



Durham County Food Security Coordinator Position Update

July 13, 2020

I. Purpose of Position

The County Food Security Coordinator will focus on improving food access and supporting sound food policy in Durham County, working within County Government and with the Durham community to improve year-round planning, coordination, collaboration, data analysis, and resource development to strengthen our food system and work to ensure Durham residents have equitable access to healthy food.

Further, it is hoped the position will:

- Harness the expertise of food partners and work collaboratively across systems.
- Coordinate and work with an internal cross-departmental Food Security Team to improve alignment and coordination among County programs & initiatives.
- Support improved coordination between community food security partners.
- Bring a racial equity focus to food security and food policy work.
- Support the creation of a comprehensive community food security plan.
- Explore options for the development of a shared government-community food network or council.
- Examine opportunities to align, maximize, and generate resources.
- Work with partners and staff to craft a data plan to inform food security efforts.
- Promote close programmatic alignment with the Durham County Strategic Plan.
- Provide consultation to emergency operations, when needed, in the area of food security.

II. Background

The COVID-19 emergency has heightened the need for planning and coordination to meet the food needs of the Durham population. The food system is vast and complex, and the responding organizations and agencies are varied and working at or above full capacity, both before, and certainly during, the pandemic. The crisis

has demonstrated the need for increased coordination and collaboration among feeding operations, the need for better data, food system improvements, and a comprehensive plan around food security. The establishment of a Food Security office/position embedded in local government has been recommended and supported by End Hunger Durham and other community food access and food system advocates since 2017. This position, created to start this fiscal year, will work to harness the expertise in the Durham community and in County government to build a resilient food system and increase food access for the long term, while addressing the immediate food security needs of the current crisis.

III. Position Status

The County Food Security Coordinator position will utilize a currently vacant County position using our County reclassification process as needed to classify the position correctly. Staff has prepared a draft of the required paperwork and has researched comparable positions across the state and throughout the country to aid this process.

IV. Position Location

Following discussion across Goal 2 departments and recognition of the increased workload on staff in Public Health and DSS due to COVID-19, the preferred current location for the position would be in Cooperative Extension.

The position will benefit from support of food, agriculture, and community development staff within the department along with the expected establishment of an internal County Food Security team as an essential strategy to promote collaborative work across County departments in support of the County's food security needs. The location of the position can be evaluated again in the future.

V. Review of Food Security and Policy Positions

The review below is a combination of information from peer job descriptions as well as from correspondence with other local governments.

Wake County, NC

Food Security Coordinator

Wake County Government, Cooperative Extension

The Coordinator position acts as a single point "Air Traffic Controller" of the many County-led food security activities, policies, and communications to magnify the impact of County food security policy goals. The coordinator follows the Comprehensive Food Security Action Plan, working closely with their food council, Capital Area Food Network (CAFN), and other partners to track overall progress on Actions and Indicators, coordinate and convene partners where direct facilitation is needed, and form a community-to-government link to align efforts throughout Wake County.

The position supports 10 AmeriCorps VISTA staff at a total expense of less than \$20,000 a year. Other staff positions in local foods and food & nutrition provide support.

Key Learnings:

- Follow a comprehensive community plan and use it to measure progress and guide the work.
- Build Internal collaborative relationships.
- Encourage crossover between County and City plans.
- Provide support and staff for Food Policy Council (CAFN).
- Incorporate equity into work and plans.
- Need for better data (always).

<https://capitalareafoodnetwork.files.wordpress.com/2016/12/2017-05-01-foodsecurityplan-compressed.pdf>

Washington D.C.

Food Policy Director, Food Policy Analyst, Cross Systems Planner (food & health)

Office of Planning

Food Policy Director promotes equitable and sustainable food policies across the District that increase food access and build a local food economy. The position collaborates to promote locally-grown and sustainable food production practices; seeks outside grants, recognition, and partnerships to facilitate positive food policy; provides assistance to participants in the local food economy in navigating processes; advocates for new local food economy ventures; devises strategies for the District to meet the food goals identified in the Sustainable DC Plan; and works with relevant agencies to reduce regulatory burdens on the local food economy.

