

Finding the Role of Faith Communities in Food Sovereignty



Rev. Dr. Olive Hinnant
Caitlin Matthews

photo credit:
Alex Ríos

GETTING TO KNOW WHO'S IN THE ROOM

Please share your...

- Name
- Pronouns
- Church/Community
- What food reminds you of home?





Founded in 2022 by a dedicated steering committee and guided by a strategic retreat with resident leaders, local organizations, and small businesses

OUR MISSION

Food Justice NW Aurora is building a multicultural, intergenerational, and intersectional movement for food justice and food sovereignty to transform our local food system in northwest Aurora, Colorado.

We strive to create a just, sustainable, and complete food environment by mobilizing people, organizations, and businesses; building community wealth; facilitating and nurturing strategic partnerships; and advocating for policy and systems changes.

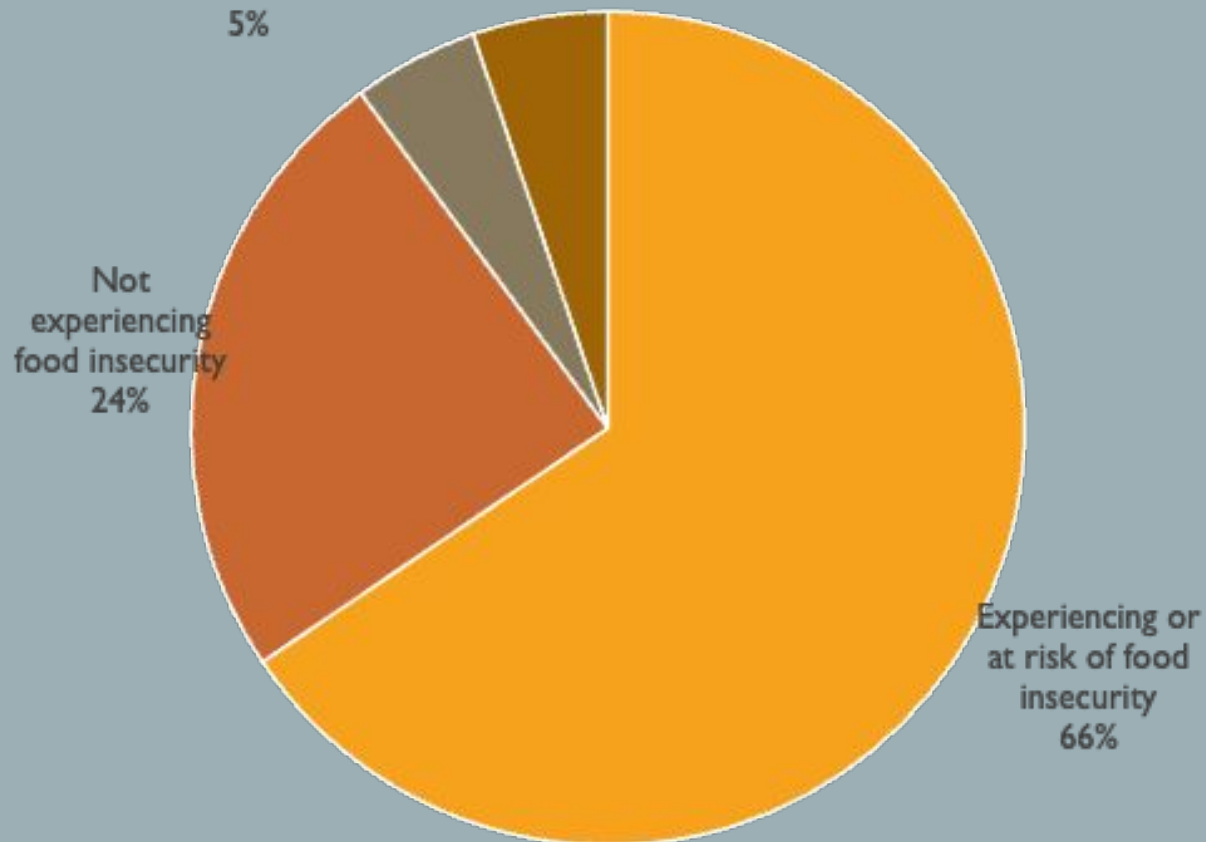


FOOD INSECURITY IN NW AURORA

Food Insecurity Screener (n=267)

Prefer not to
answer
5%

No response
5%



Data collected at the 2023 Food Justice Festival in NW Aurora. Responses include Aurora zip codes and zip codes adjacent to NW Aurora.

