

December 17th, 2020

Dear Mayor Hancock,

On behalf of the Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council, we request review through your Policy Review Committee of our Mayoral Advisory on farm-to-food assistance to support Denver's food insecure populations and enhance the City's regional food infrastructure.

What are we asking the City to do?

To support farm-to-food assistance programs that feed Denverites experiencing food insecurity and economically support local producers to further the creation of a resilient and equitable local and regional food system, especially during these times of increased food security.

Specifically, this Mayoral Advisory includes the following policy recommendations:

1. Utilize the Healthy Food for Denver Kids Initiative¹ to prioritize funding for farm-to-food pantry programs that purchase from local producers, especially those using regenerative agricultural practices, and pay them fair prices for their product
2. Ensure 10% of any incoming dollars for emergency food provision from federal or state sources are reserved for contracts that purchase from local producers, especially those using regenerative agricultural practices, and pay them fair prices for their product
3. Convene a multi-stakeholder task force consisting of local producers, food hubs, emergency food providers, and others to explore how to strengthen linkages and leverage resources of community food partners and explore procurement and funding models that champion local food producers.

Which City goals would this help to accomplish?

- Denver Food Vision 2030 Winnable Goals and Priorities
- City and County of Denver 2020 Sustainability Goals
- Mayor's Equity Platform
- Approved recommendations submitted by Food Security sub-committee of the Social Safety Net Council established by the Mayor and City Council during the pandemic

The complete Mayoral Advisory follows. Please contact us if you have any questions or feedback at denversfpc@gmail.com or through Laine Cidlowski, Food Systems Administrator at DDPHE, at laine.cidlowski@denvergov.org.

Sincerely,

Kristin Lacy, Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council Co-Chair
Doug Wooley, Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council Co-Chair
Roberto Meza, Working Group Co-Chair
Helen D. Silver, Working Group Co-Chair

¹ Denver Municipal Code, Article VIII, Sec. 2-243.

Mayoral Advisory on Farm-to-Food Assistance Supporting People Experiencing Food Insecurity and Local Producers

I. Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated already deeply-entrenched inequities in Denver’s food system. Prior to the pandemic, an estimated 11% percent of Denverites were experiencing food insecurity, 12.6% of Denver children (~17,570) were experiencing food insecurity,² and the meal gap in Denver was 15.4 million meals (i.e. the number of meals needed to feed all food insecure residents).³ Moreover, low-income communities and those with high ethnic and racial minority populations lacked equal access to healthy, fresh foods and were disproportionately affected by hunger and detrimental health outcomes.⁴

The COVID-19 crisis increased the number of people experiencing food insecurity by 223% across the United States, and Feeding America now projects the food insecurity rate in Denver to be at 16%.⁵ Food assistance organizations⁶ around the city are reporting a two to tenfold increase in the number of people served since the pandemic began, with an average 345% increase in demand from March to August 2020.⁷

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) created the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), a two-pronged approach to address 1) the economic fallout for farmers and ranchers and 2) the increased food insecurity caused by the pandemic. CFAP allocated \$3 billion to the “Farmers to Families Food Box program” to support direct purchases of meat, dairy, and specialty crops from producers. Despite its specific designation to support local farmers, however, less than 7% of funds actually went to local producers, falling far short of the stated intent of mitigating the pandemic’s economic impact on them.⁸ As a result, small and medium size producers that contribute to food assistance efforts are struggling to make their operations economically viable during this pandemic, thus jeopardizing the viability and resilience of our regional food system.

Supporting local farmers by increasing the use of local foods in food assistance organizations is critical to achieving the pillars of the Denver Food Vision 2030. Currently, food assistance organizations often rely on highly-processed foods that travel long distances to meet the majority of their distribution needs. Continued reliance on this supply chain, however, perpetuates root causes of hunger by 1) sending economic resources outside the community, 2)

² Feeding America (2018). Food insecurity in Denver county, <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2018/overall/colorado/county/denver>

³ Natural Resources Defense Council (2017). Modeling the potential to increase food rescue: Denver, New York City and Nashville, <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/modeling-potential-increase-food-rescue-report.pdf>

⁴ See maps in Appendices A and B.

