

7th Annual Convening on Healthy Food Access Event Summary

On Tuesday, May 1 and Wednesday, May 2, PolicyLink, The Food Trust, and Reinvestment Fund, co-hosted the Seventh Annual Convening on Healthy Food Access in Washington, DC. This annual gathering represents the keystone event of national Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) campaign efforts and serves as an opportunity for all grantees of the federal HFFI program to come together to share best practices in healthy food access and project financing. This year's Convening gathered 150 participants from 25 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Attendees included grantees of the federal Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI), representatives of federal agencies, healthy food retailers, staff from the House and Senate Agriculture Committees, and advocates of healthy food financing from across the country.

Tuesday began with an inspiring keynote address from the former First Lady of Virginia and No Kid Hungry Virginia Chair, Dorothy McAuliffe. Mrs. McAuliffe shared with participants how a relatively simple approach



Dorothy McAuliffe, Former First Lady of Virginia, delivers the opening keynote speech.

can have radical implications with regards to food access—such as the state supporting innovative models of school breakfast resulting in over 10 million *more* breakfasts served to VA students. Lisa Cylar-Barret, Director of Federal Policy at PolicyLink, moderated a timely plenary session about the 2018 Farm Bill, introduced by House Republicans just weeks prior to the Convening. The perspectives from staff in the House and Senate Agriculture Committees fostered an engaging and insightful discussion around the complexities of the House Farm Bill. The legislation supports some key policies—like HFFI—while adversely affecting other critical components needed to equitably address access to healthy food.

The remaining sessions throughout the day explored a range of healthy food access topics that came about as a result of the many realities communities and advocates face, including food access in a time of increasing natural disasters, building capacity for food system entrepreneurs, and examining the evolution of grocery retail in today's expanding highly-technological industry.



Staff from Capitol Hill brief attendees on the current status of the Farm Bill.

Workshop Highlights

Case Study: Healthy Food Access in Virginia featured speakers from across the Commonwealth of Virginia who are working on increasing access to healthy food from a variety of sectors and vantage points – including public health, CDFIs, and community organizing and urban gardening.

“It’s ultra important that when we talk about access, the community is at the front end of designing and implementing – including what is grown, what is sold at the grocery stores, and in partnerships. It’s important to put those communities most affected at the front end of the conversation.”

– Duron Chavis, Community Engagement Coordinator, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden

Food Access Post Disaster highlighted the barriers to rebuilding food systems after communities face natural disasters and discussed solutions to make food systems more resilient in the face of increasingly frequent natural disasters. Attendees heard from speakers who work with disaster response food policies and have worked in New Orleans, California, and Puerto Rico, among other places, which have faced and are currently facing the consequences of natural disasters in their food systems.

Capacity Building and Equity for Food System Entrepreneurs discussed the unique barriers faced by entrepreneurs within the food systems and solutions to these barriers based in equity.

“This is not a Democratic or Republican issue. This is a we-gotta-feed-people issue.”

– Janie Simms Hipp, Director, Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative, University of Arkansas

Community Driven Innovation in Food Access shared best practices for healthy food access solutions that are led by the communities they serve, including work from DC, Pittsburgh, and the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Presenters talked about a range of strategies, from the need for livable wages, community ownership over food systems and infrastructure, and community input at every stage of the planning and implementation processes for healthy food access projects.

Evolution of Grocery Retail highlighted the topics central to the thoughts of many involved in healthy food access work regarding the rapidly evolving grocery industry and real time innovations of grocers. Jimmy Wright, Owner of Wright’s Markets in Opelika, Alabama, shared the success of his innovations in grocery delivery and online ordering with SNAP as he expanded the reach of his brick and mortar store, emphasizing that HFFI helps close gaps in capital for grocers. Chris Jones, Vice President of Government Affairs & Counsel at the *National Grocers Association* provided attendees with an update on national trends in the grocery industry.

Investing in Food Equity with Federal Resources provided an opportunity to explore the range of federal resources that complement HFFI to increase access to healthy food in low income and underserved communities, including Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Opportunity Zones, Small Business Administration (SBA), and New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC).