The positions work closely with a Food Policy Council that was authorized by local government and includes both staff and community members/organizations. Five different working groups include: Urban Agriculture, Food Access, Entrepreneurship & Jobs, Sustainable Supply, Nutrition Education. They also operate an internal food team through the planning department to support and collaborate and includes offices of planning, extension, energy and environment, human services, etc. Staff focus on process, evaluation, data, and emergency food response. Efforts led to a more equitable, healthy, and sustainable food system.

Key Learnings

- Food is integrated into all comprehensive plans, food touches every part of the economy, environment, land use, workforce, etc.
- Create a Food Policy Council that has shared government (ex-officio) and community members working collaboratively.
- Develop a data plan and personnel.
- Embrace convening and community engagement roles.
- Build strong community relationships.
- Make goals and expectations clear.
- Look for small wins while working for the longer-term.
- Learn from other communities.
- Authorizing legislation from public officials helpful in creating structure and accountability.

<https://dcfoodpolicy.org/about/#:~:text=The%20District%20of%20Columbia%20Food%20Policy%20Council%20was,on%20food%20access%2C%20equity%2C%20and%20the%20food%20economy.>

Winston-Salem, NC

Food Resilience Program Manager

City of Winston-Salem, Operations Department

Program Manager develops and implements the City's strategic initiatives to address food access and insecurity in collaboration with various City departments including but not limited to: Community Development, Human Relations, Sustainability, Recreation and Parks, and Marketing and Communications. Conducts research, determine best practices and provide recommendations on relevant food policy issues. Provides programmatic and administrative support to the Urban Food Policy Council.

Serves as the staff-lead for the Think Orange taskforce and represents the City's food interests at local, regional, state, and national levels.

Develops and coordinates collaborative partnerships with government, nonprofit, and community groups in support of food security and economic prosperity initiatives. Supports Think Orange: Campaign to Combat Hunger. Position is new as of February 2020.

Madison, Wisconsin

Food Policy Director

City of Madison, Office of the Mayor

The Food Policy Director focuses on providing equitable access to healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate food to all communities and developing policies that positively impact the health and well-being of all residents of the City and beyond. The Director's work supports food policy initiatives by providing leadership and strategic direction to policymakers and stakeholders regarding policy development, coordination, implementation, and analysis. The position provides professional staff support, leadership, and strategic direction for the Madison Food Policy Council.

The city funds a model Healthy Retail Access Program with several benefits to businesses and customers including an expanded healthy inventory, a broader customer base, increased sales, and greater visibility. Complementary financing establishes and renovates small food retailers in underserved areas of the City.

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/mayor/programs/food>

Key Learnings:

- Create a food security plan, informed by robust community input, with focused priority areas.
- Dedicate operational funding for mini-grants for community programs around food security. This funding further signals to the community the local government's investment in these critical issues.
- Establish a food council that is created by and reports to the local elected board. A food council expands the capacity beyond staff members to steer and lead key food security projects.

VI. Food Support Structure—County and Community Programs & Resources Focused on Components of Food Access, Food Systems, and/or Food Policy

Internal County Programs & Resources

Durham County Cooperative Extension offers nutrition education workshops and programs, farmer assistance & education, and support for community gardens, including a working garden education space, Briggs Avenue Community Garden. <https://durham.ces.ncsu.edu>

Durham County Soil & Water provides assistance and incentives to conserve and enhance natural resources, including the Agriculture Cost-Share Assistance Program (ACSP), and administers Durham County's Agriculture Grant program. <https://www.dconc.gov/government/departments-f-z/soil-water-conservation-district>

Durham County Department of Public Health (DCoDPH) Nutrition Division offers low-cost personalized nutrition counseling to adults and children. <http://dcopublichealth.org/services/nutrition-3670>

DCoDPH DINE offers group nutrition education and programming. www.dineforlife.org

Durham County Department of Social Services Food and Nutrition Services provides food assistance to those in need, including SNAP. <https://www.dconc.gov/government/departments-f-z/social-services/food-nutrition-services-food-stamps>

Durham County Nonprofit Grant Program includes grants to organizations that address issues of hunger and food system development.

Durham County Public Library typically serves as a site for the DPS Summer Meals Program.

