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# Food Justice Movement

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[Jump to navigation](#)[Jump to search](#)

## Contents

[hide]

- **1**Introduction
- **2**Research and theory
  - 2.1Food Movements and Race/History.
- **3**Food Justice and Policy
  - 3.1Agricultural Justice Project
  - 3.2Coalition of Immokalee Workers
  - 3.3Community to Community Development
  - 3.4Familias Unidas por la Justicia
  - 3.5Farm Aid
  - 3.6Food First
  - 3.7Food Chain Worker's Alliance
  - 3.8Food Empowerment Project
  - 3.9Land Loss Prevention Project
  - 3.10Migrant Justice
  - 3.11National Black Farmers Association
  - 3.12National Farmers Union
  - 3.13National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association
  - 3.14Real Food Challenge:
  - 3.15Rural Coalition:
  - 3.16Rural Advancement Foundation International
  - 3.17ROPPA
  - 3.18Soul Fire Farm
  - 3.19United Farm Workers
  - 3.20Via Campesina
  - 3.21San Diego Food Sytem Alliance
  - 3.22National Black Food & Justice Alliance
- **4**Racism in the Food Industry: How fast food industries disproportionately target Black kids.
- **5**'*Food Deserts*'
  - 5.1From Food Deserts to Food Apartheid
  - 5.2Food Mirages and Food Swamps
- **6**Structural Inequities that Created Disparity
  - 6.1Residential Segregation Leads to Commercial Flight
- **7**Health Outcomes Related to Nutrition in Communities of Color
  - 7.1Victim Blaming
- **8**Food Sovereignty and the Global South
- **9**Possible Solutions
  - 9.1Urban/Community farms
  - 9.2Produce Availability
  - 9.3Food Vending
  - 9.4SNAP and other Food Assistance Programs

- 9.5 Education
- 9.6 GMO's
- 9.7 Notable Food Justice Advocates/ Food Justice Groups
- 10 See also
- 11 References

## Introduction [\[edit source\]](#)

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The **Food Justice Movement** is described as a grassroots initiative emerging from many communities in response to food insecurity and economic pressures that prevent access to healthy, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods.<sup>[1]</sup> Food justice emerged as a way of applying food security and anti-hunger movements to policy by drawing from established social and environmental theoretical frameworks. Food justice is not an identified organization acting in solidarity; rather, it is used to describe the growing distribution of local movements acting in advocacy for healthy, appropriate, and sustainable food production, as well as more broad policy movements such as the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations' declaration of every person's right to food.<sup>[2]</sup> Food justice is also a social justice movement as it "demands recognition of human rights, equal opportunity, and fair treatment"<sup>[3]</sup> Crucially, food justice informs "an analysis that recognizes the food system itself as a racial project and problematizes the influence of race and class on the production, distribution and consumption of food".<sup>[4]</sup> Food justice also relates to topics such as farm labor work, land disputes and topics of status and class. Often, issues of environmental justice, public politics and advocacy as well as social and cultural dynamics are involved in the large conversation of food justice. Moreover, it centres the voices and experiences of communities of color and low-income communities that are most often rendered invisible in the dominant narratives surrounding the food system.<sup>[4]</sup> Food justice is also closely connected with [Food sovereignty](#) in that it critiques "structural barriers communities of color face to accessing local and organic foods" that are largely due to institutional racism and the effect it has on economic equality.<sup>[5]</sup>

The modern Food Justice movement was largely a result of the formation of the [Community Food Security Coalition](#) (CFSC) in 1996, which was created to provide access to affordable, culturally appropriate, healthy food across all races and classes of Americans. However, a significant shortcoming of this group, was that it was composed entirely of white Americans, and accepted little input from residents of the food insecure areas the CFSC was trying to support.<sup>[4]</sup>

Criticism of the food justice movement often points out that the food justice movement does not focus on the antiracist history from which it originated. Instead, it emphasized the consumption of local and fresh fruits and vegetables, and thereby removed race from the conversation. Director of Nuestras Raíces Daniel Ross points out that:

