

Public Policy Brief: Louisville's Food Access Landscape



2018 Hunger Innovation Fellowship

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The Hunger Innovation Fellowship is a collaboration of the Lift a Life Foundation and the Community Foundation of Louisville providing social, intellectual and financial capital for an individual or team to research opportunities for systems-level change within Louisville's food ecosystem. Identified opportunities will have the potential to significantly accelerate and elevate the collective efforts of local organizations and their partners. Solutions may even inspire change for communities facing similar challenges.

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Introduction

Public policy can be described as the government's legal and programmatic responses to recognized needs in the community. A key component to a city's health is the ability to feed its population. Food access is a social determinant of health and wellness. In Jefferson County, KY, over 122,000 citizens are struggling with food insecurity, or the burden of choosing between buying the food they need or paying other expenses.¹ This public policy brief provides an overview of the agencies and policies that influence Louisville's food resources. Our goal is to introduce Louisvillians to information that can inspire more participation in public policy and advocacy to improve Louisville's access to food.

Government Agencies Supporting Food Access in Louisville

Food access in Louisville, KY is heavily influenced by federal and state policy. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s [Food and Nutrition Service \(FNS\)](#) and the United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) lead federal efforts with programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). On the state level, the [Kentucky Department of Agriculture \(KDA\)](#) oversees the coordination of food access programs throughout Kentucky. Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles also convenes the [Kentucky Hunger Initiative and Task Force](#), a public/private partnership to identify solutions for statewide food insecurity. The separate Governor's Office of Agriculture Policy exercises influence with programmatic funding through the [Kentucky Agriculture Development Fund](#).

The Louisville Metro Government (Louisville Metro), led by its mayor and Metro Council, administers food access programs (usually state or federally funded) via several departments. These departments include, but are not limited to:

- **Office of Resilience and Community Services** – The Office of Resilience and Community Services works to fight poverty in Louisville and provides outreach programs to help its citizens access social services. For example, the [Neighborhood Place](#) helps people sign up for food programs, and the [Senior Nutrition program](#) works to provide congregate and in-home meals to Louisville's seniors.
- **Louisville Metro Department of Health and Wellness (LMDPHW)** – The LMDPHW is Louisville's health department. In addition to clinical services and prevention, the agency engages in significant community health initiatives. The [Center for Health Equity](#) leads local research efforts on health outcomes in Louisville.
- **Louisville Forward** (formerly the Office of Economic Development) – Louisville Forward works to attract grocers to areas with low food access by providing market studies, negotiating real estate opportunities, and providing business resource information to potential retailers.
- **External Associated Agencies** – Louisville Metro uses external associated agencies to help implement local food access programs. For example, the [Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency \(KIPDA\)](#) has a role in administering Louisville's senior nutrition programs. [The Jefferson County Cooperative Extension Service](#), although

managed by universities, also partners with Louisville Metro to manage 10 community gardens.²

- **External Agency Fund** – Louisville Metro provides funding to external, nonprofit agencies in each annual budget. For example, in the approved fiscal year 2018-2019 budget, Louisville Metro Government funded local food access organizations like Dare to Care Food Bank (~\$364,500), New Roots Fresh Stop Markets (~\$70,000), the Open Hand Kitchen (~\$15,000), the Food Literacy Project (~\$10,000), Louisville Grows (~\$7,500), and several community area ministries' emergency assistance programs.

In 2011, former mayor Jerry Abramson created the Louisville Food Policy Advisory Council (LFPAC) by executive order and allocated grant funding to staff an LFPAC coordinator.^{3,4,5} From interviews in the community, including former LFPAC members, the needs of the “buy local” food movement and food access movement were too polarizing and caused cleavages that made prioritization difficult. This division was only worsened by the transition in mayoral administration. The LFPAC dissolved by 2013 and is survived by the community-led [Food in Neighborhoods Coalition](#).

Food Access Policies, Programs and/or Initiatives Affecting Louisville

The federal, state, and local policies and programs that are affecting Louisville's food access environment are organized into the following categories: affordable and fresh food access, food donations, student nutrition, and senior nutrition.