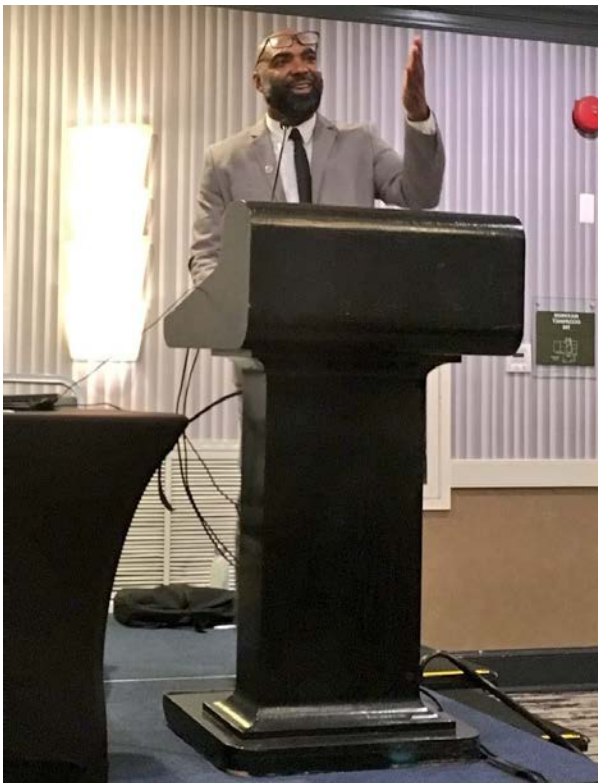
Networking Roundtables

New to the Convening this year, the Networking Roundtables activity allowed participants to dig deeper into specific topics and best practices with experts from across the country. Topics included Distribution & Innovative Retail Models, Defining the Food System Asset Class, Limited Supermarket Access Data & Mapping, Equity as part of the Michigan Good Food Fund, and the Advocate Perspective of the 2018 Farm Bill process and potential. The format of the activity fostered intimate connections and networking points outside of the traditional panel format, allowing attendees to walk away with more concrete solutions and fuel for their healthy food access work across the country.

Closing Plenary Panel & Remarks

The closing plenary panel, Food Access and Beyond: Building Healthy Communities tied together topics discussed throughout the day into a central question – how do we develop food access solutions that incorporate the coexisting needs of communities? Speakers presented on healthcare partnerships, comprehensive approaches to food access on the local level, and the connections between food banks and longer term food policy solutions. Monique Brigham of The Root Cause Coalition shared a call to action for attendees working toward more inclusive food access solutions: “Creating collaborations that are authentic and meaningful that creates sustainable solutions. We need all sectors at the table together to envision what the future can look like for that community.”

Dwayne Wharton, Director of External Affairs at The Food Trust, closed the day by energizing attendees and reminding them of why this work is so important at this moment in time, and why equity should be at the center of healthy food access work:



“Show up for others. Become the unusual ally. Seek to better understand the past and figure out how you can remedy, or at least not make the same mistakes. Be honest about what you see today. Believe that people have the ability to lead the change they want for themselves, especially when given the resources to do so.

Let us use our positions, to use our privilege to serve as gateways, instead of gatekeepers, and invite in as many people as possible, especially those who have been left out for way too long. And when we do this, we will all be better for it.”

– Dwayne Wharton, Director of External Affairs, *The Food Trust*

Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill

On Wednesday morning, attendees spent the morning on Capitol Hill educating elected officials about HFFI and highlighting projects back home. Participants met with the offices of elected officials from across the country, and were able to relay stories of food access successes and barriers that their constituents face on a daily basis.

AGENDA

The Liaison Capitol Hill

415 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, DC, 20001

Tuesday, May 1 & Wednesday, May 2, 2018

TUESDAY, MAY 1

8:30 – 9:30 AM **REGISTRATION, BREAKFAST & NETWORKING**

9:30 – 10:00 AM **WELCOME** | *Metropolitan East/West*
PolicyLink, The Food Trust, Reinvestment Fund

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Dorothy McAuliffe, Former First Lady of Virginia & Politics Fellow, Georgetown University

10:00 – 11:00 AM **OPENING PLENARY** | *Metropolitan East/West*

Farm Bill 2018: Perspectives from the Hill

Moderator: Lisa Cylar Barrett, *PolicyLink*

- Kelliann Blazek, Legislative Assistant, Office of Congresswoman Chellie Pingree (D-ME-01)
- Jacqlyn Schneider, Deputy Staff Director, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow

11:05 – 12:30PM **WORKSHOP SESSION I**

1. Case Study: Healthy Food Access in Virginia | *Metropolitan East/West*

Moderator: Brian Lang, *The Food Trust*

- Duron Chavis, Community Engagement Coordinator, *Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden*
- James Wallace, Fresh Food Advisor, *Virginia Community Capital*
- Robin Gahan, Senior Director, Government Relations, Virginia, *American Heart Association*
- Elizabeth Ackley, PhD, Associate Professor, Health & Human Performance, *Roanoke College*

2. Food Access Post Disaster | *The Hub*

Moderator: Julia Koprak, *The Food Trust*

- Ellen Vollinger, Legal Director, *Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)*
- Kim Zeuli, Senior Vice President, Director of the Research and Advisory Practice, *ICIC*
- Sajjan Philip, Director, Central Regional & Washington, *Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF)*
- Yanna Mohan Muriel, *Gestora Agroacultural at Visit Rico Agroturismo Puerto Rico*