...food security cannot be divorced from the issues of concern to communities [...] food and agriculture lends itself to addressing [racism and power imbalances] because food is so central to communities and, if you had working communities, you'd have justice and equality. [...] At the heart is the element of justice.<sup>[6]</sup>

Other scholars who have done research in food justice and related topics include Monica M. White whose research is focused on the primarily black community in Detroit. In her article *Sisters of the Soil: Urban Gardening as Resistance in Detroit*, she discusses the work of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (DBCFSN) that uses farming as a way to alleviate food insecurity and make political statements. White cites the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey of 2005-2006 to point out that 52.9% of black women are obese, compared to 37.2% of black men and 32.9% of white women due to phenomena like food deserts and food insecurity. Because the socioeconomic status of black communities in Detroit are a huge part of the food insecurity issues black communities face, this serves as an example for the inseparability of food justice movements and social reform.<sup>[7]</sup>

Solutions such as policy change and community farms will be discussed throughout this article. Food Justice in the global setting, such as South Africa's [Land Reform](#), will also be touched on.

Article 25 of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) states: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."

The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations states that the right to food is "The right to feed oneself in dignity. It is the right to have continuous access to the resources that will enable you to produce, earn or purchase enough food to not only prevent hunger, but also to ensure health and well-being. The right to food only rarely means that a person has the right to free handouts." <sup>[2]</sup>

Chocolate of Peace is a part of the food justice movement. It is the work of a British-Columbian team who believe in transformative power. They are a group of victims of the armed conflict and have been using grassroots for twenty years to create peace. However, the government of Juan Manuel Santos and the FARC-EP guerrilla is hard to make negotiations with and even though the Community's efforts are noticed in international human rights circles, many Columbians are unaware of the peace movement.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) which is apart of USDA's Research, Education, and Economics mission area (REE), NIFA is an agency that uses federal funding in order to address agricultural and food justice related issues that impact peoples daily lives. This is a collaborative effort that uses scientists and research in order to locate and find solutions to issues in the agricultural chain. They use science-policy decision making, something to keep in mind when asking what problems are being fixed and for what purpose. <sup>[8]</sup>

## Research and theory [\[edit source\]](#)

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There is a plethora of research pertaining to community gardens, urban farming, and their impact on local communities. <sup>[9]</sup> The literature tries to connect the activities of community gardens and urban agricultural projects to social, health, and economic outcomes. However, due to the overwhelming lack of diversity in the perspectives that inform the food justice movement, a new concept of *just sustainability* <sup>[1]</sup> has been proposed. To address white and middle class culture dominating the discussion and priorities of organic food and sustainability practices, a more multi-cultural and intersectional approach is suggested that includes the narratives of historically marginalized communities. <sup>[1]</sup>

The modern Food Justice movement was largely a result of the formation of the [Community Food Security Coalition](#) (CFSC) in 1996, which was created to provide access to affordable, culturally appropriate, healthy food across all races and classes of Americans. However, a significant shortcoming of this group, was that it was composed entirely of white Americans, and accepted little input from residents of the food insecure areas the CFSC was trying to support. <sup>[10]</sup>

### **Food Movements and Race/History.** [\[edit source\]](#)

Positionality and the different food movement perspectives. "Pollan's analysis presumes that food-ways are individual choices removed from their social and economic constraints. In a critique rooted in the environmental justice movement, food justice activists demonstrate that institutional racism, in its intersections with economic inequality, has stripped communities of color of their local food sovereignty, preventing many of them from eating in the way the food sovereignty, preventing many of them from eating in the way the food movement describes as proper. By aiming their critique at the structural barriers communities of color face to accessing local and organic food, the food justice

movement hopes to craft collective racial and cultural identities through the celebration of particular foods while reaching out to those whose food-ways still reflect the dominance of American agribusiness.” Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability edited by Alison Hope Alkon, Julian Agyeman, Mun S. Ho, Robert Gottlieb

## Food Justice and Policy[\[edit source\]](#)

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<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0739456X04264886> According to Wekerle, Food Justice has emerged as a way of applying food security and anti-hunger movements to policy. “Theoretically, the food justice frame opens up linkages to a wider range of conceptual frameworks drawn from the literature on democracy, citizenship, social movements, and social and environmental justice.” Food justice emerged as a way of applying food security and anti-hunger movements to policy by drawing from established social and environmental theoretical frameworks. The food justice movement is related to food sovereignty in that it critiques “structural barriers communities of color face to accessing local and organic foods” (Alkon et al) that are largely due to institutional racism and the effect it has on economic equality.

