EQUITY:
The Key to Growing a Strong Economy and Sustainable Food System

Growing the Local/Regional Food System:
Strategies for Sustainable and Equitable Economic Development

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PolicyLink is a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity by Lifting Up What Works. ®
What is Equity?

Equity means *just and fair inclusion*

An equitable society is one in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

Who benefits?  Who pays/is harmed?  Who leads?  Who decides?
It’s more than language…

Equity is the antidote to inequality
Equity is both the means and the end
Equity is Results
Equity is the Future


Racism  Inclusion

Pillars of Equity
Why equity matters more than ever...

• Face of America is changing; strong communities of color are necessary for the nation’s economic growth and prosperity

• Income inequality is high and persistent

• Low-income people and people of color disproportionately experience lack of access to healthy food—health disparities increasing, health care costs high; productivity decreasing

The way forward: An equity driven growth model
The Collateral Benefits of Equity

Equity targets the most vulnerable

Equity is an economic imperative
Racism Matters To Transforming Food Systems

• To transform food systems we must consider the many ways in which racism reaches into the lives of people of color.

• Find ways to build a food equity approach that puts people of color at the center of the work.
Equitable Growth through the Food System is Possible
How Do We “Do” Equity?

Equity through Policy
- Strategy Development

Equity through Process
- Data Collection/Analysis
- Community Engagement & Leadership Development
Welcome to the National Equity Atlas, a comprehensive data resource to track, measure, and make the case for inclusive growth.

Data in Action: Data Drives Community Foundation Investments
The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo is using a racial equity framework to guide its investments in the region's future.

The Face of America is Changing
Equity Indicators Framework

Who lives here? How is it changing?

Can everyone connect, participate, and contribute?

How much stronger would the economy be with equity?

Demographics

Economic Vitality

Readiness

Connectedness

Economic Benefits of Equity
Understanding Systems and Dynamics

- **Values Conflicts**
  - Adaptive challenges
  - World view, beliefs, principles
  - Habits of mind and heart
  - Personal identity

- **Structural Conflicts**
  - How a situation is set up
  - Formal role definitions
  - Time constraints
  - Geographical/physical constraints
  - Unequal power/authority
  - Unequal control of resources

- **Interest Conflicts**
  - Substantive
  - Procedural

- **Relationship Conflicts**
  - Troubled past history
  - Strong negative emotions
  - Habitual misconceptions
  - Negative projections
  - Defensive or aggressive reactions

- **Data Conflicts**
  - Lack of information
  - Misinformation
  - Ideas of relevancy
  - Interpretation of the data
  - Assessment procedures

- **Language Conflicts**
  - Cross-talking
  - Definitions
  - Communication preferences
Why Is Engagement & Leadership Important?

• Processes have *historically excluded* and *marginalized*

• Knowledge and perspective of low-income communities and communities of color is *vital* to turning visions for revitalization into reality

• Lack of engagement in the process sometimes results in *opposition to results* that does not reflect community needs

• Meaningful community engagement requires participation in governance and decision making
Community Engagement Considerations

- Acknowledge power dynamics
- Address issues of race, culture, class
- Outreach is not engagement
- Be willing to slow the process down
- Be intentional on inclusion, accessibility, and transparency
- Target resources for ongoing engagement
Institutional Structures for Community Engagement

**Ascending Value**

- **Governance Level**
  - Appointment to decision making boards and commissions

- **Consortia**
  - Membership based group with options for decision making

- **Advisory Groups**
  - Provide guidance and advice to policymakers

- **Task forces**
  - Short term participation with opportunity to offer recommendations

- **Focus Groups**
  - One-time opportunity to provide input

- **Town Hall Meetings**
  - Information provided one time, sometimes an ability to offer group comments

**Descending Value**
How Do We “Do” Equity?

Equity through Policy
- Strategy Development

Equity through Process
- Information Collection/Analysis
- Community Engagement
Policy Matters

- Policy impacts the economic, social, physical and service environments

- **Health in All Policies**: Policies not traditionally thought of as health policies (transportation, agriculture, land use, education, economics) impact health and obesity rates

- **Equity in All Policies**: All policies can produce either positive or negative impacts on low income communities and communities of color
Equitable Policies:

• Include equity as criteria for inclusion and/or prioritization of policies

• Identify policies important to low-income communities, communities of color and other vulnerable populations

• Target benefits to vulnerable populations

• Prioritize provision of resources to areas that need it most
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITY</th>
<th>GOOD FOOD</th>
<th>GOOD JOBS</th>
<th>FOOD SECTOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liquor Licenses</td>
<td>Enforce health and food safety rules in restaurants and convenience stores that sell liquor</td>
<td>Incentivize high road labor practices for employers through granting or renewing liquor licenses</td>
<td>Service Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing Subsidies</td>
<td>Encourage small and medium sized food manufacturers producing trendy ethnic cuisine</td>
<td>Subsidize employers who don’t violate labor law and who sign onto a code of conduct</td>
<td>Processing Distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement Policies</td>
<td>Purchase local and sustainable food for state and national government</td>
<td>Require contractors to embrace high road labor standards in order to win public contracts</td>
<td>Production Processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Subsidies</td>
<td>Expand healthy and organic food availability in low-income communities of color</td>
<td>Mandate that community food markets have high bar labor standards or contribute to community wealth</td>
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</table>
Coalition of Immokalee Workers

- Fair Food Program – partnership among farmworkers, tomato growers and participating retail buyers who pay 1 cent more per pound to increase workers’ wages from $10/12k-$17k

- Campaign for Fair Food – educates consumers on the issue of labor exploitation
Sustainable Food and Labor Efforts
Green City Growers [Cleveland]
Common Market
Common Market: Philly Good Food Lab
Pennsylvania’s FFFI Triple Bottom Line

Developing Quality Food Markets in Low-Income Communities & Communities of Color

- Promotes a healthy diet which can contribute to reduced rates of diabetes & obesity
- Creates jobs with career paths
- Revitalizes neighborhoods
- Leverages private capital
- Increases local taxes

Health
Income
Economic Stimulus
National HFFI Goals

• Expand access to healthy foods
• Support small business development & job creation
• Focus on low-income communities and communities of color
Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI)

10 farms
5 healthy food retailers
3 food hubs
Mandela Marketplace

- 2,200-sq foot, worker-owned enterprise
- Distributed 200 lbs produce
- $950,000 in estimated sales by end of 2014
Healthy Food Access Portal

Profile: Nojaim Brothers Supermarket

Nojaim Brothers Supermarket is a neighborhood institution that has served the Near Westside community of Syracuse, New York, for more than 90 years.

What's New

Funding
Available funding is a searchable database of healthy food financing.

News
Find the latest media coverage related to healthy food access.

Resources
CDFIs offer alternative lending for financing supermarkets. The flexibility...
Conclusion

• Takes time
• Stretching outside our comfort zones
  • Understand structural racism and embrace racial and economic inclusion
  • Continuously ask and hold you and others accountable to the questions
• Less about specific issues and more about the tactics and processes that give meaningful power and voice to those who have been previously shut out from reaping the rewards and shaping our shared fate.
Thank you!

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*America’s Tomorrow: Equity is the Superior Growth Model*
Monthly Digest
www.policylink.org
www.healthyfoodaccess.org

PolicyLink Equity Summit
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