



DC Food Policy Council May Meeting
Meeting Notes
May 6th, 2020

You can find the meeting slides [here](#).
You can find the meeting recording [here](#).

1. Introduction
 - a. Email dcfoodpolicy@dc.gov with any follow up questions after meeting
2. New Members:
 - a. Dalila Boclin - Director of Programs, FRESHFARM
 - b. Ronnie Webb - Executive Director of and Co-Founder of The Green Scheme
 - c. Kate Lee, Director of Urban Agriculture of DOEE
 - d. Chris Bradshaw, Founder and Executive Director of Dreaming Out Loud (Reappointed for 2nd Term)
3. Overview of District's Food Response
 - a. Folks should stay home, refrain from making unnecessary trips to stores and consider local delivery options when possible
 - b. You can find the District's food resource map at [Coronavirus.dc.gov/food](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/food)
 - c. Text "Food" or "Comida" to 877877 for an automatic response that points you to meals for kids closest to you (English/Spanish)
 - d. Folks who are quarantined can call 1-888-349-8323 or visit coronavirus.dc.gov/gethelp for a 10-14 day supply of food, hygiene products, prescription drug resources and toilet paper
 - e. DC Hunger Solutions is organizing a webinar on Wednesday, May 13th on federal and local food programs available to families with children during COVID-19. The webinar is targeted to organizations who work directly with District families. You can register for the webinar [here](#).
4. ReOpen DC
 - a. Mayor Bowser has created a ReOpen Advisory Group, made up of over 100 people and 11 subcommittees; you can learn more information [here](#)

- b. Ona (the DC Food Policy Director) is on the Food and Restaurants Committee (including grocery stores, farmers' markets, emergency food providers, etc.)
 - c. Recommendations to the Mayor are due May 13 - any ideas or feedback are welcome. These recommendations will be used to inform the reopening strategy
 - d. The public ReOpen survey is still open until Thursday, 5/06/20 - link is [here](#)
 - e. Most food businesses are partly operating - there is a lot to consider to ensure safety of workers and patrons across food industry
 - f. Mayor is interested in reopening more equitably with a strong emphasis on health and well being
 - g. Ona is incorporating the priorities of the FPC in her recommendations for the committee
5. DHS Update: Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) - Michael Ribar
- a. P-EBT was authorized in March by Congress: P-EBT provides federally funded food benefits for children who otherwise would have received free or reduced meals at school
 - b. Food benefits are equal to the free rate for meals: \$28.50/week provided on an EBT card
 - c. District P-EBT plan is working with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), DCPS and the Public School Charter Board on outreach in order to ensure all eligible students are enrolled in program
 - d. Benefit coverage is March 16-June 19th
 - e. Families with an EBT card (SNAP/TANF) will receive P-EBT automatically on card
 - i. Those without an EBT card because they have not received SNAP/TANF in the past will receive and be able to activate their card from DHS
 - f. Expecting that 68,000 children or 40k families across the District will receive benefits
 - g. OSSE/DCPS is also working to get new families on new school lunch program to ensure they can access the P-EBT benefits
 - i. Families who apply before June 19th will be eligible for a full month allotment once they become certified
 - ii. Families should apply as soon as possible in order to receive the largest benefit as possible -- families who apply in May will receive the May benefits as well
 - h. DHS is working on an outreach plan with OSSE:

- i. Setting up a P-EBT hotline
- ii. Posting and distributing fliers
- iii. LEA communication channels
- iv. Working with the public schools to get the application process up and running again
- v. P-EBT card and benefits can be used on Amazon and any other food providers who accept EBT
- vi. Families who receive P-EBT will get notified of benefit updates through DHS robocalls
- vii. Planning on getting outreach methods up and running by next week

6. DC Health - Sara Beckwith

- a. COVID-19 has shifted time and attention which has meant a delayed release date for the Joyful Food Markets, ProducePlus and Produce RX RFA
- b. DC Health hopes to release the RFA at a later date in 2021; DC Health will push out this information to organizations with ample notice
- c. Thank you to all those who have offered feedback from the last RFA meeting

7. FEMA Reimbursements - Lindsey Palmer

- a. There is a FEMA funding stream for non-profits who are performing emergency work to protect public health and safety related to COVID-19
- b. Nonprofits who are interested must be registered
- c. Nonprofits must own or operate a facility that is providing an eligible service. Food assistance is considered an eligible service.
- d. Nonprofits must be able to demonstrate that they are using their own funds for reimbursement, and there is a cost share of 25%
- e. Funds cannot be used for recouping lost revenue streams or duplicate other funding
- f. Funding is not all inclusive but the activity of purchasing and distribution of food, water and other consumable supplies are eligible purchases
- g. Contact Lindsey Palmer at lindsey.palmer@dc.gov with any questions
- h. Lindsey will be working on a google survey to identify common questions
- i. Q: For organizations working out of an in-kind space, are they eligible?
 - i. Lindsey: will follow up. Total cost for reimbursement must be at least \$3300
- j. Q: The program currently does exist, though slow moving
 - i. FEMA can work with non-profits on their particular questions/cases