Fighting for family farmers to keep and sustain their land, or ensuring access to healthy foods to those previously denied affordable nourishment, there are many ways folks contribute to remedy the accessibility of quality of food in the US. Listed below are a few organizations around the world expanding the vision of food justice and pursuing tangible

### **Agricultural Justice Project**[\[edit source\]](#)

AJP develops and distributes the Food Justice Certified label, which ensures that all workers and farmers are treated and compensated fairly. Operating on the principle that “transparency = trust”, AJP is bringing the international fair trade program to the U.S. context, setting the bar with high standards for food system transformation.

### **Coalition of Immokalee Workers**[\[edit source\]](#)

Recently profiled in the feature-length film Food Chains, the CIW has been organizing since 1993 for farmworker justice, starting with tomato pickers in Immokalee, Florida. Along with growing high-profile campaigns, they launched the Alliance for Fair Food, a network of people working in solidarity with CIW. Their Fair Food Program (est. 2011) is a model for worker-driven social responsibility for participating retailers, with wins from 14 buyers so far, including McDonald’s and Walmart. <http://ciw-online.org>

### **Community to Community Development**[\[edit source\]](#)

With a deeply participatory and democratic organizational structure, Community to Community Development is led by women of color to advance immigrant rights and food sovereignty. Based out of Washington State, C2C engages in projects to empower communities through participatory democracy and movement building for food justice. <http://www.foodjustice.org>

### **Familias Unidas por la Justicia**[\[edit source\]](#)

This collection of farm-workers’ primary focus is a boycott of Driscoll’s and Sakuma berries (provider for Driscoll’s), until the Sakuma brothers provide the opportunity to negotiate a contract to ensure fair treatment and wages. This ongoing dispute is an attempt to make up for years of experiencing wage theft, poverty wages, hostile working conditions, and unattainable production standards. <http://familiasunidasjusticia.org/en/home/>

### **Farm Aid**[\[edit source\]](#)

Starting in 1985 as a benefit concert with Willie Nelson, John Mellencamp, and Neil Young, Farm Aid now works year-round to keep family farmers thriving on their land across the United States. The annual music and food festival provides funds for 24/7 access to resources farmers need, supporting

nonprofits, and ongoing advocacy, totaling to over US\$50 million over the past 30 years. <https://www.farmaid.org>

### **Food First**[\[edit source\]](#)

Also known as the Institute for Food and Development Policy, Food First provides research and analysis that works to eliminate injustices that cause hunger. Their approach since 1975 has been to work alongside social movements, which focuses their research on the needs of farmers and their communities instead of the corporate food industry. <https://foodfirst.org>

### **Food Chain Worker's Alliance**[\[edit source\]](#)

Operating as a coalition of worker-led organizations, FCWA alliance works for improved conditions and wages for workers across the food chain, at every stage from harvest to transport, and preparation to serving. Based out of L.A., FCWA has represented hundreds of thousands of workers – and growing – since 2009. <http://foodchainworkers.org>

### **Food Empowerment Project**[\[edit source\]](#)

FEP believes in the creation of a more just and sustainable world through the power of food. A vegan food justice organization based in California, FEP engages in activism that ties together the struggles of underpaid workers, abused animals, and depleted natural resources as one cause for food justice. <http://www.foodispower.org/about-f-e-p/>

