

MODULE 2: EQUITY IN RESILIENCE

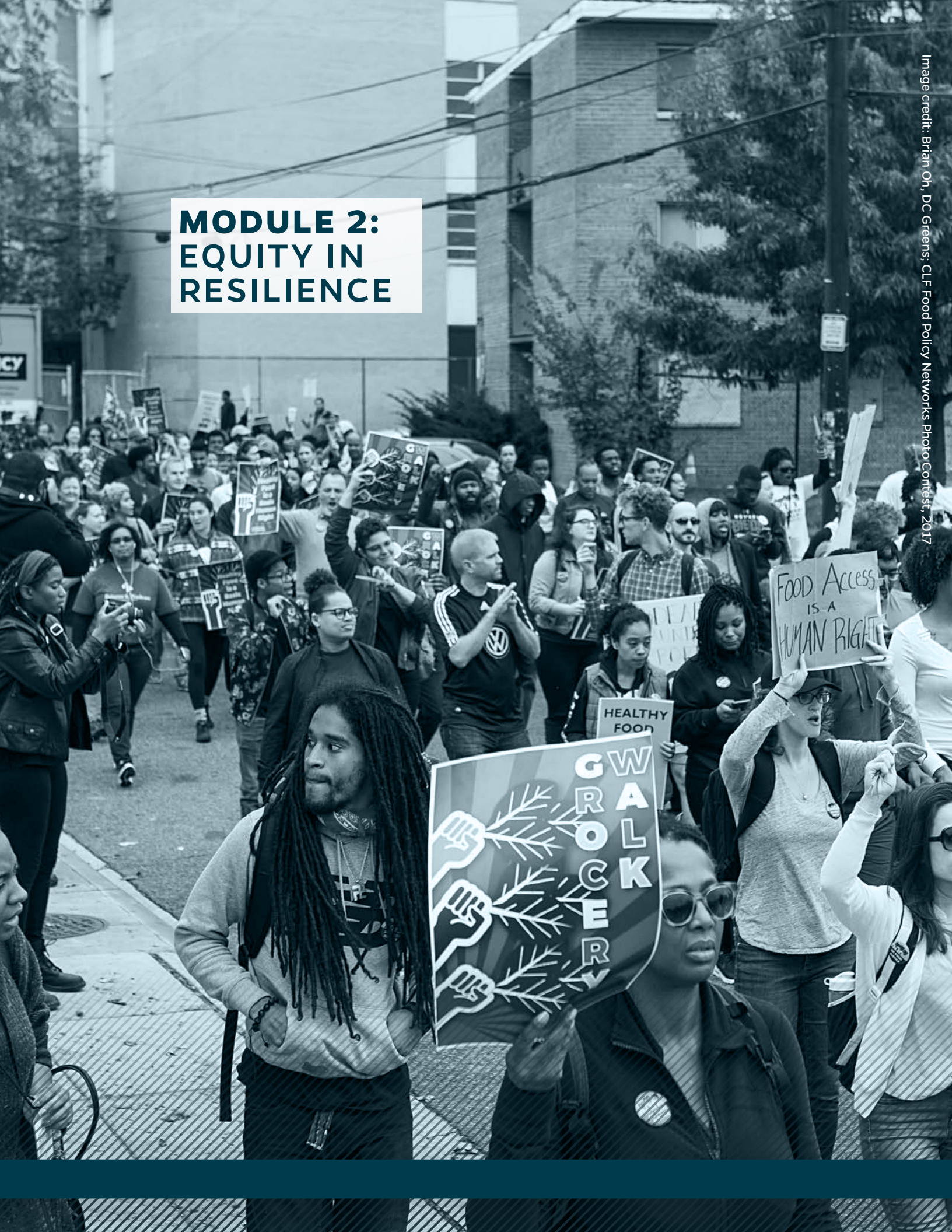


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EQUITY & JUSTICE PRINCIPLES

This section will help you to:

- Understand equity and justice approaches to food system resilience planning, and why they are important
- Apply equity and justice principles to food system resilience work in ways that build procedural, distributional, structural, and intergenerational equity
- Find resources to learn more about inequities and racism in current food systems

This section describes and offers a framework for prioritizing equity and justice in your resilience planning and work. We placed this module at the beginning of the guide to emphasize its importance and help you incorporate equity and justice throughout the entire planning process.