⁵ Feeding America (2020). The impact of Coronavirus on food insecurity, <https://www.feedingamericaaction.org/the-impact-of-coronavirus-on-food-insecurity/>

⁶ The term “food assistance organizations” includes food pantries, food banks, food access organizations, and community-based organizations serving grocery food products or meals to the community.

⁷ Healthy Food for Denver’s Kids Emergency Hunger Relief Grant Report November 2020

⁸ National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (2020). USDA Food Box Program falls short of supporting small farms, <https://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/food-box-program-and-small-farms/>

depriving local producers of markets, 3) taking away employment opportunities for community members, 4) and supplying families experiencing hunger with foods that do not promote health. Further, while local, mission-driven farms are willing to donate food, they do so by foregoing profitable sales in other markets. A system that relies solely on donations to meet the needs of those experiencing food insecurity simultaneously perpetuates inequitable access to healthy, fresh produce and the underlying economic causes of hunger.

To address the rising needs among Denver residents facing food insecurity and the economic hardships faced by local farmers, the SFPC recommends that the City support and enhance the ability of food assistance programs purchasing from local producers, especially those using regenerative agricultural practices, and that pay local producers a fair price for their product.

Specifically SFPC makes the following policy recommends:

- Utilize the Healthy Food for Denver Kids Initiative (HFDK)⁹ to prioritize funding for farm-to-food pantry programs that require procurement from local producers
- Ensure 10% of incoming emergency food aid dollars from federal or state sources are reserved for contracts that purchase from local producers
- Convene a multi-stakeholder task force consisting of local producers, food hubs, emergency food providers, and others to explore how to strengthen linkages and leverage resources of community food partners and explore procurement and funding models that champion local food producers.

Appendix A contains definitions of “local” (with respect to producers and agricultural products), “fair price,” and “regenerative agricultural practices.”

II. Background & Context

The Denver Food Vision 2030, adopted by Mayor Hancock in 2017, envisions a Denver food system that is inclusive, resilient, vibrant and healthy. The Denver Food Vision posits “complete neighborhood food environments” where: neighbors produce and share food; infrastructure assets of the old system are leveraged and expanded in support of a new regenerative and resilient food system; and resources are accessible for community-nurtured and community-supported entrepreneurship and for local farmers so that both can be economically viable.

However, the Denver Food Vision lacks a clear articulation of the structural inequities and racism embedded in the food system that shape residents’ access to food. In the context of COVID-19, a reckoning with structural racism embedded in the food system is necessary, as is a definition of equity that is intended to negotiate this reality. This Mayoral Advisory highlights some of the structural inequities in the food system that have been laid bare and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In a future Mayoral Advisory, SFPC intends to submit additional equity analysis and proposed changes to the language in the Denver Food Vision to further define equity in the context of the Denver food system.

⁹ Denver Municipal Code, Article VIII, Sec. 2-243.

Prior to COVID-19, data collected by DDPHE clearly showed unevenly distributed health outcomes by race and socioeconomic status. For instance, neighborhoods with higher rates of childhood obesity correlate with neighborhoods without access to full-service grocery stores and food pantries. Low-income neighborhoods, including North of I70 and West of I25, also have more convenience stores and small markets (typically with more processed and less-nutritious foods) and less access to full-service stores and food pantries.¹⁰ These neighborhoods are often the same neighborhoods with high populations of children of color, and often the same neighborhoods that have been historically redlined.¹¹

Furthermore, COVID-19 has radically increased the health, social, and economic vulnerability of communities, including a dramatic increase in the already unacceptable level of food insecurity in Denver. Now more than ever, producers, food banks, and food pantries are a critical source of food infrastructure and emergency food assistance. Food pantry demand has increased an average 345%, and Hunger Free Colorado's average daily hotline calls from at-risk Denver neighborhoods spiked to four times the City's average before the pandemic.¹² Similarly, the most common referrals given to incoming 2-1-1 calls during April and May were for (1) where to find food pantries, (2) how to enroll and where to use SNAP, (3) grocery delivery options, and (4) how to enroll in and where to use WIC.¹³ Current food insecurity is estimated at least 25-36% of the Denver population (182-262K residents), with variations by neighborhood.¹⁴

Both before and during COVID-19, demand for fresh, healthy, and local foods has outstripped the ability of local producers to donate. Many mission-driven and non-profit farms are donating food to pantries and food assistance partners; however, they often do so by foregoing more profitable sales in other markets, thereby decreasing the viability of their farm businesses. While many food assistance organizations recognize local producers as important anti-hunger partners, procurement from local farms has been under-leveraged for a variety of reasons.