- ii. Public Assistance (PA) reimbursement is only available for 501C3s

8. Online SNAP Purchasing - Michael Ribar

- a. USDA approved the District's plan to implement online purchasing
- b. EBT card can be used online at SNAP authorized retailers
- c. Only Amazon has committed to implementing online purchasing at this time
- d. Beneficiaries who use P-EBT are authorized as well
- e. The District is working to expand retailers who can accept online purchases (the USDA approves retailers)
 - i. Caroline Howe is working with the Office of Food Policy to provide support to small retailers and connect with technology partners so as to help overcome hurdles
- f. SNAP cannot be used to pay delivery fees - just purchasing (though there is free delivery for minimum purchase amounts on Amazon)
 - i. All SNAP EBT related information for Amazon can be found [here](#)
 - ii. Free Delivery Minimums
 - 1. Amazon Grocery: \$25 min for free delivery
 - 2. Amazon Fresh: \$35 min for free delivery
 - 3. Amazon Pantry: \$35 min for free delivery
 - 4. [amazon.com/snap-ebt](https://www.amazon.com/snap-ebt)
 - iii. Whole Foods is not included, though products are
 - 1. SNAP only accepted - not TANF - at this time on Amazon
 - iv. Expecting roll out next week for D.C.
 - v. This appears to be a permanent policy change for D.C.

9. Federal Funding Programs; USDA (click links below for more information)

- a. Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Programs - May 18 ([link](#))
 - i. SNAP incentive program for fruits and vegetables
- b. Local Food Promotion Program - May 26 ([link](#))
 - i. Programs to increase local food purchasing
- c. Community Food Projects - June 3 ([link](#))
 - i. Projects to promote local solutions to food insecurity
- d. Regional Food Systems Partnerships- May 26 ([link](#))
 - i. Public-private partnerships to strengthen regional food systems
- e. Urban Ag Grants - July 6 ([link](#))
 - i. Urban Ag and Innovation Production Competitive Grants and Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction Project Cooperative Agreements

10. How can you support the food system?

- a. Continue to stay home!
- b. Volunteer (while practicing social distancing)
 - i. DC Food Project has a great list of local food organizations that need volunteers
- c. Share resources
 - i. Government websites like coronavirus.dc.gov/food
 - ii. DC Food Project: <https://dcfoodproject.org/emergency-food-access>
 - iii. DC Greens: [COVID-19 Resources](#) and [sign up](#) for their newsletter
- d. Learn about the food system
 - i. DPR Urban Grower Classes (May 12- July 28): [register here](#)
 - ii. North American Food Systems Network Webinars: [learn more](#)
 - iii. Food Solutions New England Racial Equity Challenge Resources: [learn more](#)
- e. Buy local
 - i. Support farmers' markets and CSAs whenever possible
 - ii. Patron local food/retail businesses
 - iii. Purchase takeout, delivery and gift cards and tip well!
- f. Donate when able

11. Updates from Working Groups

- a. Food Access and Equity
 - i. The efforts of this group are making a difference in folks' lives
 - ii. Once Lindsey has made Google survey for FEMA reimbursement, this group will ensure that it gets out to all organizations who might need assistance in applying
- b. Urban Agriculture
 - i. Great attendance at the committee meetings and continue to attract folks who are not farmers
 - ii. Awarding of property tax abatement to Uptown Acres (!!!)
 - iii. New farms, including Little Wild Things, are also applying
 - iv. Looking forward to seeing Mayor's budget on May 12 and how this will impact available funds available for urban agriculture
 - v. USDA has released a lot of funding for urban agriculture
 1. \$3 million for innovative projects ([check out more here](#))
 2. Encouraging farms to look at the grant opportunities
 - vi. Common Good City Farms are receiving a FDA food safety audit

1. If they don't receive a good score, they will face hurdles from FDA
 2. Will work to support Common Good and other farmers
- c. Sustainable Supply Chain
- i. Food Works team presented on the Centralized Kitchen Study
 1. Enacted a work plan and reaching out to stakeholders who will be advisors - advisors will be inclusive of geographies and disciplines
 2. Looking at centralized kitchens in other jurisdictions
 3. Reach out to working group or Wendy at wendy@foodworksgroup.com if you'd like to become involved in the study
 - ii. Regional supply chains have been integrated in COVID-19 response
 - iii. Thrilled that the contract for a centralized kitchen went out before COVID-19
- d. Nutrition and Food Systems Education
- i. Food and garden education calls on Wednesdays at 4pm since COVID-19 - join the Google Group for a weekly reminder to participate in the calls: dcfoodeducators@googlegroups.com
 - ii. Continue to discuss how to put together online educational tools as well as summer programming
 - iii. Will be hosting another call next week on live online classes
- e. Entrepreneurship and Food Jobs
- i. Welcomed Ronnie to working group
 - ii. Provided overview of small business resources and technical assistance -- including the Paycheck Protection Program, DMPED Microgrants, and Economic Injury Disaster Loan
 - iii. Spoke about ReOpen committee, including how to pivot businesses during COVID-19
 - iv. Talked about gaps and challenges for food businesses
 - v. Discussed how priorities have changed/stayed the same since COVID-19
 - vi. Email emily.johnson@dc.gov to become a part of the working group

12. Additional Updates

- a. If anyone who is providing emergency food assistance would like to be a part of the 2x weekly emergency food provider call, please reach out Ona
- b. DC Food Project
 - i. Updating food resources page daily

- ii. If additional information should be added, please email DC Food Project
 - 1. Michael/DHS: please email P-EBT updates to DC Food Project to ensure its on the resource page
- c. LEDC is still accepting PPP applications for small food businesses
 - i. So far 34% of the applications are for food businesses
- d. Dreaming Out Loud is looking for cold storage and a truck
- e. SBA opened up the Economic Injury Disaster Loans for agribusinesses
 - i. Food growing businesses are included in these loans

Meeting ended at 6 pm