This module does not detail the inequities and structural racism present in food systems. We strongly suggest reviewing the **LEARN MORE ABOUT EQUITY (page 29)** section at the end of this module for more information on centering food system work around equity and justice. If your local government has an Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (or the like), we encourage you to include them in this planning process and work with them to align your work with existing tools, partnerships, and resources.

This module includes the **Equity Considerations to Guide Food System Resilience Planning** tool. This tool provides procedural, distributional, structural, and intergenerational equity considerations to think about and discuss with your community partners and members when developing or implementing food system resilience strategies. This tool should be used as a preliminary step to start conversation and reflect on potential actions and strategies. It is not a comprehensive list of all equity considerations.

AN EQUITY- AND JUSTICE-CENTERED APPROACH

An equity and justice-centered approach to building food system resilience requires that efforts taken before, during, and after disruptions support the development of food systems that provide safe, healthy, affordable, and acceptable food for all. This approach emphasizes that not everyone needs the same kind or amount of support. It addresses underlying structural and systemic injustices that drive differential needs. Further, this approach means the work is not just done for a community but co-owned by and developed with them.

One way to approach food system resilience work from an equity and justice perspective is to ensure it promotes procedural, distributional, structural, and intergenerational equity. Compared to disaster response, resilience planning addresses longer-term goals and thus is an important opportunity to incorporate an equity framework that also takes a long view.

Figure 6 presents these equity objectives and applies them to food system resilience work. The framing of these principles is based on work by the Urban Sustainability Directors Network.¹

Figure 6. Core Equity Principles as They Relate to Food System Resilience Planning.

Procedural	Distributional	Structural	Intergenerational
<p>Procedural equity exists when the development and implementation of actions are “transparent, fair, and inclusive.”¹ One possible way to promote procedural equity is by starting your food system resilience planning process with the people and communities most likely to be impacted by a disruption. Inclusive and open dialogue can help you co-develop the steps your jurisdiction can take to build a more resilient food system.</p>	<p>Distributional equity indicates that resources should be prioritized for communities experiencing the greatest inequalities. Because most local governments have limited or no designated funding for food system resilience work, hard decisions must be made about allocating resources. Prioritizing the communities and locations with the greatest vulnerabilities can help to ensure those communities receive the resources they need to respond to disruptions.</p>	<p>When responding to disruptions, the goal of food system resilience is not to return to the status quo after a disruption but to create a food system that is more equitable and just. Food system resilience planning should uproot the long-term embedded structures of racism that perpetuate inequalities. Within food system resilience planning, this means going beyond the outcomes to the reasons for those outcomes and developing strategies that address the root causes.</p>	<p>The intergenerational equity principle states that “every generation holds the Earth in common with members of the present generation and with other generations, past and future.”² Or put simply, intergenerational equity is the “fairness among generations in the use and conservation of the environment and its natural resources.”² For food system resilience work, this means considering how actions taken today may impact future generations’ access to food system resources.</p>

DEFINING COMMUNITY IN THIS GUIDE

When “community” is mentioned in this guide, it refers to people who live, work, or are connected to the jurisdiction of focus. We acknowledge that there are multiple communities that should be considered in food system resilience planning. We consider the term “community” in this guide to mean members of different communities that are impacted, affected, part of solutions, allies, colleagues, clients, tribes, advocacy groups, interested parties/groups, implementing partners, working partners, funders, etc.

PEER PERSPECTIVE

“Focusing on the community aspect is probably the most important; start there.”

(Food System Resilience Community of Practice participant, statement edited for clarity)

APPLYING AN EQUITY- AND JUSTICE-CENTERED APPROACH

- 1. Procedural equity:** Establish “transparent, fair, and inclusive” food system resilience planning, implementation, and evaluation processes¹

Building food systems that can outlast whatever challenges the future brings requires building authentic and long-lasting relationships between government actors and community partners. All elements of community engagement should be bi-directional and built on trust and open communication between government and community partners. Many resources exist to guide you through principles and methods of community engagement (see the **LEARN MORE ABOUT EQUITY (page 29)** section at the end of this module), but when applying them to food system resilience work, we suggest keeping these questions in mind:

- **Who is included in and representing the community?**
 - As you begin the process of food system resilience planning, consider: What do you mean by “community”? Who is included? Who is not included? Do the people in your community with whom you have relationships represent the diversity of views and experiences from the communities they represent? For the engagement to be equitable and just, prioritize communities that could be most negatively impacted by a disruption in the food system and use strategies that meaningfully include them in the process.
- **Is the community engaged at all steps of the process?**
 - As a core principle of urban planning, community engagement should occur throughout the entire process of preparing, assessing, planning, implementing, and evaluating food system resilience strategies. Consider the ways in which you engage with your community so as to remove barriers to participation and create accessible spaces to engage (e.g., consider location, timing, transportation, childcare, providing food, etc.).
- **Is the process giving equal weight to diverse voices?**
 - Unfortunately, in some approaches, diversity can be a checkbox as an organization moves through a process and diverse voices are marginalized, quieted or ideas are blatantly dismissed. Throughout the planning process, diverse voices should not only be included but it is critical that they are valued and given equal weight in decision-making.

PROCEDURAL EQUITY EXAMPLE: BALTIMORE FOOD POLICY INITIATIVE

[Baltimore Food Policy Initiative](#) (BFPI) is an interagency collaborative supported by the City of Baltimore Department of Planning, Baltimore City Health Department, and Baltimore Development Corporation.

The initiative has two ways in which community partners can be involved and contribute to food policy planning and action. The BFPI convenes bimonthly with the Food Policy Action Coalition (Food PAC) to network, learn, and engage in discussion around food policy in the city. Food PAC consists of over 60 community partners, mostly nonprofit staff, university students and faculty, farmers, and business owners. In addition, BFPI works with residents as Resident Food Equity Advisors to learn about the City's food and governance systems, share perspectives on neighborhood food environments, and create policy recommendations for city officials to consider.

- 2. Distributional equity:** Ensure the benefits and burdens of your food system resilience planning are equitably distributed¹

The causes and impacts of food system disruptions and the resources available to recover from them are not equally distributed across all communities. Neighborhoods where low-income and marginalized communities, including Black, Indigenous, and people of color, live have greater exposure to environmental hazards^{3,4}, have fewer economic resources to prepare for and overcome disruptions⁵, and are disproportionately excluded from the decisions that could reduce these harms.⁶ Additionally, other types of inequities that are particularly relevant for food system resilience, such as primary language spoken, disability status, immigrant or undocumented status, and low socioeconomic status should be considered.

Analyzing and visualizing population data, for example with maps, to identify inequalities, draw connections, and understand trends across systems, such as healthcare, housing, transportation, and food, can better inform policies and create more effective programs. Consider using publicly available datasets such as the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Social Vulnerability Index](#) to help illustrate the unequal distribution of social vulnerabilities in the United States.

Not only do distributional equity approaches consider the disparities across communities, but they also recognize community assets, including networks of people and organizations, local programs and initiatives, and physical resources. Understanding the layering of individual and community needs, along with the scope of resources available, or lack thereof, can help to appropriately distribute what is needed during any given disruption. It is essential to include community members in data collection efforts to incorporate community-identified deficits and assets, and perceptions of space. Participatory mapping approaches, where community partners identify the salient data and create maps based on their knowledge of their environments, can be an effective strategy to engage and learn from the community.

- 3. Structural equity:** Uproot long-term, embedded structures that perpetuate inequitable food system and resilience outcomes¹

Addressing vulnerabilities through food system resilience planning requires moving beyond identifying the lack of resources to ultimately understanding the reasons these conditions and environments exist. To do this, we must take a critical look at past and current policies and practices. For example, the historical policy of redlining, whereby the (US) Home Owners'

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND BUILDING TRUST

How can community engagement support long-term trust and relationships between government and community partners?

Trust between government and community members is critical in order to react and respond in a quick and coordinated manner during a disruption. Engaging community is more effective when seen and implemented not as the end goal, but as an on-going process towards building and sustaining long-term relationships between local government and community members. Building long-term relationships requires trust, respect, and open communication. Listen to and respect community partners' knowledge. Practice accountability by not only listening to community voices but accurately reflecting their input in goals and actions so there is true co-ownership in the planning process.