First, though COVID-19 has heightened awareness of the importance of regionally resilient food systems, many food banks are constrained by price and convenience to rely on large retailers and distributors, such as Walmart, Amazon, and Costco, which source conventionally-produced products from far away. As the COVID-19 crisis demonstrates, there is a real threat that these long supply chains can break down or that "pandemic buying" can decrease food availability from these sources, thus increasing food insecurity. Second, by sourcing from far-away agricultural producers, food banks are foregoing the opportunity to build wealth directly in Colorado communities. In doing so, food banks are missing opportunities for increasing economic justice, thereby increasing food insecurity. Finally, local food pantries lack the resources to adequately connect with local producers. Aside from resources provided by the Food Bank of the Rockies (which itself purchases only a small amount of local product), there are few educational or institutional resources to facilitate these transactions.

¹⁰ See maps in Appendix B.

¹¹ DDPHE (9/20/2019). Map: Denver Neighborhood Equity Index in Relation to Historical Redlining Grades.

¹² Hunger Free Colorado (2020). *14-day Moving Average of Daily Hotline Calls*.

¹³ "WIC" is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants and Children.

¹⁴ DDPHE (2020). Internal Food Needs Assessment.

The pandemic has necessitated many shifts in the food system from production to processing and distribution and evidences the need for many more changes in the near and long term. The urgency of the pandemic requires a quick and assertive response to support both consumers and producers and to stand up an alternative food supply chain.

The City of Denver needs to support the development of policies and programs in the short and long term to build the capacity for resilient neighborhoods while increasing producer viability. The recommended policies set forth in Section III outline how the City can leverage resources and relationships of community food partners and linking them with local producers and collaborative food aggregation and distribution initiatives. Adoption of these policies will help prevent spikes in hunger, ameliorate negative impacts of unhealthy foods, ensure economic stability through fair prices to local farmers, and build resiliency when conventional food supply chains are disrupted - ultimately, buffering the effects of future pandemics and states of emergency.

III. Policy Solutions

Consumers - in particular low-income and underserved populations – now, more than ever, need healthy food. Policies that support programs linking local producers directly to food assistance programs help address these challenges by fairly compensating local producers for their products while harnessing the distribution power of the charitable food system to better meet the needs of Denver’s vulnerable communities. The following policies recommendations by the Denver SFPC are tangible ways that the City could support these efforts.

1. **Utilize the Healthy Food for Denver Kids (HFDK) Initiative to prioritize funding for farm-to-food pantry programs that require procurement from local producers**

SFPC recommends that the HFDK Commission create a separate request for proposal to solicit applications from food pantries that want to buy directly from local producers. This program, similar to a “Denver Farm-to-Food-Pantry Assistance Grant,” would subsidize produce purchases by food assistance partners from local producers, especially those that use regenerative agricultural practices and pay living wages. Such a Denver’-based program would be complementary to the [Colorado-based Food Pantry Assistance Grant](#),¹⁵ which provides “triple win” opportunities by supporting local producers, supporting environmental sustainability through less food miles traveled and better farming practices, and getting healthy food to people experiencing hunger.¹⁶

¹⁵ Hunger Free Colorado (n.d.). *Colorado Food Pantry Assistance Grant*, <https://www.hungerfreecolorado.org/CPA/>

¹⁶ In 2018, the Colorado Food Pantry Assistance Grant awarded \$451,250 to 94 food pantries (including all 5 food banks in the state) serving all 64 counties and over 86,000 clients. These food pantries bought a total of 449,185 pounds of food from 130 local farmers. In 2020 during the pandemic, the Colorado Food Pantry Assistance Grant program received \$1.6 million in requests from food pantries, but the Colorado General Assembly allocated only \$475,000 funds for disbursement. Several other states have created farm-to-food pantry programs, including [Vermont](#) and [Washington](#) that are very successful.

