

5/27/2020 (2-3pm ET)

Webinar title: **Feeding Communities in the Face of Adversity: Municipal Emergency Planning & Policy Options for Healthy Food Access**

**Questions in real time from the attendees in the chat box:**

- **Participant Question #1:** Do many of these have a termination date or to be in effect until state of emergency ends, etc?
  - Panelist Response(s):
    - Most are in effect during state of emergency periods without a specific end date. They will remain in effect until the state of emergency ends.
  
- **Participant Question #2:** US pork market is facing a bottleneck in the supply chain - a vertical market that flows farmer-packing house distribution center-market consumer. How can local communities help flatten the chain to connect farmer to consumer? what land use and economic development policies can local govt pursue to help flatten it?
  - Panelist Response(s):
    - To flatten the chain and allow for more direct connections between farmers and consumers, communities need to make sure that they have both the physical and policy infrastructure in place to make this happen. These include farmers' markets and farm stands in the community that can become direct retail access venues for the farmers. In Seminole County (Florida), the Health Department applied for a grant to open a farmers' market in a food desert community. The money is used to subsidize the market's vendors. In addition to these, communities can also help farmers create value added products by making sure that they have access to commercial kitchens to process their products. Finally, urban agriculture ordinances are a must for urban communities that don't have direct access to farmers.
    - For the meat market in particular, we are seeing the risks of having a vertically integrated food supply chain. Local governments could look into policies that support the location of smaller producers and small-scale meat processing facilities and, where they have the ability to do so, could reduce regulatory barriers to incentivize these businesses, in an effort to create a more sustainable and potentially stable supply chain.
  
- **Participant Question #3:** I am a non-profit that redistributes food waste to those who are food insecure. I am now going to continue operating a mobile food delivery instead of wanting a brick and mortar. Any advice or direction on having a food truck to do food deliveries. I am in Atlanta, Ga.
  - Panelist Response(s):
    - We are not readily familiar with the local laws that would impact food trucks and food delivery in Atlanta, but we recommend reaching out to your city's [Office of Resilience](#) to get started.
    - Hebni Nutrition in Orlando operates the Fresh Stop bus, which is a similar concept. More information can be found at <http://www.thefreshstopbus.com/>.

- **Participant Question #4:** Have you found having a local government staff assigned to formal Food security or food access roles helpful? We have seen other local governments improve their planning after adding such a staffer. Our community is considering that.
  - Panelist Response(s):
    - Many cities are recognizing the importance of having dedicated staff working on food systems or food access to increase food security. Boston, as an example, has a new [Office of Food Access](#) that provides resources and programming to create a more food secure community. I think having someone who works on food access at the City level is a great way to connect the dots between other departments that work on issues related to food (health, transportation, planning, economic development, etc.).
    - Other cities, like Minneapolis and D.C. also provide good models for having food policy work strongly tied to city government. In addition, personal experience on a city/county food policy commission that is not highly embedded in the government suggests that it is very easy to be forgotten where that connection is not present.
  
- **Participant Question #5:** A lot of policy movement in terms of food policy and procurement is happening via school wellness policies - we have had a lot success with our school food service provider and getting language in our school wellness policy to require them to meet nutrition standards and procure from local food suppliers - has there been any consideration of the policy index looking at school wellness policies?
  - Panelist Response(s):
    - This is a great point. We agree that schools are instrumental for improving nutrition and can play a big role in supporting local and regional producers. Unfortunately school policies are outside the scope of the Healthy Food Policy Project, so it is not an area we will be indexing.
  
- **Participant Question #6:** How can local food (policy) councils contribute to planning for and best position themselves to serve as resources in emergency response?
  - Panelist Response(s):
    - Strong relationships between local food policy councils and the governments of the municipalities where they are located are very important. Regarding working with the planning department generally, one option is to invite the department to use the human resources of the policy council to do community engagement around new options and ideas. This can be done through tabling at community festivals and events, community farmers' markets, community little league games, school open house nights. Regarding serving as a resource for emergency response, it is important that the policy council have strong, functioning networks that include decision makers at organizations positioned to contribute to a response such as hunger relief organizations, food service establishments, shelters, and schools. When food councils have these relationships they are better positioned to quickly identify and help coordinate solutions.
    - Regional councils are often tasked with coordinating emergency response. It might be a good idea to start developing a relationship with this type of agency to start the conversation.

- **Participant Question #7:** Thanks for organizing this. I serve on our food security task force here in Durham County, NC. Please consider convening a follow-up conversation that allows breakouts and encourages people to share ideas and stumbles with each other.
  - Panelist Response(s):
    - What a fantastic idea. We will definitely consider that suggestion.
  
- **Participant Question #8:** Is there the opportunity to share policies that we know of in our area on your website? Not necessarily COVID-related, but urban gardening ordinances?
  - Panelist Response(s):
    - Absolutely. There is a “suggest a policy” link toward the bottom left of this [page](#).
  
- **Participant Question #9:** Will you share more about labor force/ food workers protections?
  - Panelist Response(s):
    - Thanks for this question. We do not have specific expertise in labor laws, however there are certainly opportunities for local action around issues such as PPE requirements and sick leave. For example, St. Paul, Minnesota is one city that has an employee [safe-and-sick leave policy](#) that could be used as a model for temporary or permanent policies in other jurisdictions. That policy is not specific to food workers, but extends to them and other types of employees.
  
- **Participant Question #10:** What can we do to support our communities to be more resilient? What are some steps that communities and neighborhoods should take?
  - Panelist Response(s):
    - Making the case that the way we’ve built our communities has worsened the crisis could be very effective in promoting resiliency moving forward. I think at some point it will be time to survey what office space and retail aren’t likely to come back in your community; work with your DOT to see if they’re studying what traffic patterns might look like in the future; etc. This will give you some hard data to work with as you approach public officials to push for a human-focused community (e.g., good food access, walkability, livability) rather than one that continues to prioritize things like how profitable a land use is or how efficiently it can move automobiles through it. This is the type of thing that I (Ross) am really thinking a lot about and am happy to talk more with anyone who wants to listen.
    - CAFS has recently published a report on [Food Systems Resiliency](#) that might be worth checking out if you want to learn more about the concept of resiliency and different policy approaches.

#### Shared Resources:

- In the EU, financial aid usually used by governments only for food has been allowed to be used by governments for other necessities; but also to cover costs for safety attire for delivery people, plus also to be used for vouchers rather than the tangible food items . See here: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1089&furtherNews=yes&newsId=9638Coronavirus>
  - The FEAD to continue supporting people in need. Amendments to the FEAD Regulation were adopted on 22 April to meet COVID-19 related challenges, including through enabling the buying of protective equipment for those delivering aid. Food and basic material assistance can be delivered through vouchers, lowering risks of contamination.