11.2%
Food insecurity across Colorado



* Photo from Walmart at
Colfax and Havana on 5.22.24

OUR PILLARS //
NUESTROS PILARES

INCREASE
LOCAL FOOD
PRODUCTION



INCREMENTAR
LA PRODUCCIÓN
LOCAL DE
ALIMENTOS

IMPROVE ACCESS
TO NUTRITIOUS
FOOD



MEJORAR ACCESO A
ALIMENTOS
NUTRITIVOS

BUILD THE FOOD
JUSTICE MOVEMENT
IN NW AURORA



CONSTRUIR EL
MOVIMIENTO DE JUSTICIA
ALIMENTARIA EN EL
NOROESTE DE AURORA

INCREASE LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION

- Cultivate Aurora Community Garden mini-grants launched in 2024
- Cultivate Aurora Community Greenhouse Project
- Multilingual urban ag workshop series



CULTIVATE AURORA VISION

- Grow food-producing plant starts and perennials for Aurora's residents, farms, and organizations
- Provide education and training about urban agriculture and food production to Aurora's residents
- Create year-round and seasonal jobs and offer workforce training







IMPROVE ACCESS TO NUTRITIOUS FOOD WHERE PEOPLE LIVE

- Technical assistance for small food markets
- Retaining existing large grocery stores after Walmart store closure

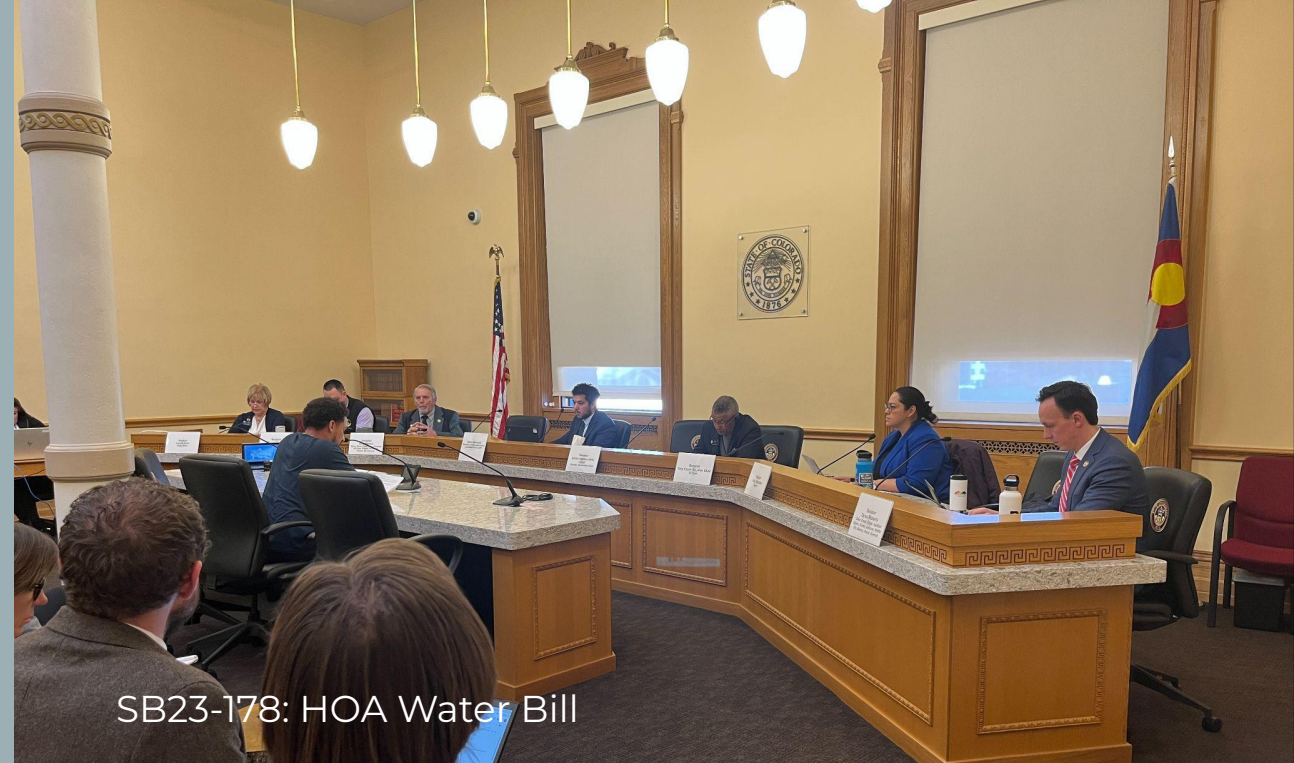


BUILD THE FOOD JUSTICE MOVEMENT IN NW AURORA

GOAL: Engage resident leaders in advancing food justice priorities

APPROACHES:

- Leadership capacity building
- Community Advisory Committee
- Trainings and policy advocacy at the local and state level
- Celebration in community (Food Justice Festival)



DISCUSSION

What activities is your church doing related to food?
How is your church connected to food now?