Similarly, SFPC recommends that the HFDC Commission use existing RFP's to pay local producers directly to distribute produce boxes to WIC-enrolled families. Robust models for this program exist including Nourish Colorado's (formerly Livewell Colorado) sponsorship of a Farm-to-WIC program connecting 12 local farmers to 130 families enrolled in WIC. This program was made possible through state funds in 2019 and 2020, but due to state budget deficits, is not currently slated to be funded again. HFDC could fill this budget gap with existing funds. Similarly HFDC awarded Sprout City Farms to serve produce boxes to 30 families enrolled in WIC per week. SFPC recommends that HFDC duplicate these types of grants linking farmers and WIC-enrolled families.

2. Ensure 10% of incoming emergency food aid dollars from federal or state sources are reserved for contracts with local producers

SFPC recommends that organizations submitting a proposal for emergency funding to the City should be required to set aside 10% of their funding to purchase local food. This measure would harness the purchasing power of the City and food assistance organizations to direct emergency funds to local farms and producers, thus helping local agriculture buffer the economic impacts of the current pandemic -and future states of emergency - and ensuring the longevity of diversified vegetable production in Colorado. Furthermore, by procuring from local producers, organizations can meet community food needs while paying farmers a fair and dignified price for their products. This will foster equity in our local food supply chain from production to distribution strengthening local economies, reducing the likelihood that producers become food insecure themselves, and promoting a resilient and sustainable local food system where both communities and producers can thrive.

Both small and large organizations should have an equal chance of securing such funding and therefore care should be taken to ensure the application process is not burdensome so as to not penalize small organizations with limited staff capacity and experience in applying for funding. Applications should be reviewed using a predetermined methodology, similar to what the City used for CARES emergency funding or HFDC.

3. Convene a multi-stakeholder task force consisting of local producers, food hubs, emergency food providers, and others to explore how to strengthen linkages and leverage resources of community food partners and explore procurement and funding models that champion local food producers.

We recommend that the Food Systems Team of DDPHE to convene a multi-stakeholder task force to focus on the following objectives:

- Connect emergency food providers with Hunger Free Colorado Regional Food Coordinators, distributors, and food hubs that purchase from local producers and coordinate with food pantries
- Streamline communication between producers and food assistance organizations
- Support the distribution of educational resources for consumers to avoid food waste

- Explore procurement and funding models that champion local producers using regenerative agricultural practices and pay them a fair price for their products

This multi-stakeholder task force would leverage and facilitate work currently underway by various groups and food hubs, including the Hunger Free Colorado (HFC) regional food coordinators and various food hubs around Denver. These organizations are developing a model of value chain coordination to connect local farms to food pantries and buyers across the city. The airtable platform is a database of local producers and farmers categorized by product, availability, scale, and interest in working with food pantries. Created by HFC Regional Food Coordinators, it plays a critical role in supporting the work of value chain coordinators.¹⁷ This and other databases (such as Colorado Proud producer list¹⁸) offer value chain coordinators an opportunity to quickly source from an extensive list of local producers that serve food assistance organizations. This value chain coordination is key as it streamlines logistics, aggregation, and distribution between pantries and local farms.

Convening a task force consisting of these and other actors would strategically situate DDPHE as both a facilitator and an information hub. As such, DDPHE would not have the responsibility of directly doing the work of linking producers and food pantries, but would ensure that the City is aware of critical opportunities to support these entities.

Streamlining communication between DDPHE, local food hubs, and food assistance organizations also helps alleviate food waste and surplus: If one pantry has excess food, while another is struggling to meet clients' needs, then food can be equitably redistributed to areas of need. Mitigating food waste at the point of the end-consumer is also critical, and DDPHE should play an active facilitation role here. Offering educational materials that instruct end users on proper storage, preparation, and integration of fresh produce into daily diets can prevent food waste. With support from DDPHE, these educational materials could be distributed by food assistance organizations, food hubs, and others.

