

Florence Fang Community Farm - Case Study and Analysis of Federal Efforts to End Hunger Through Food Justice and Food Sovereignty Initiatives

In 2021, President Joe Biden committed to spending \$10 billion to end hunger, in part to address the more than 38 million people in America who are food insecure and lacking consistent access to food. To investigate a more inclusive approach to ending hunger, this paper summarizes gaps in federal support for Food Justice and Food Sovereignty initiatives that could otherwise play a huge role in ending hunger in America.

Food Security Feeds People but Leaves a Gaping Hole

Food Security is the primary focus of federally supported programs to end hunger. These programs emphasize food access, which ensures the availability of food and individuals' ability to access food. For example, SNAP and CSFP provide funding to low-income families to buy groceries. Programs such as CACFP and NSLP provide prepared meals to children and adults in need. However, these programs leave a gaping hole in people's control of their own food sources. America also needs to support and encourage programs that allows people to feed themselves. The food provided through food access programs mostly comes from large farming operations (which grow with potentially harmful chemicals), major manufacturers (which often make less healthy foods that are highly processed or ultra-processed), and national grocery store chains (which provide homogenized lowest common denominator food rather than respecting different cultural traditions of diverse communities).

Food Justice Empowers People to Grow Their Own Food

The Congressional Hunger Center describes Food Justice as communities exercising their right to grow, sell, and eat healthy food. This expresses itself in urban farms, community gardens, and people learning to grow in their yards. The United Nations estimates that 800 million people practice urban agriculture. Yet, there are no such estimates for America as a nation. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has just begun to understand the impact and operational needs of urban farms. However, USDA policies are still fixated on large, rural farms – leaving out support or funding for local communities to grow their own food. In 2021, the USDA's Urban Farm competitive grants program received 329 applications. Yet only 21 grants were awarded, less than 6.5% of the need of America's urban farms.

Urban farming programs:

- Serve the lowest income residents with cheaper and more available food
- Offer greater social inclusion, community development and local jobs
- Educate the public, and particularly the younger generation on where food comes from and how we can all grow our own food

Food Sovereignty Strengthens the Ethnic Foodways of BIPOC Communities

Homogenized food choices from grocery store chains means that the food preferences of BIPOC communities are left out. The foods that different BIPOC communities are most comfortable eating are unavailable to them. How can BIPOC communities be healthy when they have no access to foods that match their own traditions? Food Sovereignty for BIPOC communities means access to healthy and culturally appropriate food and having the ability to define their own food and agricultural systems. The intermingling of mixed generations and ethnicities enables the sharing of stories and traditions, reproducing original as well as hybrid identity formations and cultural practices. Spaces of food sovereignty allow different cultures to interact and share, growing various foodways and traditions. Currently the federal government provides a few resources to tribal-serving organizations, but there are no efforts to support food sovereignty programs for all Americans.

Food Systems and the Environment

The Rodale Institute in Pennsylvania has estimated that global warming would not only be stabilized, but actually reversed, if food were produced using small farming operations. Large farms are responsible for 60% of

biodiversity loss, 24% of global greenhouse gas emissions, and degrade the earth's natural soil. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recognizes the importance of Urban Farming, but until 2021's passage of President Biden's American Recovery Plan, there was no funding for urban farms and community gardens. Even then, federal support was only included in the EPA's small grants program.

Case Study: Florence Fang Community Farm

Florence Fang Community Farm (FFCF) was founded in 2014 to advance food justice, healthy living, and community resilience. FFCF volunteers do this by giving residents the space, training, and tools they need to feed themselves. FFCF operates in the Bayview/Hunters Point (BVHP) district of San Francisco, historically one of the city's least developed areas, with almost no outlets for fresh produce, and defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as a food desert.

BVHP is the only neighborhood in San Francisco with two freeways cutting through the community. As described by the San Francisco Planning Department in the "Bayview Hunters Point Area Plan," BVHP is an industrial and residential district that has been the locus of some of the city's most noxious and unhealthy heavy industries, including steel manufacturing, ship repair, junk yards, and auto wrecking. The BVHP waterfront also includes the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard that was designated by the Environmental Protection Agency as a Superfund site in 1989.

Here, BVHP residents restored a barren and blighted, one-acre site that housed San Francisco's last operating farm for the benefit of the community and to restore the land for farming. FFCF connects community members, farmers, and business owners to support community resilience, power, ownership and engagement; improve food security and health outcomes among BVHP residents; and advance environmental and ecological justice.

FFCF was San Francisco's first urban farm to focus on traditional Asian farming techniques and has evolved into a USDA-certified, multicultural community farm, based on principles of equity and the progression of ethnic foodways. At FFCF, 100 Black, Asian, and Latinx farmers grow crops side-by-side and participate in events like the semiannual Open Farm Days, which include food and entertainment for the community. FFCF's after school and summer school programs engage local youth, ages 8-12, most of whom are Black and Latinx, to interact and learn with the volunteer farmers, many of whom are older Chinese immigrants. Up to 200 BVHP families receive fresh produce from FFCF through weekly food pantry operations. FFCF leadership reflects the people served by the farm, coming from all ages - elders to just graduated professionals - and different ethnicities - including Asian, Black, Latino and White.

FFCF improves food production, processing, and distribution to provide more fresh produce to more BVHP families, as well as to community organizations, corner stores, and local restaurants and increases the availability of culturally relevant, high quality produce in BVHP. FFCF leverages new and existing community partnerships to train BVHP residents on food sovereignty and food justice. Through these activities, FFCF creates a hyper-local community food system in which BVHP residents and local businesses continue to have a high level of control over their food, from seed to table. Finally, this project, in collaboration with FFCF partners, creates a regenerative urban community farm enterprise model that can be implemented both by other urban farms to achieve long-term financial sustainability and by residential backyard gardeners to become an integral part of their local food economy.

MEDIA

Chairman Jim McGovern Visits the Farm

<https://mailchi.mp/8be4b1296d0b/gong-xi-fa-cai-happy-lunar-new-year-from-the-ffcf-5085840>

Speaker Nancy Pelosi heralds groundbreaking of Community Farm

https://youtu.be/BX16dy_ukEA

Speaker Nancy Pelosi Groundbreaking Remarks

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56629c28e4b02fb598ff8377/t/56dddf9a9f7266c047bd131a/1457381275555/PelosiRemarks041714.png>

Seniors growing their own food and sharing food with the community

<https://videos.aarp.org/detail/video/5828821777001/aapi-hero-nominee-johnny-chen>

Food Equity in San Francisco's most diverse and underserved neighborhood

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/restaurants/article/An-upstart-organic-farm-in-the-Bayview-hopes-to-15440891.php#photo-19734492>

Providing healthy food options grown by and for the neighborhood

<https://www.sfexaminer.com/news/bayview-growers-market-provides-healthy-food-options-grown-by-and-for-the-neighborhood/>

The last San Francisco farm's stubborn final years

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/oursf/article/Our-SF-Last-San-Francisco-Farm-6880913.php>