### **Land Loss Prevention Project**[\[edit source\]](#)

A Durham, NC based organization, LLPP has been advocating for and supporting farmers in crisis since 1983. The project started as a group of Black lawyers providing legal assistance, in response to inordinate losses of Black owned land in North Carolina. Litigation, public policy engagement, and promotion of sustainable agriculture now comprise LLPP's activities to keep land in the hands of minorities. <https://www.landloss.org/index.html>

### **Migrant Justice**[\[edit source\]](#)

Migrant Justice is based out of Burlington, VT, where community members have gathered since 2009 to build the power of farm-workers organizing for economic justice and human rights. They are committed to collective solutions to shared problems in the food system, with several legislative wins and ongoing Milk with Dignity campaign. <http://www.migrantjustice.net>

### **National Black Farmers Association**[\[edit source\]](#)

John W. Boyd, Jr., third generation farmer determined to save his farm from foreclosure, started the National Black Farmers Association in 1995. Black farmers have been historically denied subsidies, loans, and other services from the USDA that escalated black land loss, so the NBFA works to ensure black farmers can now access these services, along with education and advocacy on civil rights, land retention, and rural development. NBFA worked closely on the Pigford v. Glickman class action discrimination suit to ultimately win the US\$2 billion settlement for black farmers across the nation. <http://www.nationalblackfarmersassociation.org>

### **National Farmers Union**[\[edit source\]](#)

National Farmers Union has operated with a grassroots model since its founding in Texas in 1902. With divisions in 33 states, NFU now aims to improve the well-being of family farmers, fishers, ranchers and rural communities across the country, through policy advocacy for co-operative rights, fair market access, and more. <https://nfu.org>

### **National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association**[\[edit source\]](#)

NLFRTA started in Washington, D.C. in 2004 to ensure the full inclusion of Latino farmers in public policy discussions, in response to an absence of Latino voices. Through facilitating meetings with



elected officials, educational outreach, forums, and more, NLFRTA is committed to the longevity of Latino producers throughout the United States and beyond. <http://www.nlfrta>.

### **Real Food Challenge:**[\[edit source\]](#)

Real Food Challenge encompasses the national student movement to leverage university purchasing power in support of a just and sustainable food system. This student activist network is committed to envisioning the future of the movement for food justice, starting by shifting \$1 billion to support local/community-based, fair, ecologically sound and humane food sources (i.e. “real food”) by 2020. <https://www.realfoodchallenge.org>

### **Rural Coalition:**[\[edit source\]](#)

This alliance of farmers, farm-workers, indigenous, migrant and working people from rural areas is also one of the most diverse of rural groups. A deeply grassroots driven organization, Rural Coalition is based out of Washington, D.C. to impact federal policies relevant to rural people, particularly the Farm Bill. <https://www.ruralco.org>

### **Rural Advancement Foundation International**[\[edit source\]](#)

– RAFI: RAFI supports socially just and environmentally sound farming through advocating for market access and relevant policies, and providing education and assistance to farmers. An international organization incorporated in 1990, much of their work focuses on farmers in the Southeastern United States. <http://rafiusa.org>

### **ROPPA**[\[edit source\]](#)

Reseau Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricoles de l’Afrique de l’Ouest // Network of Peasant Organizations and Producers in West Africa – Since 2000, ROPPA has fought for the interests of West African producers in policy discussions otherwise dominated by financial interests. ROPPA bridges the gap between policymakers and farmers, ensuring their place in the debate for funding, research, and technical assistance to support the producers they represent from 13 countries. <http://www.roppa-afrique.org>

### **Soul Fire Farm**[\[edit source\]](#)

Soul Fire Farm is a working farm in New York State, dedicated to ending racism and injustice in the food system by raising life-giving food and training the next generation of activist-farmers who will quite literally grow the movement. Sharing skills in sustainable agriculture with diverse audiences, the farm supports many immersions, apprenticeships, and retreats, and classes, as well as international solidarity in food sovereignty. <http://www.soulfirefarm.org>