Finally, we suggest that this task force focus exploring funding and procurement models that champion local producers using regenerative agricultural practices and pay them a fair price. As noted above, the long-term inability or failure of food assistance organizations to pay producers a fair price undermines the viability of farm businesses, which are foundational to Denver's regional food economy. Further traditional models of procurement, such as direct purchase at market price or reliance upon subsidies, will likely perpetuate the root causes of hunger and financial viability of food assistance organizations or threaten the financial viability of food assistance organizations and farmers alike. Therefore, DDPHE should leverage the expertise and innovation of these stakeholders to explore alternative procurement models.

Ultimately, positioning DDPHE as a facilitator and point of informational convergence would connect food assistance organizations with local food hubs, resulting in a more streamlined and integrated network of food distributors to ensure equitable flow of local products. This would

¹⁷ [Hunger Free Colorado \(n.d.\). Food Pantry Purchasing Guide, https://www.hungerfreecolorado.org/network/](https://www.hungerfreecolorado.org/network/)

¹⁸ Colorado Department of Agriculture (n.d.). [Colorado Proud Directory, http://coloradoproud.com/](http://coloradoproud.com/)

translate into increased sales for local producers and job creation as local food hub models scale to meet communities’ needs.

IV. Potential Impacts of Proposed Policy Changes

Implementing the recommendations contained in this advisory will help achieve the objectives in all four pillars of the Denver Food Vision 2030 (approved by the Mayor in January 2018) as well as racial equity goals (put forth by the Mayor’s office in 2019). The table below summarizes various City goals.

City Goal	Supporting Strategies in the Policy Advisory
<p>Food Vision - Pillar: Healthy Denver</p> <p><i>Winnable Goals:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 55% reduction in food insecure households - 75% of youth and adults eat at least 1 serving of fruit and vegetables per day 	<p><i>Relieving food insecurity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening linkages between community food partners and local producers and providing resources to relieve hunger and food insecurity, which has doubled since the emergence of COVID-19.¹⁹
	<p><i>Providing additional access to healthy and nutritious foods</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing access to whole or minimally-processed fruits, vegetables, and grains through partnerships between food pantries and local producers, as opposed to conventional supply chains that depend on highly-processed, obesogenic foods.
	<p><i>Strengthening emergency food response capacity and supply chain logistic responses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with local producers and community food partners to determine current and future infrastructural needs will build Denver’s emergency response and resiliency in future crises.
<p>Food Vision - Pillar: Vibrant Denver</p> <p><i>Winnable Goals:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$100M of new capital to Denver food businesses 	<p><i>Supporting interim markets for agricultural producers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening relationships between community food partners and local producers will help offset market opportunity loss (e.g., from restaurant closures) due to COVID-19 and improve farmer livelihood, thus strengthening Denver’s food economy and preserving local agricultural resources.

¹⁹ DDPHE (August 25, 2020). *Denver Department of Public Health & Environment awards nearly \$6 million in grants to feed hungry kids*, https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/environmental-health/news/newsroom_2020/hfdk-first-round-grantee-announcement.html; Feeding America (2019). *Map the Meal Gap: Food Insecurity in Denver County*, <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2018/overall/colorado/county/denver>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 59% increase size of Denver food economy - 25% of food purchased by public institutions in Denver comes from Colorado 	<p><i>Increasing farmer income and protecting farm worker health and dignity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring that local farmers and ranchers receive a fair price for their products.
<p>Food Vision - Pillar: Resilient Denver <i>Winnable Goals:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 99.2 acres (0.1% of Denver acres) preserved in active agricultural production 	<p><i>Environmental sustainability:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting agricultural producers using regenerative agricultural practices that support healthy soils and create environmental benefits (improved air and water quality, carbon sequestration, and minimization of greenhouse gas emissions). <p><i>Supporting interim markets for producers through community food partners (e.g. pantries):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring local producers can sell and deliver to community food partners while receiving a fair price will bolster producer financial viability and ability to continue farming the land.
<p>Food Vision - Pillar: Inclusive Denver <i>Applicable Strategy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leverage public and private investments to fill community identified gaps and make neighborhood food environments more complete, including investments in neighborhood retail spaces, food, co-ops, gardens, food pantries, market locations, and/or nonprofit educational urban farms 	<p><i>Linking community food partners, local producers, and low-income or underserved neighborhoods:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting infrastructure in a manner that directly engages the affected neighborhoods so efforts support complete food environments.
<p>Denver Sustainability Goals: “Grow[ing] or process[ing] at</p>	<p><i>Supporting community food partners to purchase local products from local producers and distributors</i></p>