Food Access Policies, Programs and/or Initiatives Affecting Louisville

Type	Authority	Policy/Program Name	Description
Affordable and Fresh Food Access	US Legislature	The Food, Nutrition and Conservation Act of 2008 (Farm Bill)	The Farm Bill reauthorizes USDA program funding, including the Supplemental Assistance Nutrition Program (SNAP), the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP). The latest version was authorized in 2014 and gets reauthorized about every five years.
	USDA	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	SNAP benefits provide low income participants with money (i.e. EBT card) to purchase affordable foods. There are over 663 SNAP retailers in Jefferson County and an estimated 14.1% of Jefferson County residents are participants in the program. ^{6,7}
	USDA	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	WIC offers food money to low-income mothers and small children (up to age five) who are found to be at nutritional risk. In 2016, Louisville Metro estimated there are over 13,000 WIC participants. ⁸ WIC participants can also utilize the USDA's WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) to redeem their benefits at area farmers' markets.
	Louisville Metro	Land Development Code	Louisville's local codes do not require farmers and gardeners to purchase a permit to sell their raw products. The code also clarifies zoning and provides regulations for community gardens.
Food Donations	US Legislature	Bill Emerson Food Donation Act	This federal law protects food donors (i.e. grocery stores) from legal liability; the law is designed to increase food donations.
	KY Legislature	KY Food Donor Immunity Law	This state law to reinforces federal legal protections for food donors; the law is designed to increase food donations.
	KY Legislature	Senate Joint Resolution 218	This new resolution (2018) is designed to monitor and reduce food waste in all state agencies.
	USDA	The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)	TEFAP provides low income recipients with food at no cost. Dare to Care manages the program in Louisville with federal and non-governmental sources. Kentucky received over \$5,703,028 in TEFAP support in fiscal year 2017. ⁹
	KY Department of Agriculture	Farms to Food Banks Program	The program incentivizes Kentucky farmers to donate lower grade produce to food banks, rather than wasting the products, by reimbursing farmers for distribution costs. Kentuckians may also simply check a box on their state tax returns to donate to the program. In 2015, the program distributed enough produce to fill half a plate full of fruits and vegetables for over 6,000,000 meals in Kentucky (including Jefferson County). ¹⁰
Senior Nutrition	US Legislature	Older Americans Act of 1965	The law provides funding for senior nutrition programs like the Home Delivered Meals program, the Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP), and Congregate Nutrition Services Program (CNSP). The latest version was last authorized in 2016 and is scheduled for reauthorization every three years.
	Louisville Metro	Home Delivered Meals Program	The Home-Delivered Meals program authorizes meals and related nutrition services for older individuals who are homebound. In fiscal year 2018, \$3,289,890 was provided to Kentucky for home-delivered meals for seniors. ¹¹ KIPDA manages this program as part of a seven-county agency.
	USDA	Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP)	NSIP is a nutrition program provides money to seniors that is used exclusively to purchase food. The program provided \$1,602,559 in cash allocations to Kentucky in fiscal year 2018. ¹²

Senior Nutrition	Louisville Metro	Congregate Nutrition Services Program (CNSP)	CNSP provides group meals for seniors at various locations. Louisville seniors can visit one of 19 different meal sites. ¹³ KIPDA manages this program as part of a seven-county agency.
	USDA	Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)	CSFP provides low income seniors with USDA foods monthly. CSFP serves 28,300 seniors across Kentucky. ¹⁴ Dare to Care Food Bank manages the program in Louisville with \$489,059 in federal funds and the rest with non-governmental resources. ¹⁵
	USDA	Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)	SFMNP provides low-income seniors with coupons (\$28 in Kentucky) that can be exchanged for eligible, fresh foods at farmers markets. The program served 11,445 Kentucky seniors in 2017. ¹⁶ There are nine farmers markets in Louisville that accept the vouchers for payment.
Student Nutrition	US Legislature	Child Nutrition Act of 1966 Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010	These policies are responsible for the establishment and reauthorization of child nutrition programs throughout the United States. The policy was last authorized in 2010 and is due for reauthorization every five years; associated programs were temporarily extended in 2015. These programs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National School Lunch Program (NSLP) • School Breakfast Program (SBP) • Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) • Child and Adult Care Program (CACFP) • Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) • Child Nutrition Commodities Program (CNCP) • Special Milk Program (SMP) • Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
	USDA	National School Lunch Program (NSLP)	NSLP is a federally-assisted meal program that provides balanced, low-cost and/or free lunches to children each school day. NSLP provides free lunch to all but 15 Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) schools; students at ineligible schools can apply to qualify for free or reduced lunch prices. ¹⁷
	USDA	School Breakfast Program (SBP)	SBP is a federally-assisted program that provides low-cost or free breakfast to children in schools and childcare institutions. For the 2016-2017 school year, JCPS served breakfast in all 147 schools. ¹⁸ Of those, 127 schools offered free breakfast to all students (86%).
	USDA	Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)	SFSP is a federally-assisted program that provides meals to kids during summer break.
	USDA	Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)	CACFP is a federally-assisted program that provides meals and/or snacks to after school children's programs and adult care centers. JCPS reported just over 242,000 CACFP meals served from 88 sites in fiscal year 2017. ¹⁹
	USDA	Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)	FFVP is a federally-assisted program that provides free fresh fruits and vegetables to children at eligible elementary schools during the school day. In 2017, JCPS reported that 45 schools received FFVP grants for the benefit of 21,000 students. ²⁰
	USDA	Child Nutrition Commodity Program (CNCP)	CNCP reimburses agricultural producers for school meals and provides USDA-purchased food to schools. Kentucky serves USDA foods valued at over \$28,000,000 a year for 195 school systems, serving over 400,000 students daily. ²¹
	USDA	Special Milk Program (SMP)	SMP reimburses schools and childcare centers for milk they serve to children under specific program circumstances.
	KY Department of Agriculture	Kentucky-Grown Vegetable Incentive Program (K-VIP)	K-VIP creates a financial incentive for summer meal sponsors to include Kentucky-grown fruit and vegetables in the meals they serve. JCPS was awarded a \$22,000 grant for K-VIP in the summer of 2018. ²²