### **United Farm Workers**[\[edit source\]](#)

The “original” union for food justice, United Farm Workers of America was founded by Cesar Chavez in 1962. As the nation’s first successful and largest farm workers union, UFW continues to win union contracts with prominent operations and advocate for policy protections for farm-workers – most recently, with historic expansion of overtime pay in California (AB 1066 passed California legislature Aug 29 – Gov. Brown still needs to sign into law) <http://ufw.org>

### **Via Campesina**[\[edit source\]](#)

La Via Campesina is the international peasant’s movement, born in 1993. The movement defends the foremost values of their members, encompassing “small- and medium-sized producers, landless, rural women, indigenous people, rural youth and agricultural workers,” from 69 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas. La Via Campesina fights for their ability and right to make decisions about lands, territories, water, seeds, livestock and biodiversity in the interest of health and sustainability. <https://viacampesina.org/en/>

### **San Diego Food System Alliance**[\[edit source\]](#)

The purpose of the San Diego Food System Alliance is to develop and maintain an equitable, healthy and sustainable food system for the benefit of all people in San Diego County. They believe in cultivating an ideal food system through the use of their 4 values: Environment, Economics, Equity, and Education. <http://www.sdfsa.org/overview/>

### **National Black Food & Justice Alliance**[\[edit source\]](#)

A coalition of Black-led organizations working towards cultivating and advancing Black leadership, building Black self-determination, Black institution building and organizing for food sovereignty, land and justice. The Alliance seeks to achieve this by engaging in broad based coalition organizing for black food and land, increasing visibility of Black led narratives and work, advancing Black led visions for just and sustainable communities, and building capacity for self-determination within our local, national, and international food systems and land rights work. <http://www.blackfoodjustice.org/about/>

## **Racism in the Food Industry: How fast food industries disproportionately target Black kids.**[\[edit source\]](#)

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There is no denying that there are disparities in the US food system. The inability to access quality food is an issue for many communities throughout the US. What makes matters worse, however, is that it's been proven that fast food industries are disproportionately targeting Black kids through their advertisement. In a new study, a team of researchers at the University of Illinois at Chicago and Arizona State University found that fast food chains in predominantly black neighborhoods were more than 60 percent more likely to advertise to children than in predominantly white neighborhoods. The researchers also found that fast food restaurants in middle- and low-income areas tended to direct their ads toward children more often than those in high-income neighborhoods, and those in rural communities tended to market their products to kids more often than those in more urban settings "Fast food restaurants in black neighborhoods have significantly higher odds of using kids' meal toy displays to market their products to children compared to restaurants in white neighborhoods," said Punam Ohri-Vachaspati, the lead author of the study. "The associations we observe are troubling because we know that black children are at higher risk for consuming unhealthy diets including fast food, and have higher prevalence of obesity." What's different about this study, however, is that the researchers were able to pinpoint exactly how these fast food chains were advertising to Black kids. They surveyed 6,700 restaurants across the US and learned that more than 20 percent of all the restaurants, and 31 percent of the chain restaurants used child-directed marketing -- a category that includes advertisements with cartoon characters, television personalities, movie stars, and sports figures, as well as displays with kids' meal toys, three-dimensional cardboard cutouts, and play areas. The researchers also found that fast food restaurants in middle- and low-income areas tended to direct their ads toward children more often than those in high-income neighborhoods, and those in rural communities tended to market their products to kids more often than those in more urban settings. By making sure to advertise fast food restaurants to kids, they are increasing the amount of kids that will eat at these restaurants by essentially brainwashing them so all they want to eat is fast food. The amount of fast food restaurants in low-income Black and Latinx neighborhoods are directly linked to the diseases that are prevalent in those communities. Without the proper health care, these individuals can succumb to diabetes, heart diseases, etc. The food industry and the health care system are two ways in which the US directly controls the lives of marginalized groups by limiting access to resources.