least 20% of the food purchased in Denver entirely within Colorado. ²⁰	
<p>COVID-19 Response and Recovery Committee (Recommendations of The Social Safety Net Council sub-committee)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasize the need for city agencies to work with stakeholders to address food insecurity by developing shared goals, strategies and programs (Appendix D). 	<p><i>Supporting farm to food pantry connections will bolster a long-term funding strategy for food access and hunger.</i></p> <p><i>Supporting aggregation and distribution efforts will strengthen stakeholders to address food insecurity through shared goals</i></p> <p><i>Supporting local initiatives and efforts will also fortify local economies and buffer the effect of economic moments of hardship for food producers and providers</i></p>
Mayor’s Equity Platform	<i>Creating social and economic equity among agricultural producers and food end-consumers, particularly those in underserved, low-income, or other vulnerable communities.</i>

VII. Policy Stakeholders:

Implementing these recommendations will depend upon several stakeholders. The City and County of Denver should convene these stakeholders as soon as practicable to develop the most equitable, efficient, and effective plans. Stakeholders include:

- Food assistance organizations, including food banks and food pantries
- End-consumers utilizing food assistance organizations
- Foundations and funders
- Local producers (for profit and nonprofit organizations)
- Producer cooperatives and existing food hubs (for profit and nonprofit organizations)

VIII. Conclusion

The Denver Food Vision aims to create a healthy, equitable, resilient, and inclusive food system that supports local producers and ensures that those suffering food insecurity have access to adequate nutrition, including healthy fruits and vegetables. The COVID-19 crisis shows that

²⁰ City of Denver (n.d.). 2020 Sustainability Goals, <https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/779/documents/2020%20Sustainability%20Goals%20071715.pdf>

achieving the goals of the Denver Food Vision is imperative. Implementation of the policies and programs above will help to achieve those goals.

Appendix A: Definitions of Key Terms

A. “Local” Food

In this advisory, “local” food or agricultural products mean those products “grown or processed” within the State of Colorado. This definition is consistent with purchasing goals identified in the Denver Food Vision, as well as the City’s 2020 Sustainability Goals.²¹ This, however, is an incomplete definition if the goal - as is the case here - is to create a resilient and equitable regional food system. Catastrophic events, such as extreme weather or fire, could severely diminish local agricultural resources. Therefore, we suggest that there may be occasion to expand the definition of local to include agricultural producers outside the state, but within the region, for instance, within 400 miles of Denver.²²

B. “Fair Price”

In 2018, producers receive only 14 cents for every dollar spent on food, which can dissuade production of healthy food and donations of healthy food to support people experiencing food insecurity.²³ All policies, programs, and actions by the City should ensure local farmers receive a fair price for their product. In this advisory, “fair price” is defined as a price that ensures producer prosperity and protect worker dignity by providing a margin of profit to pay living wages for farmers, and by covering: 1) the costs of labor, health benefits, paid sick and holiday leave, and housing where applicable; 2) the costs of production, including inputs such as seeds and access to land and water.

A fair price for producers is essential to creating an equitable and resilient food system. Among other things, a fair price will: 1) safeguard producer and farm worker health, safety, and prosperity; 2) ensure producers can continue providing product to food assistance organizations and sell produce within local retail and direct-to-consumer markets; (3) support businesses that employ people in Denver and increase money spent within Denver; and 4) help maintain land in agricultural production and protect environmental, social, and economic benefits provided by open spaces. Since 2009, Jefferson, Denver and Adams Counties have lost a combined 7,331.5 acres²⁴, jeopardizing environmental resilience and food security of these areas.