3. Capacity Building and Equity for Food System Entrepreneurs | *The Grid*

Moderator: Lisa Cylar Barrett, *PolicyLink*

- Malik Yakini, Executive Director, *Detroit Black Community Food Security Network*
- Tina Khan, Food Access Project Coordinator, *Kansas State University*
- Janie Simms Hipp, Director, Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative, *University of Arkansas*

12:30 – 1:30 PM **LUNCH** | *Metropolitan East/West*

1:30 – 2:30 PM

NETWORKING ROUNDTABLES | Starting Point: *Metropolitan East/West*
See additional document in your packet for full descriptions and a map.

Roundtable	Facilitator(s)
Advocate Perspective: 2018 Farm Bill	John Weidman, <i>The Food Trust</i> Ellen Vollinger, <i>Food Research Action Center</i> Wes King, <i>National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition</i> Kate Fitzgerald, <i>Fitzgerald Canepa, LLC</i>
Limited Supermarket Access Data & Mapping	Michael Norton, <i>Reinvestment Fund</i>
Michigan Good Food Fund: At the Intersection of Equity and Good Food Financing Distribution & Innovative Retail Models	Olivia Rebanal, <i>Capital Impact Partners</i> Jean Chorazyczewski, <i>Fair Food Network</i> Pamela Hess, <i>Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food and Agriculture</i> Haile Johnston & Tatiana Garcia Granados, <i>The Common Market</i>
WANDA: Women Advancing Nutrition, Dietetics, and Agriculture Defining the Food System Asset Class	Tambra Raye Stevenson, <i>WANDA</i> Toby Rittner & Thomas Leonard, <i>Council of Development Finance Agencies (CDFA)</i>

2:35 – 4:00 PM

WORKSHOP SESSION II

1. Community Driven Innovation in Food Access | *Metropolitan East/West*

Moderator: Mary Lee, *PolicyLink*

- Asha Carter, Community Engagement Specialist, *DC Greens*
- Nick Hernandez, Food Sovereignty Initiative, *Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation, Pine Ridge Reservation*
- Abigail Sanders, Advisory Council Coordinator, Youth & Young Adults, *Pittsburgh Community Food Bank*

2. Evolution of Grocery Retail | *The Hub*

Moderator: Caroline Harries, *The Food Trust*

- Jimmy Wright, Owner, *Wright's Markets, Opelika, AL*
- Tamara Dubowitz, Senior Policy Researcher, *RAND Corporation*
- Chris Jones, Vice President, Government Affairs & Counsel, *National Grocers Association*
- Kristin Mullins, President & CEO, *Ohio Grocers Association*

3. Investing in Food Equity with Federal Resources | *The Grid*

Moderator: Donna Leuchten Nuccio, *Reinvestment Fund*

- Kathy Saloy, Vice President, Community & Economic Development, *Hope Enterprise Corporation*
Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- Matt Josephs, Senior Vice President for Policy, *Local Initiatives Support Corporation*
Opportunity Zones
- José Cerda, Vice President of Public Policy, *IFF*
New Market Tax Credit (NMTC)
- Anne Misak, Loan Officer, *Colorado Enterprise Fund*
Small Business Administration (SBA)

4:00 – 4:15 PM

BREAK

4:15 – 5:15 PM

CLOSING PLENARY PANEL

Food Access and Beyond: Building Healthy Communities | Metropolitan East/East

Moderator: Pat Smith, *Reinvestment Fund*

- Susan Bridle-Fitzpatrick, Senior Researcher, *Health Care Without Harm*
- Monique Brigham, Manager of Education and Programming, *The Root Cause Coalition*
- Bill McKinney, Executive Vice President, *The Food Trust, FARE Project, Cleveland*
- Reginald Young, Food for Change Director, *Houston Food Bank*

5:15 – 5:30 PM

CLOSING REMARKS

Dwayne Wharton, Director of External Affairs, *The Food Trust*

5:30 – 7:30 PM

NETWORKING RECEPTION

WEDNESDAY, MAY 2

8:00 – 9:30 AM

ADVOCACY DAY BREAKFAST & TRAINING | Metropolitan East/West

8:00 AM

Breakfast Served

8:30 AM

Brief Overview & Meet with Groups and Ambassadors

9:30 AM

Depart for Capitol Hill

Participants will travel to the Hill with Staff Ambassadors by foot or in cabs immediately following the conclusion of the Advocacy Breakfast & Training.

10:00 – 2:00 PM

ADVOCACY MEETINGS on CAPITOL HILL