



**2019
FOOD
JUSTICE
SUMMIT**

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FROM THE GROUND UP:

UNEARTHING ROOT CAUSES

November 4-6th, 2019

Duluth Entertainment Convention Center

Opportunity: Together, we can improve health and prosperity of Minnesota communities by ensuring equitable access to reliable, healthy, safe, affordable, culturally appropriate food for all – especially for those with the least access. The 7th annual Food Justice Summit will bring together organizations, advocates, community members, agencies, farmers, and many more around sharing and building healthier and more just food systems across the state.

Statement of the Situation: In Minnesota alone, an average of 2.2 million households experience lapses in food access (being able to obtain food that is safe, nutritious, and affordable) and food insecurity (being able to obtain such food both physically and economically). These are influenced by “social determinants of health” and “social determinants of equity” – the conditions where people are born, live, work, and age as well as access to resources, income, wealth, justice, health, equitable treatment, etc. Many live in areas short on access to healthy foods, experience low incomes, and rely on tight budgets. People of color, Indigenous communities, under-resourced communities and rural residents suffer the highest rates of preventable, diet-related diseases linked to poor nutrition.

We know we can do better. Minnesota has set a goal to continue developing, supporting, and rebuilding healthy, equitable and affordable food systems (locally, regionally, and statewide). Minnesotans have identified challenges and priorities within the Minnesota Food Charter, a shared roadmap of strategies to improve food access in Minnesota. The work is complex and ongoing. We acknowledge the need to continue to dig deeper into the underlying social inequities that persist throughout our food economy within indigenous communities, communities of color, and rural farming communities.

Background: From 2011 to 2017, Minnesota has hosted the largest food access event in the United States. The Summit has enjoyed steady growth, with attendance doubling since its first convening in 2011. In recent years, over 500 people across the state have attended – a diverse group ranging from hunger relief, education, public health, community organizations, policy, agriculture and other sectors. What makes the Food Justice Summit unique is that it is the only statewide convening that specifically gathers Minnesotans to discuss food from a systemic perspective. Skill-building workshops, arts and culture, facilitated networking, and strategic conversations will build upon, expand, and strengthen the food justice movement throughout Minnesota.

EVOLUTION: FROM ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The Summit Planning Committee voted in January 2019 to transform the name of the Summit from the Food Access Summit into the Food Justice Summit. This name change intends to carry the history and time put into cultivating the Summit since its inception while evolving naturally as the food movement shifts into centering equity and justice at its core.

In late 2018, five in-person and online events were held across Minnesota to better understand participants' past experiences with the 2017 Summit and what they would like to see in the 2019 Summit. The request for these visioning sessions originated from a group of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) attendees who were present at the 2017 Summit as well as information harvested from the Post-Summit survey. The desire to broaden the reach of the Summit and dig deeper into root causes of food insecurity was heard widely. From these five sessions, the perspectives of over 85 people were collected. A common thread among each session was the desire to reconsider the title of the Summit.

The Food Access Summit was created in 2011 to be a common ground for those within the public health and hunger relief communities to connect and learn from one another. As the conference grew, the inclusion of agriculture and other community based organizations became a higher priority.

Language is powerful - it incites emotion and has the ability to bring people together or tear them apart. Access has become a staple word within the food world - lack of access is recognized as a vital component of food insecurity. While this may be true, the term "access" assumes a power dynamic where someone holds the key and someone is allowed access. It does not address the reasoning behind how or why one holds the key and another does not. Honoring the histories and resilience of Indigenous, Black and other communities of color, access only scrapes the surface of the inequities at hand.

As it should be, our work is ever changing and evolving. Community needs, funding, capacity, and passion drive much of our work in attempting to address and remediate issues in our food system. And as our work shifts, so may the way we approach this Summit. Changing the name of this Summit will not instantly solve all inequities, but it is a public step towards acting on values that enforce the need for racial equity to be present as we plan for a more vibrant food system. The concept of justice is not monolithic, but ultimately imbibes principles of community voice and ownership.

CURRENT, NEW, AND EXPANDED AUDIENCE

The Summit will build upon food access work in Minnesota by bringing champions of food justice together while also reaching into new sectors to broaden the scope and impact of food systems work. An emphasis will be placed on highlighting BIPOC/farming communities and the connection to restoring healthy food systems.

Attendance will include representation from the following sectors/communities:

- **Public Health and Health Care** - chronic disease prevention (including public and private associations and institutions)
- **Agriculture** - urban/rural farmers and farm laborers, agriculture policy and union leaders
- **Retailers** - food enterprises, entrepreneurs, farmers markets, grocery stores, food co-operatives
- **Hunger Relief** - food banks, food shelves, emergency food assistance, nonprofit organizations
- **Food Justice** - community organizers and activists, grassroots organizations, youth-led enterprises
- **Local, State, and Federal Government** - elected officials, city and county planners, public health, human services, agricultural departments, etc.
- **Indigenous and Tribal Communities**
- **And more!**

Long-Term Goal: To bring together people working to advance healthy food access to learn from each other's lived experiences & stories, build connections across sector, cultural perspectives, and geography to build alignment and momentum toward collaborative action.

2019 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Moving Towards Justice. Ensure that overlooked communities have voice, presence, and power in shaping Minnesota's food system.

- To develop a shared understanding and common language across sectors and cultural perspectives in areas of tension in the food system
- Build a more cohesive and statewide understanding on the root causes of food insecurity and the role justice plays in healthy and sustainable food systems

Expanded Participation of New Systems and Sectors. The Summit will connect systems and sectors impacting healthy food systems who may not typically work together.

- Build understanding on how food systems work and the sectors that have influence and impact - why farmers or city planners would be included
- Participants will leave impassioned with a broader network of connectivity as well as a stronger understanding of topics such as racial equity, emergency food services, urban/rural farming, policy/advocacy, etc.

Collective Action and Impact. More content will focus on the social determinants of health and the policy, systems, and environments that impact food access, leading to cross-sector collaborative action.

- To build and strengthen relationships across cultural perspectives, sectors, and geography

Food Systems Education. Build upon the established momentum of the MN Food Charter and understand its value as a tool for expanding healthy food access.

- To build enthusiasm for collective action to advance healthy food access
- To build skills and action plans for implementing collaborative action for broader impact