²¹ City of Denver (n.d.). 2020 Sustainability Goals, <https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/779/documents/2020%20Sustainability%20Goals%20071715.pdf>

²² While USDA does not have a set definition of “local” foods, 400 miles is sometimes used as a guidepost. USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (n.d.), Why Local Food Matters: Views from the National Landscape, <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/Why%20Local%20Food%20Matters.pdf>

²³ Hunger Free Colorado (n.d.). Colorado Food Pantry Assistance Grant, <https://www.hungerfreecolorado.org/CPA/>

²⁴ Helen D. Silver’s calculations based on USDA CropScape (<https://nassgeodata.gmu.edu/CropScape/>).

C. *“Regenerative Agricultural Practices”*

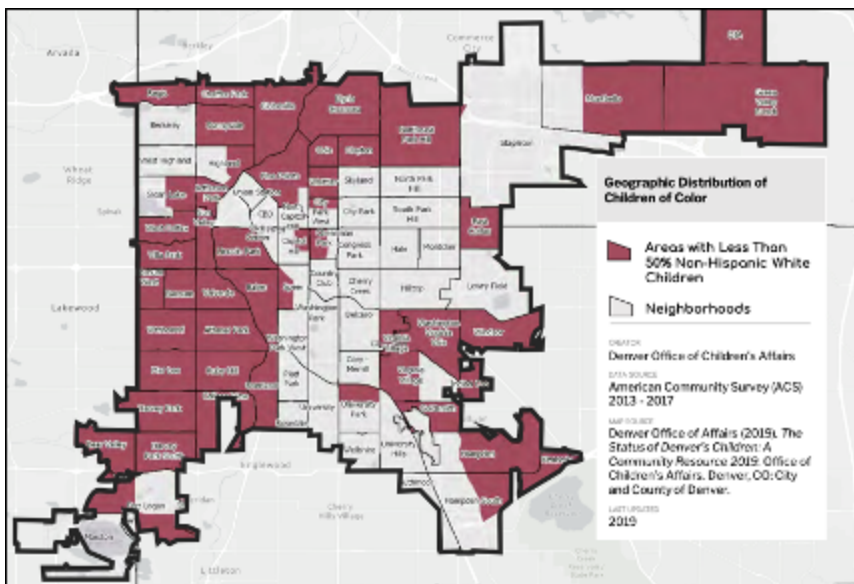
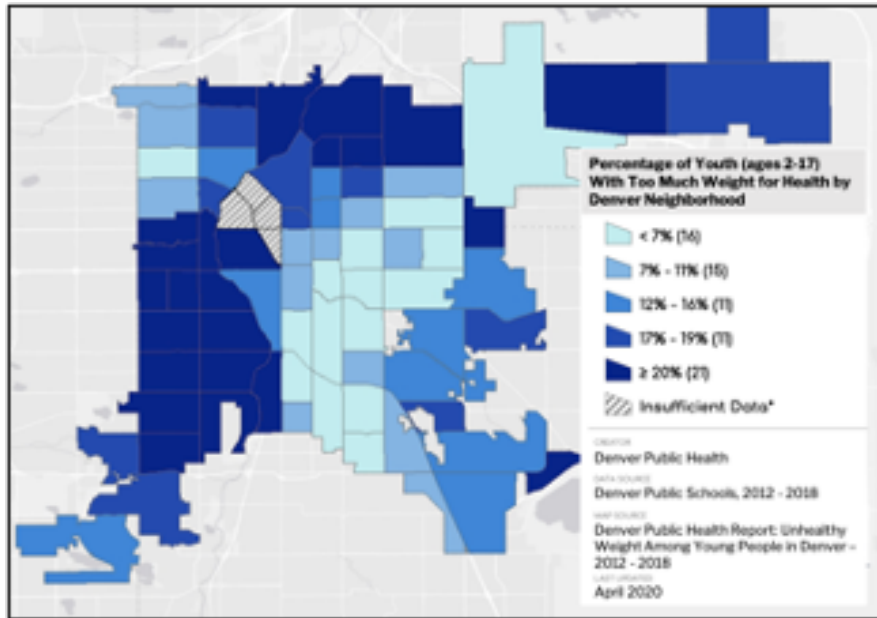
Regenerative agriculture is “a system of farming principles and practices that seeks to rehabilitate and enhance the entire ecosystem of the farm by placing a heavy premium on soil health with attention also paid to water management, fertilizer use,” and other factors.²⁵ These practices protect and enhance the environment, increase farm productivity, and safeguard human health - including the health of farm and ranch laborers. Denver policies, programs, and actions should support only those producers using regenerative agricultural practices to the greatest extent possible.