Appendix

Part A: Areas of Changing Public Policy (Advocacy Focus Areas)

There are recent developments in public policy that can significantly impact Louisville's food access environment. Although these threats are external to Louisville, they identify where advocacy and awareness are critical to prepare Louisville for the future. These include:

- **SNAP Challenges in the 2018 Farm Bill** – Congress is working to review and set budgetary guidelines for fiscal year 2019; federal nutrition programs make up the majority of the Farm Bill's budget each year. The initial House of Representatives proposal of the 2018 Farm Bill included a budget cut of \$17,000,000,000 from SNAP's previous \$70,000,000,000 budget and complicated the eligibility/work requirements of SNAP beneficiaries.²³ Although the initial proposal failed in spring of 2018; there are active negotiations to decide how SNAP will change in coming years. The latest iteration from the Senate, The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, reauthorizes the SNAP program, simplifies SNAP-related eligibility/work requirements and training opportunities, and continues federal grants for community food access improvements.²⁴ An estimated 14.1% of Jefferson County residents utilize SNAP benefits; the Census Bureau estimates over 111,000 Jefferson County residents utilized SNAP in 2015.^{25,26}
- **The Pending Child Nutrition Reauthorization** – The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 was responsible for reauthorizing the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Summer Food Service Program, the Child and Adult Care Program, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.²⁷ The policy expired on September 30, 2015 and the programs were due for renewal in 2016; however, the reauthorization did not take place due to significant policy differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill. Still, two years later, the programs have not been reauthorized and are therefore vulnerable to severe interference. 62% of Jefferson County Public Schools students are likely to be impacted by this legislation, over 62,500 students.²⁸
- **Administration of Senior Food Access Programs** – The public senior nutrition programs, including the Home Delivered Nutrition Services Program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and the Congregate Nutrition Services Program, are authorized by the federal Administration on Aging's Older Americans Act of 1965 and must be reauthorized every three years.²⁹ The latest reauthorization continued funding to these programs but did not significantly increase funding for senior nutrition programs despite the growing number of seniors. For example, Dare to Care Food Bank estimates that only 7% of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program in Jefferson County is funded with federal money; the rest of the total costs are met with non-governmental sources.³⁰

Part B: Federal Food Access Grant Opportunities

The following information provides details on open, federal food access grants. For more details on each program, including application requirements, please visit the website at the links provided.

The Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI)

[The Healthy Food Financing Initiative](#) is a partnership between the DHHS, USDA and United States Department of the Treasury to provide funding for healthier food retail in areas with low food access. Launched in 2010, the initiative expands access to food in communities through efforts such as developing, funding and equipping grocery stores, small retailers, corner stores, and farmers markets selling healthy food.

DHHS Community Economic Development (CED) Grant Program

The DHHS offers competitive grants for the financing of fresh, nutritious food retailers (i.e. grocery stores, farmers markets, etc.) Successful projects facilitate healthy food options while creating jobs in low-income communities; between 2011 and 2016, over \$51,800,000 has been awarded.³¹

Example: The DHHS awarded Community Ventures in Lexington, KY with \$800,000 in grant funds to support a revolving loan fund with Good Foods Co-op, a locally owned and operated cooperative grocery store in central Kentucky.³² Good Foods used the funding to create 40 jobs and open a 9,000 sq. ft. grocery store in a food desert; 75% of those jobs were for low-income locals.

The Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program (CFPCGP)

The USDA created the [Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program \(CFPCGP\)](#) in 1996 to fight food insecurity and promote self-sufficiency in low income communities. The primary goals of the CFPCGP are to meet the food needs of low-income individuals, increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their food needs, promote comprehensive responses to local food access, farm, and nutrition issues, and meet specific state, local or neighborhood food and agricultural needs. All grants require a dollar-for-dollar match in resources.

Applicants can apply for Community Food Projects (CFPS), training and technical assistance (T&TA), or project planning (PP). They are intended to support the development of projects with a one-time installment of federal assistance to establish and carry out self-sustaining, multipurpose community food projects. Community Food Projects can be funded up to \$400,000 over the course of 48 months. Planning Projects may be funded up to \$35,000 for the total project period, which is one year.

The Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) Grant Program

Related to the CFPCGP, the [Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive \(FINI\) Grant Program](#) supports projects to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables among low-income consumers participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by providing incentives at the point of purchase. There are three categories of projects: (1) FINI Pilot Projects (awards not to exceed a total of \$100,000 over one year); (2) Multi-year, community-based FINI Projects (awards not to exceed a total of \$500,000 over no more than four years); and (3) Multi-year, FINI Large-Scale Projects (awards of \$500,000 or more over no more than four years). FINI recipients can be states, agencies or cities.

- Example: A recent FINI grant to Kentucky merged the Community Farm Alliance (CFA) and Bluegrass Farm to Table (BGFT) Double Dollars program to increase SNAP recipients' purchasing power in 22 counties.³³ In addition to securing \$602,000 from FINI and \$262,000 from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund, private partners have joined the effort to make fresh foods more accessible to low income families across Kentucky. The Double Dollars are redeemable in Louisville farmers' markets as well as local Fresh Stop Markets.

The Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund

Through this fund, the Department of Treasury provides financial, training, and technical assistance to CDFIs that invest in businesses to provide healthy food options. \$22,000,000 was awarded to CDFIs in 2015 via the fund, and the Treasury now offers the **New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Program** to provide grants and tax incentives to CDFIs.³⁴ To date, 129 NMTC investments have been made in Kentucky.³⁵

Other USDA Support Programs

The 2014 Farm Bill authorizes \$125,000,000 to the USDA for financial and technical assistance to fresh, healthy food retailers in low-income areas.³⁶ Support typically includes market planning, promotion, operational improvements, and local food investments (including distribution).

Example: The USDA's **Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP)** offers competitive food business planning and implementation grants for applicants that source a 25% budget match. Food Chain Inc. in Lexington, KY was awarded \$189,552 in an USDA LFPP award to utilize its commercial kitchen as a processor of lower grade, local produce; the matching amount Food Chain Inc. contributed was \$83,674 for a total \$273,226 project budget.³⁷

Federal Funding for Healthier Food in Low Income Communities					
<i>(# Values in \$ Millions)</i>					
Funding Agency	US Department of Agriculture		US Department of Health and Human Services	US Department of Treasury	All Sources
	<i>Community Food Projects Grant Program (CFPCGP)</i>	<i>Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) Grant Program</i>	<i>Community Economic Development Grant (CED-HFFI)</i>	<i>Community Development Financial Institutions Fund (CDFI) (HFFI-FA)</i>	Total
2017	\$ 8.6	\$ 16.8	N/A	\$ 22.0	\$ 47.4
2016	\$ 8.6	\$ 16.8	\$ 7.4	\$ 22.1	\$ 54.9
2015	\$ 8.6	\$ 31.5	\$ 6.0	\$ 22.0	\$ 68.1
2014	\$ 4.6	\$ -	\$ 9.4	\$ 22.4	\$ 36.4
2013	\$ 4.8	\$ -	\$ 9.1	\$ 22.3	\$ 36.2
2012	\$ 4.8	\$ -	\$ 10.0	\$ 23.0	\$ 37.8
2011	\$ 4.8	\$ -	\$ 10.0	\$ 25.0	\$ 39.8
Total	\$ 44.9	\$ 65.1	\$ 51.8	\$ 158.8	\$ 320.6

Chart references: National Institute of Food and Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture, United States Department of Health and Human Services, and United States Department of the Treasury.

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