SPECTRUM OF CONDITIONS IN LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

FOOD
SOVEREIGNTY

FOOD JUSTICE

FOOD
SECURITY

FOOD
APARTHEID

greater localized decision-making power



FOOD APARTHEID

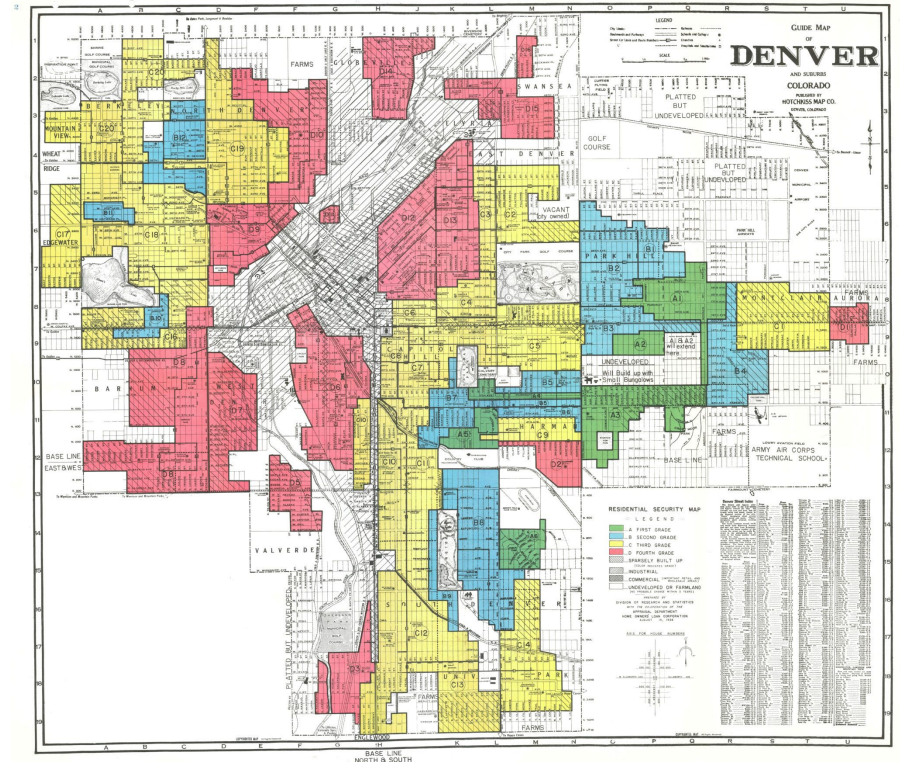
“...the term ‘food apartheid’ is used to highlight the racially discriminatory political structures that past and present impact food access and control.”

“Food apartheid’, on the other hand, communicates that the geographic distribution of increased barriers to food access can be explained not by a community’s lack of initiative, but by the continued legacy of racially discriminatory economic and political structures.”

Source:
<https://utenvironment.org/projects/microfarm/food-justice/glossary/food-apartheid-not-desert/>



photo credit: bluezones.com



Denver's 1934 Residential Security Map

FOOD SECURITY

“the ability to access enough food at all times in order to live a meaningful, active and healthy life”

Source:

<https://intersectionalenvironmentalist.com/toolkits/reimagining-food-justice-food-sovereignty-toolkit>



FOOD JUSTICE

“Food Justice is a holistic and structural view of our food systems that sees healthy food as a basic human right and addresses the structural barriers that obstruct this right. These structural barriers include poverty, racial inequity, and social injustice.”

Source: <https://foodlifeline.org/food-sovereignty>



FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

“Food sovereignty is the right of all people, communities and countries to define agricultural, food and land policies that are ecologically, socially, economically and culturally relevant. Food sovereignty holds that all people have the right to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food and food-producing resources.”

Source:

https://www.emoregon.org/pdfs/IFFP/Food_Sovereignty_for_All_handbook.pdf



DISCUSSION

Historically, where have you seen faith communities engaging in food-related activities across this spectrum?



SIX PILLARS OF FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

“Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.”

Source: Forum on Food Sovereignty, [Declaration of Nyéleni](#) (2007), pg. 9

- **Focuses on food for people**
- **Values food providers**
- **Localizes food systems**



- **Makes decisions locally**
- **Builds knowledge and skills**
- **Works with nature**

Source: Forum on Food Sovereignty, [Declaration of Nyéleni](#) (2007), pg. 39

FROM CHARITY TO SOLIDARITY

“No creo en la caridad; creo en la solidaridad. La caridad es humillante porque se ejerce verticalmente y desde arriba; la solidaridad es horizontal e implica respeto mutuo. Tenemos mucho que aprender de los otros.”

-Eduardo Galeano

"I don't believe in charity; I believe in solidarity. Charity is humiliating because it is exercised vertically and from above; solidarity is horizontal and implies mutual respect. We have much to learn from others."