Loan Corporation used ranked color-coded maps to exclude racial minorities from financial assistance and ultimately obtaining housing in certain neighborhoods⁷, has had lasting impacts on many communities and food systems.⁸ Additionally, historical practices such as those used by local USDA county committees to deny farm loans or offer worse loan terms to Black farmers more frequently than white farmers have led to significant loss of Black farmers and land owned by Black farmers.⁹ Current policies, such as zoning regulations, can also influence a community's food environment, such as locations for supermarkets or urban farms.

Data, such as the previously mentioned Social Vulnerability Index, can be used to depict distributional inequities, as well as to examine change over time. Consider the following questions when looking at data across your jurisdiction:

- How has your community changed or stayed the same over time?
- Are there neighborhoods in your community that have fared better or worse?
- What policies or practices (historical or current) may have contributed to the changes you observe?
- What practices outside of food systems may have contributed to inequities in your community? Consider housing, transportation, education, and others.

4. Intergenerational equity: Actions taken today conserve resources for future generations²

When responding to a disruption, the focus is often on emergency response efforts. This is justified, but competing priorities often arise before there is time to work on long-term resilience planning. It is critical to work on these long-term changes that uproot the inequitable systems now to make improvements for future generations. By planning now and addressing potential future disruptions, we can protect resources for future generations. Consider involving partners outside of the food system space who address natural resources, including environmental protection agencies, farmland, soil or water conservation organizations, and air quality advocates. Ensure a variety of ages, from youth to elderly, are included in the process.

DISTRIBUTIONAL EQUITY EXAMPLE: DANE COUNTY OFFICE OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Since 2015, the Dane County Office for Equity and Inclusion in Wisconsin has made intentional investments in county-based community groups addressing systemic racial inequalities in health, education, employment, or criminal justice through the [Partners in Equity Racial Equity and Social Justice Grant](#). Partnering with the Dane County Food Council, the Office of Equity and Inclusion also offers the Partner in Equity Food Project grant to support projects that advance equity and access in local food systems across the county. Programs like these can help to prioritize and support projects centered in communities most in need.

PEER PERSPECTIVE

“[COVID-19] exposed all the cracks in our system—unemployment, people’s access to food, reliance on free and reduced lunch—it really indicated so many other pieces in our system that are just failing...food is a really interesting lens through which we can see this stuff because it touches everybody.”

(Food System Resilience Community of Practice participant, statement edited for clarity)

STRUCTURAL EQUITY EXAMPLE: CULTIVATE CHARLOTTESVILLE FOOD JUSTICE NETWORK

The [Cultivate Charlottesville Food Justice Network](#) in Virginia is a network of over 35 organizations that successfully advocated for the Charlottesville City Council to take steps to reshape community health, wealth, and belonging by appropriating funds for the Food Equity Initiative. The Initiative brings together community members, City departments, and Charlottesville City Schools to identify policies and funding to tackle the root causes of food insecurity. A 2021 policy platform identified priority policies at the intersections of food equity, healthy school food, affordable housing, urban agriculture, food access, and transportation.

INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY EXAMPLE: AUSTIN YOUTH CLIMATE EQUITY COUNCIL

A new partnership between the City of Austin's Office of Sustainability, Austin Independent School District and nonprofit leaders is creating an opportunity for youth to inform government climate actions. The [Austin Youth Climate Equity Council](#) is made up of 18 high school students who work with city officials and local partners to learn about sustainability and city planning, and to engage in and inform local climate action efforts.

LEARN MORE ABOUT EQUITY

- [Tools and Resources on how Local Government can Work to Advance Racial Equity](#): Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race and Equity
- [An Annotated Bibliography on Structural Racism Present in the U.S. Food System, Eight Edition](#): Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems
- [Measuring Racial Equity in the Food System: Established and Suggested Metrics](#): Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems
- [Racial and Social Equity Assessment Tool for Farm to School Programs and Policy](#): National Farm to School Network
- [A Guide to Equitable, Community-Driven Climate Preparedness Planning](#): Urban Sustainability Directors Network
- [Racial Equity Tools for Food Systems Planning](#): University of Wisconsin Department of Urban and Regional Planning
- [Equity Capacity Building Resource List](#): Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future
- [Mapping inequality: Redlining in New Deal America](#): University of Richmond, Virginia Tech, and University of Maryland
- [Rebuilding our Cities with an Equity Lens- Self Guided Online Course](#): GovEx Academy
- [Equity in Planning Committee](#): The City of Baltimore Department of Planning
- [Equity in Sustainability: An Equity Scan of Local Government Sustainability Programs](#): Urban Sustainability Directors Network
- [Getting Equity Advocacy Results: Build the Base for Equity Advocacy—Equitable Development Toolkit](#): PolicyLink
- [A Blueprint for Changemakers: Achieving Health Equity Through Law & Policy](#): ChangeLab Solutions
- [The Principles for Equitable and Inclusive Civic Engagement: A Guide to Transformative Change](#): Ohio State University Kirwan Institute