Partnership for a Healthy Durham is a collaboration of 500+ individuals and organizations that work together to complete Durham County's Health Assessment and focus on identified priorities. Obesity, Diabetes and Food Access (ODAFA) has been a health priority since before 2006. <https://healthydurham.org/>

Racial Equity Officer – Racial equity is at the core of many food system issues. See more information at the following links: <https://www.centerforsocialinclusion.org/publication/building-the-case-for-racial-equity-in-the-food-system/>; <https://cefs.ncsu.edu/food-system-initiatives/food-system-committee-on-racial-equity/>
The County's new racial equity position could be a great supporter of this work.

Community Organizations

60+ food pantries and congregate meal sites throughout Durham County. A complete list of pantries can be found on End Hunger Durham's website. <https://www.endhungerdurham.org/food-pantries/>

Durham Center of Senior Living offers congregate meal sites (currently pick up and limited delivery) and healthy living education and activities. <http://dcsInc.org/index.php>

Durham Farmers' Markets Double Bucks doubles SNAP/EBT up to \$10 per visit and adds value to WIC and Senior Farmers' Market vouchers. www.durhamfarmersmarket.com; www.southdurhamfarmersmarket.org

Durham Public Schools Hub Farm 30+ acre farm and outdoor learning lab aimed at increasing physical activity and healthy eating. <https://www.facebook.com/DPSHubFarm>

Durham Public Schools, School Nutrition Services offers meals to students; universal free breakfast, After School Snack, Summer Food Service, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grant Program, Farm to School. <https://www.dpsnc.net/Nutrition>

Duke Healthy Eating Research (HER) is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) that supports research on policy, systems, and environmental strategies that promote healthy eating among children, especially those at highest risk. <https://healthyeatingresearch.org/>

Duke World Food Policy Center develops coordinated and inclusive food policy and practice bridging key areas of the food system to improve human wellbeing, environmental health, and equity. They work in Durham, in North Carolina. <https://wfpc.sanford.duke.edu/>

End Hunger Durham forms collaborations of partners to reduce food insecurity and hosts information about food pantries and other feeding operations on their website. www.endhungerdurham.org

Farmer Foodshare increases the availability of local food and ensures farmers make a healthy living; donation stations at farmers markets and wholesale market. www.farmerfoodshare.org

Food Insight Group (FIG) works to build just, equitable, and resilient food systems in Durham and beyond through research, coaching, and technical assistance. <https://www.foodinsightgroup.com/>

Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC* distributes food and summer meals and runs a backpack buddies program. <http://www.foodbankcenc.org>

Inter-Faith Food Shuttle (IFFS)* food rescue and distribution organization; runs programs for summer meals, gardening, culinary job training, backpack buddies, and nutrition education. <http://foodshuttle.org/>

**Food Bank and IFFS provide food resources to local food pantries.*

Lincoln Community Health Center's Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) Program provides food assistance & nutrition education to pregnant and breastfeeding women and children under 5. <http://www.lincolnhc.org/>

Meals on Wheels of Durham provides home-delivered meals to senior citizens. www.mowdurham.org

Medical Nutrition Therapy, Duke University Health System offers personalized nutrition counseling at Duke Hospital, Regional Hospital & clinics. <https://dieteticinternship.duhs.duke.edu/departments-nutrition-services>

More in My Basket promotes outreach education about the Food Nutrition Service Program and provides assistance with applications in person and over the phone. <https://www.morefood.org/>

Plant-a-Row is a grassroots network of food pantries and small-scale vegetable gardeners sharing fresh produce with neighbors in need. <https://plant-a-row-durhamnc.com/>

PORCH Durham provides supplemental food through food donations to children and families facing hunger in Durham County, including school pantries and backpack buddies. <https://durham.porchcommunities.org/>

Reinvestment Partners Bull City Cool works to strengthen the food system; programs include Bull City Cool Food Hub and Bull City Bucks. www.reinvestmentpartners.org

SEEDS develops the capacity of young people to respect life, the earth and each other through growing, cooking and sharing food including through a 1.75 acre urban farm/garden. www.seedsnc.org

This report is respectfully submitted by the Co-Leaders of the COVID-19 Food Security Task Force:

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