*-Eduardo Galeano,
Uruguayan journalist and author*

FAITH COMMUNITIES IN THE FOOD JUSTICE MOVEMENT

“A Call to Action: Moving Beyond Charity

Faith communities can play a pivotal role in bringing about the conditions to end hunger. **Congregations often have resources and infrastructure—land, kitchens, buildings and volunteers—that can be harnessed** for community and economic development...Many communities are turning to these kinds of creative solutions to foster self-reliance and social justice.”

(emphasis added)

Source: https://www.emoregon.org/pdfs/IFFP/Food_Sovereignty_for_All_handbook.pdf

FAITH COMMUNITIES IN THE FOOD JUSTICE MOVEMENT

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Customize your initiatives/activities to your community
- Involve those most impacted by injustices in decision making
- Build partnerships local farmers and organizations
- Learn about how food is connected to issues you care about (and remember that food intersects with many other issues - housing, labor, immigration, health care)

FAITH COMMUNITIES IN THE FOOD JUSTICE MOVEMENT

Involve those most impacted by food injustices in planning, decision making, and evaluation

- Collaborating with pantry clients to form an advisory body for the pantry
- Design and evaluate new projects and activities based on greatest needs and aspirations of your congregation and neighborhood
 - [Soul Food Project Advisory Council](#)

FAITH COMMUNITIES IN THE FOOD JUSTICE MOVEMENT

Support local food systems

- Establish partnerships with local farmers, gleaning organizations, food rescue organizations, etc.
- Organizing volunteering with local organizations and farms
- Focus on supporting BIPOC-led organizations and efforts

FAITH COMMUNITIES IN THE FOOD JUSTICE MOVEMENT

Invest in local farmers and food businesses

- Church procurement from local farmers and caterers
- Serve as a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) pickup site
- Circulate your financial resources within your community

FAITH COMMUNITIES IN THE FOOD JUSTICE MOVEMENT

Utilize church infrastructure, like land, kitchens, and buildings, for food production and food businesses

- Utilize surplus land to host a community garden, urban farm, and/or food forest
 - Work with local nonprofits/community-based organizations to use or lease land for food justice initiatives
 - [It Takes A Village Community Farm](#) is a 3-acre farm led by Just Roots in partnership with and on the land of Grace United Church of Christ

FAITH COMMUNITIES IN THE FOOD JUSTICE MOVEMENT

Utilize church infrastructure, like land, kitchens, and buildings, for food production and food businesses

- Use church kitchen for food justice and economic development activities
 - Congregate meals
 - Food preparation literacy and food preservation
 - Rent commercial kitchen to microenterprises
 - [6 Factors to Consider When Renting Out Your Church Kitchen](#)

FAITH COMMUNITIES IN THE FOOD JUSTICE MOVEMENT

Advocate for local, state, and national policies that expand food access, address root causes of food insecurity, defend workers' rights, and create equitable opportunities

- [Lobbying Rules for Houses of Worship](#) (guide)
- [Current vulnerability of SNAP and WIC program funding](#) (Colorado-based call to action)
- [World hunger and USAID](#) (article)
- [Immigration and the US Food System](#) (fact sheet)

DISCUSSION

What other ideas do we have for faith communities in food justice?



DISCUSSION

What is one action (large or small) that you are committing to after this discussion?



FURTHER READING AND WATCHING...

- [TED Talk: A guerrilla gardener in South Central LA](#)
 - Gardening as a revolutionary act
- [Feeding the Soul: A Discussion of Faith and Food Justice](#)
 - Panel discussion of religious leaders exploring connections between food, faith, and justice hosted by CSPI
- [Food Sovereignty for All: Overhauling the Food System with Faith-Based Initiatives](#)
 - A guide from the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon in 2009
- [Reimagining Food Justice + Food Sovereignty Toolkit](#)
 - A toolkit from Intersectional Environmentalist that centers racial justice



www.foodjusticenwaurora.org

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@foodjusticenwaurora



Food Justice NW Aurora

Upcoming...

- **September 27**

Food Justice Festival
from 10am-2pm at the
ABC Community Hub!!
(1635 Paris Street,
Aurora, CO 80010)

2024 Food Justice Festival

NOTE: last year's poster

Festival de Justicia Alimentaria 2024

Saturday, September 27 • Sábado 21 de septiembre
from 10am - 2pm de 10am a 2pm

Fletcher Plaza MLK Library
9898 E Colfax Ave
Aurora, CO

Fletcher Plaza
Biblioteca MLK
9898 E Colfax Ave
Aurora, CO



FREE LUNCH!
local veggies • food trucks
food resources • vendors
info booths • music
kids activities

¡ALMUERZO GRATIS!
verduras locales • vendedores
camiones de comida
recursos alimentarios
mesas de información • música
actividades para niños

CLM 2022



Thank you!

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