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TOOL #1. EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS TO GUIDE FOOD SYSTEM RESILIENCE PLANNING

Description:

Use this tool as a first step in reviewing any proposed policy, program, initiative, budget, etc. related to food system resilience to consider whether it is helping to advance equity and justice. Ideally, you will use this tool with your community partners. This tool is not a comprehensive list of all equity considerations, but it provides a starting point to guide conversation and reflection. You should revisit this tool as actions are modified or new strategies are recommended or developed.

A Microsoft Excel version of this tool is available for [download here](#).

Instructions:

1. Select an action (a proposed or in-progress policy, program, initiative, budget, etc.) that aims to build food system resilience.
2. For each question, consider how the action supports procedural, distributional, structural, or intergenerational equity principles.
3. Use the questions as a way to start conversations with your community partners and community members and to discuss how the action may or may not fully support equity principles.
4. You may find that some considerations do not apply to the action you are assessing or you may decide that you want to reconsider the chosen action. Remember, this list of questions is a starting point, and further review will be needed. Revisit this tool often as you consider new strategies and actions to build food system resilience.

TEMPLATE. EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

Brief Description of Action:	
Consideration	Response
Procedural Equity: Establish “transparent, fair, and inclusive” food system resilience planning, implementation, and evaluation processes¹	
Was the action based on a suggestion from community members?	
Does this action explicitly include a strategy for direct representation by community partners? ²	
Does this action have a process to collaborate with communities that experience the greatest inequities? ³	
Does this action include a plan for ongoing engagement of community partners throughout implementation to support community-based work and evaluations? ³	
Is there a plan for how to communicate progress and outcomes to community partners? ³	
Is there a plan in place to share data with community partners? ³	
Is there a plan or policy for how to equitably share responsibility, including funding and/or credit for the action, if applicable, with community partners? ³	
Is there a plan to ensure people are treated openly and fairly? ¹	
Is there a plan for how to include and support (e.g., stipends) community members or individuals from communities that experience the greatest inequities in the process, including in leadership roles? ²	
Will this action provide opportunities for local capacity building for community partners? ³	
Distributional Equity: Ensure that the benefits and burdens of your food system resilience planning are equitably distributed.¹	
Will this action prioritize appropriate resources to communities that experience the greatest inequities? ¹	
Will this action benefit food system workers? ²	
Is there a plan in place to evaluate the equity impact of this action including potential unintended consequences? ^{2,3}	
Structural Equity: Uproot long-term embedded structures that perpetuate inequitable food system and resilience outcomes.¹	
Does this action explicitly address racial equity? ³	
Will this action provide opportunities or directly support communities of color, indigenous communities or communities that experience the greatest inequities to build wealth? ³	

Brief Description of Action:	
Consideration	Response
Will communities that experience the greatest inequities immediately have greater control over food system resources as a result of this action? ²	
Will this enable communities that experience the greatest inequities to have greater control over food system resources long-term ? ²	
Will this action work toward providing living wages for food system jobs? ²	
Will this action create immediate change in how the food system affects communities that experience the greatest inequities? ²	
Will this action create systemic change in how the food system affects communities that experience the greatest inequities? ²	
Will this action correct past harms? ¹	
Intergenerational Equity: Consider how actions taken today may impact future generations.⁴	
Will this action help preserve resources for future generations?	
Is there a plan to include multi-generational voices in the development, implementation, and evaluation of this action?	
Have you considered the potential unintended consequences of this action? If yes, how will you mitigate those consequences? ¹	
Is there a plan for how to support the long-term viability of this action (e.g., sustainable funding)?	

TOOL REFERENCES

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