### **'Food Deserts'**[\[edit source\]](#)

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Food deserts are a phenomenon described as geographic areas wherein there is a lack of access to food supply, such as a typical chain grocery store within reachable distance. In a so called food desert, it is typical that liquor stores with no fresh food, only offering bagged chips, sodas, and other

quick eat items that lack nutritional substance, are available, alongside fast food restaurants who lack healthy options.<sup>[11]</sup> In a Report to Congress done by the [United States Department of Agriculture](#), it was found that 23.5 million Americans live more than one mile away from a grocery store and do not have access to a car.<sup>[12]</sup> While public transportation can help bridge the gap and get individuals living in a food market to a grocery store, economic factors have pushed many local stores out of business requiring some individuals to take many buses or trains just to gain access to a sub-par market.

Although access to healthy foods is beneficial, it is important to consider that the communities in which markets serve are disadvantaged in the economic sphere. If the cost of fruits and vegetables do not meet consumer budgets, they will not purchase them.

### **From Food Deserts to Food Apartheid**[\[edit source\]](#)

Recently, anthropologists studying diet and culture, have re-termed food deserts, into Food apartheid. The change in colloquial term has been made to represent that “food deserts” are not desolate, empty neighborhoods, but are neighborhoods who have been deemed to be unworthy of having access to nutritious food. Food apartheid is a form of [apartheid](#) because in most cases, the lack of availability of healthy food disproportionately affects communities of color. According to Jacqueline Bediaiko, food apartheid affects people of all races, including poor white people, although Black and brown people are affected disproportionately. Under these conditions — which are overtly abusive — whole communities are geographically and economically isolated from healthy food options.<sup>[13]</sup>

### **Food Mirages and Food Swamps**[\[edit source\]](#)

While food deserts have been used as a blanket term to describe food deserts, food mirages, and food swamps, they are not synonymous and they all differ in how they relate to the access of food.

To further support that prices play a key role in the consumption of healthy foods, the term "food mirage" has been used to describes low-income communities with access to supermarkets but with financial barriers to access those healthy foods.<sup>[14]</sup> In a study done by researchers at [Portland State University](#), a food mirage was examined in a neighborhood where residents living in poverty were surrounded by new grocery stores. Researchers found that out of the 81% of impoverished residents surveyed, 61% percent lived in moderate or extreme food mirage. Resulting in traveling more than 1.8 miles past their neighborhood grocery store in search of better prices.<sup>[15]</sup>

While food deserts are often assessed by the distance in miles between individuals' homes and supermarkets, and food mirages asses price and poverty relativity, food swamps differ in that they described as geographic areas with a high density of establishments that sell high calorie "fast food" and "junk food".<sup>[16]</sup> A comprehensive review of research done on food swamps by the [United States Department of Health and Human Services](#), has found that 10 out of 12 studies provided evidence that fast food restaurants are more likely to locate in areas where there are higher concentrations of ethnic minorities than areas populated by Whites.<sup>[17]</sup>

## **Structural Inequities that Created Disparity**[\[edit source\]](#)

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The relationship between food environments and its effects on obesity have been examined and have revealed to play a major role in the contribution to health disparities, particularly the presence of fast food restaurants and convenience stores. In neighborhoods that have access barriers to supermarkets because of proximity or prices, consumers are left with only two options; convenience stores and fast food restaurants. Low-income communities that are “lacking healthy food access— can simultaneously be ‘food swamps,’ consisting in a saturation of access to unhealthy food (e.g., fast-food, convenience stores) and nonfood (e.g., gas stations) venues, characterized by calorie-dense and high-sugared food items”<sup>[18]</sup>, these environments reinforce unhealthy behaviors among residents. Currently, there are few policies that look at the food environment, beyond food deserts, in



disadvantaged neighborhoods. In one intervention by Los Angeles policymakers, a zone ordinance that banned new free standing fast food restaurants overlooked the complexities of low-income environments. Rather than focusing on limiting specific types of fast food restaurants and convenience stores, the policy left many loopholes that allowed establishments like McDonald's to open among strip malls.<sup>[19]</sup> Strip malls are abundant in low-income communities, they are attractive to fast food restaurants because of lower rents and greater access to consumers. Although it was one of the first attempts, this demonstrates the importance of creating research based policies that clearly examine the complexities of low-income neighborhoods to address health disparities.

