmworkers.
- L. We support increasing collaboration across sectors of the food chain for shared funding, efficiency, and infrastructure.

ARTICLE IV. AGRICULTURE

- A. We support preserving and increasing agricultural land access for local food production both in rural and urban communities, especially for farmers from historically underserved and marginalized communities.
- B. We support incentivizing land development to include food production.
- C. We support funding specific to farmers from historically underserved and marginalized communities.
- D. We oppose government subsidizing of industrial and monopolistic agricultural corporations.
- E. We support elevating farmer perspectives in food system conversations and strengthening interconnection between farmers and the community.
- F. We support cultivating heritage crops and seeds that are able to reproduce.
- G. We support home farmers and gardeners and the development of community gardens.
- H. We support farm collectives and collaborative organizations in agriculture.
- I. We support removing barriers to agricultural autonomy, such as the privatization of plant varieties, restrictive zoning, or proprietary certification of food.
- J. We support broadening the market for farmers and their products, especially direct-to-consumer sales.
- K. We support zoning changes that promote sustainable and/or innovative agriculture, such as hydroponics, aquaponics, and indoor growing methods.
- L. We support organic farming techniques and oppose the industrial use of non-organic herbicides, pesticides, and commercial fertilizers.
- M. We support water conservation practices within agriculture and farming.

ARTICLE V. NATURAL RESOURCES

- A. We support the right to safe, clean, healthy, and public soil for community use.
- B. We support prioritizing sustainable access to clean water, especially for Indigenous people, including through reduction in water usage and promotion of native plants.
- C. We support prioritizing affordable water access for farmers and gardeners before industrial water uses.
- D. We support eliminating food waste, especially within government, businesses, local institutions, and households.
- E. We support the promotion of environmental sustainability across the food system.

- F. We support the conservation of existing trees, especially fruit-producing trees, and oppose the removal of trees for new development.
- G. We support the protection of pollinators and their habitats.
- H. We support renewable energy and energy conservation across the food system.
- I. We support access to composting through municipal and county zoning regulations, including for on-farm and at-home composting.
- J. We support the creation, continuation, and incentivization of public and private compost collection that is sustainably funded.

ARTICLE VI. COMMUNITY

- A. We support community leadership and community-centered decision making, especially by people with lived or living experience with food insecurity and historically underserved and marginalized communities.
- B. We support a collaborative regional food system that eliminates the scarcity mindset under which the current industrial food system operates.
- C. We support funding of community-led food justice work.
- D. We support equity to be prioritized at all levels of government.
- E. We support equitable, consensual, and respectful data collection practices across the food system.
- F. We support community determination and use of closed schools buildings and land.
- G. We support the development of shared food pantry policies and best practices, led by food pantry clients and volunteers in collaboration with pantry staff.
- H. We support the representation and leadership of youth in the food system.
- I. We support collaboration among and between state entities and local entities, including food banks, food pantries, food advocacy organizations, government, and more.
- J. We support the development of individual leadership skills to support a thriving local food system.
- K. We support community building practices that promote connection between individuals with varying perspectives and backgrounds, especially older adults and individuals experiencing homelessness.
- L. We support a culture of community leadership, volunteerism, and mutual support in the local food system.
- M. We support the development of community-led mutual aid networks in order to give underserved and historically marginalized communities autonomy and leadership within the food system.
- N. We support local and municipal policy changes that support self-sufficiency, such as access to land and zoning regulations that support food production.
- O. We support implementation of municipal and county level tax structures to support any of these policy issues.
- P. We support community voices, leadership, and decision-making within government, institutions, and organizations.
- Q. We support county-level policies and programs that protect, promote and normalize breastfeeding and chestfeeding, including lactation support, workplace accommodations and access to culturally responsive education and resources.

ARTICLE VII. EDUCATION

- A. We support community-led advocacy programs and training.

- B. We support deep learning and engagement from policy and decision makers on food system issues, equity, systemic racism, and oppression.
- C. We support efforts to educate communities about the local food system and available resources.
- D. We support community and farmer-led agricultural and nutrition education, both within the community and school curriculums.
- E. We support education on the importance of community-led data collection and data sharing practices.
- F. We support the sharing of knowledge from older adults, immigrant communities, and indigenous stewards, especially on the topics of agriculture and natural resources.
- G. We support connecting farmers to education and training opportunities, including through scholarships, attention to the farming schedule, and other ways to reduce barriers.
- H. We support education on composting and community gardens, especially in schools.
- I. We support education for community members to grow their own food to promote food sovereignty, especially for people of color or family history.