

10 Ways Food Policy Councils Can Support the Community During COVID-19

Our community food system plays a vital role during times of crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic is no exception. Below are some ideas for how your local Food Policy Council can support your community during this unprecedented time. If you would like help in implementing any of the following methods or know of any additional resources, please contact Zach Herrnstadt at herrnstz@mailbox.sc.edu or visit www.scfoodpolicy.org.

Interested in starting a Food Policy Council in your community?

Please fill out this [brief interest form](#) and we will contact you with more information!

1

Create a food systems resource guide and distribute it widely

Include food access resources, as well as resources for farmers, food industry workers, consumers, and the general public. For example, the South Carolina Food Policy Council is sharing food systems resources on [their website](#).

2

Create a document detailing how to support your community during COVID-19

Reach out to food access organizations to learn about their current needs. (e.g., donations, volunteers, transportation) and spread the word. For example, the Columbia Food Policy Committee created this [document](#) that is being distributed throughout the community.

3

Reach out to you school district to see if they need support

All school districts across the state are working hard to provide free breakfast and lunch to all children during the week. Schools are offering these meals through various methods, such as curbside pick-up and school bus routes. A full list of all free school meals sites can be found at <https://ed.sc.gov/newsroom/covid-19-coronavirus-and-south-carolina-schools/>.

4

Advocate to keep your local farmers market open and safe

Like grocery stores, farmers markets are an important source of food for our communities and should be considered essential retail establishments. To learn more about keeping your farmers market open and safe during the COVID-19 outbreak, refer to Carolina Farm Stewardship Association's [Farmers Market Advocacy Toolkit](#), as well as SC Department of Agriculture's [Guidelines for Farmers Markets during the COVID-19 Outbreak](#).

5

Begin or continue working on a Community Food Assessment

A Community Food Assessment examines a range of food related issues in order to inform and build support for practical actions to enhance the local food system. [What's Cooking in Your Food System: A Guide to Community Food Assessment](#) is a useful resource for getting started.

6

Promote alternative ways to support your farmers

Support your local farmers by promoting CSAs, farmers markets, and on-farm pickups. There are some great resources out there to get the word out, including Carolina Farm Stewardship Association's [How to Buy Local While Social Distancing: On-Farm Pickups and More](#), and The SC Department of Agriculture's [Find Local Farm Fresh Food During COVID-19](#). Also, [FoodShareSC](#) is working with local growers and distributors to offer fresh food boxes in a number of communities in South Carolina.

7

Plan for future events

Stay-at-home ordinances and social distancing will come to an end eventually, and now is the time to begin planning for future events. There are plenty of steps that can be taken to prepare for an event without setting a firm date. This [Public Forum Toolkit](#) created by Community Food Strategies is a great place to start.

8

Establish or bolster your council's web presence

Create or update your council's website. Post updates, resources, and success stories on social media. Visit the South Carolina Food Policy Council's recently updated [website](#) for some inspiration.

9

Support food industry workers

Many food industry workers are currently unemployed. To help raise money for those experiencing hardship, the South Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association has set up the [Hospitality Employee COVID-19 Relief Fund](#). In addition, [Food Chain Workers Alliance](#) has compiled a variety of [resources for food workers](#) affected by COVID-19, including applications for unemployment, legal resources, emergency assistance funds, advocacy information, and mental health resources.

10

Investigate funding opportunities

There are a variety of grants and other funding opportunities to aid the response to COVID-19. Consider partnering with a nonprofit in your community and apply for funds to contribute to the local response. Find a few to get you started on the next page.



Example Funding Opportunities

Community Funding Opportunities

- ⇒ [Midlands Community Response Fund](#) (Rolling basis)
- ⇒ [No Kid Hungry Grant Supports Feeding Programs during Coronavirus Outbreak](#)
- ⇒ [Crossroads Critical Response Fund](#) (Rolling basis)

Federal Grants

- ⇒ [Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program](#) (Due May 18, 2020)
- ⇒ [Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program](#) (Due June 3, 2020)
- ⇒ [Regional Food Systems Partnerships](#) (Due May 26, 2020)
- ⇒ [Farmers Market Promotion Program](#) (Due May 26, 2020)
- ⇒ [Local Food Promotion Program](#) (Due May 26, 2020)

Listservs

Food Policy Councils: [Johns Hopkins Food Policy Network Listserv](#)

Farmers Markets: [Farmers Market Coalition Listserv](#)

Community Supported Agriculture: [CSA Innovations Network](#)

Nutrition Incentive Programs: [Wholesome Wave's National Nutrition Incentive Network](#)

Food Hubs: [Wallace Center's Food Hub Community of Practice](#)

Young Farmers: [National Young Farmers Coalition](#)

Fresh Produce Industry: [United Fresh Produce Industry Coronavirus Resource Share Group](#)

General topics and questions related to community food systems: [ComFoods Listserv](#)

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