Several practices support a regenerative agricultural system, including minimization or elimination of pesticide usage, tillage, and nitrogen-based fertilizers. Not all regenerative agricultural practices need to be used simultaneously or every year; each farm and each year is unique, so developing a “one size fits all” approach is difficult, if not impossible. SFPC suggests working with the Good Food Purchasing Program which is developing an incentive program for institutions to purchase from producers that practice environmental sustainability, including regenerative practices.

²⁵ The Climate Reality Project (2019). What is regenerative agriculture?, <https://www.climaterealityproject.org/blog/what-regenerative-agriculture>

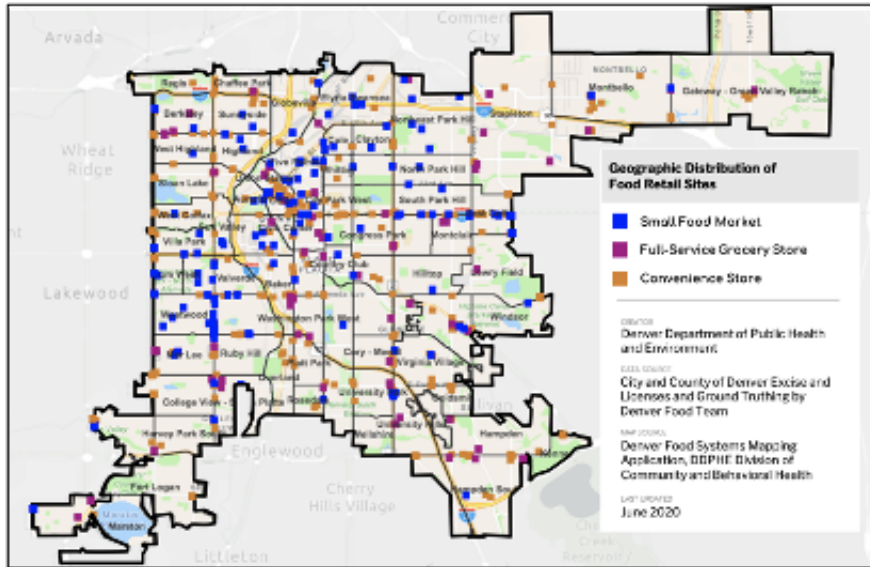
Appendix B

Maps showing neighborhoods with higher populations of racial minority residents and children are the same neighborhoods where children are facing disproportionate health impacts, including too much weight for health.



Appendix C

Map showing disproportionate access in low-income neighborhoods to full-service grocery stores and food pantries.



Appendix D

DDPHE (September 2020). *COVID-19 Denver Food Needs & Response presentation to Healthy Food for Denver's Kids Commission.*

Food Recommendations: Approved by Mayor

Actionable Now	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leverage routinely visited locations (food distribution sites) to create community care hubs/pop up sites offering integrated care, wrap-around service and supports.
Feasible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet community food needs through partnerships across city agencies by developing shared strategies, goals, programs, and data
Mid-Term (6-24 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coordinate efforts to get basic supplies, educational materials, food to families in low-opportunity neighborhoods using mobile distribution and existing sites (libraries, rec centers etc.)• Develop a long-term funding strategy for food access and hunger led and informed by community needs and knowledge• Support community-led food programs with technical assistance, data, capacity-building and citywide coordination
Cross-cutting Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritize digital inclusion• Develop a communications & marketing strategy• Create community care hubs