It has been argued that living within close proximity of fast-food restaurants increases the consumption of high calorie foods. For example, in one study, results indicated that “Fast food establishments within both a quarter and half mile had a statistically significant negative relationship with fruit and vegetable consumption,<sup>[20]</sup>” meaning that the easier access a resident had to fast food, the least likely they were to consume fruits and vegetables. Moreover, it is known that fast food restaurants provide inexpensive meals, making them highly attractive to low-income consumers. Using Geo-coded information, a study for the [Harvard School of Public Health](#), found evidence indicating that fast-food restaurants are more prevalent in minority neighborhoods, which are often low-income neighborhoods.<sup>[21]</sup> If food prices have shown to make an impact on food choices among under-served communities, it would make sense that the low cost of fast food would be appealing to consumers in low-income communities. Unfortunately, the low cost of fast-food comes at another price, fast food is high in calories and unhealthy fats, like processed food in convenience stores or supermarkets, consuming these foods puts one at risk of obesity.

Many residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods rely on fast and convenient foods, corner stores such as liquor stores are abundant in low-income communities. Convenience stores carry foods that are highly processed to extend shelf life, resulting in an abundance of calories, fat, sugar and salt.<sup>[22]</sup> Additionally, consumers turn to convenience stores because they accept government assistance programs such as SNAP,<sup>[23]</sup> further perpetuating unhealthy behaviors in food choice and the significance of redesigning food policies. Another reason convenience store foods are appealing to those living in low-income communities is that those living with food insecurity require to stretch their food, processed foods do not require refrigeration and last longer than perishable foods. By considering how food environments affect low income communities, policymakers can make better informed decisions on how policies can address contributing factors

### **Residential Segregation Leads to Commercial Flight**[\[edit source\]](#)

Food apartheid and the lack of access to food are the results of racist politicking and they stem from socioeconomic injustices that disproportionately affect low income Black communities. According to the [ACLU](#)—food deserts are the direct manifestation of structural inequities that have been solidified over time. These institutional racisms that have resulted in a lack of access to healthy food for minorities are innumerable—but among them include housing policies leading to segregated communities and financial policies leading to commercial flight. These policies have all interacted over time to contribute to health disparities among the Black community.<sup>[24]</sup>

In the year 1962, 61% of white Americans shared the sentiment that “white people[possessed] a right to keep blacks out of their neighborhoods if they [wanted] to, and blacks should respect that right.”<sup>[25]</sup> Despite years of policy changes a result of the [Civil Rights Movement](#), 30 years later in 1990, a Detroit survey of whites found that a quarter of white respondents would not move into a neighborhood that was more than 50% Black.<sup>[26]</sup> Discrimination towards Blacks continues to influence real estate practices, while public policies and institutional discrimination continue to reinforce race segregated living patterns. Although segregation by race is illegal, it has not ceased to be the standard in America. Living patterns are not only correlated with access to educational opportunities, and employment opportunities—they are also correlated to access to food.<sup>[26]</sup>

Studies published by [American Journal of Preventative Medicine](#) have found that low-income neighborhoods and minority neighborhoods are less likely to have access to large

supermarkets.<sup>[27]</sup> Federal government policies have directly hindered the development of supermarkets in Black populated communities. As middle-income whites got subsidized government loans to move from cities to suburbia, businesses, including supermarkets, relocated with them.<sup>[28]</sup> Grocery stores and retailers alike, were supported by the United States government to relocate to the suburbs—catering to the White middle class and leaving the cities desolate.

## Health Outcomes Related to Nutrition in Communities of Color<sup>[edit source]</sup>

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Although causal relationships between food habits and substandard health have not been exclusively made, it is well accepted that there is a definitely a correlation between the two. Since communities of color are disproportionately affected by food apartheid, it is no shock that Black Americans and Hispanics suffer from rates of obesity at 45% and 36.8%, respectively--which is comparatively higher than the white rate of obesity at 30%. According to the [Centers For Disease Control](#), obesity has been linked to a wide range of health problems including [Type 2 Diabetes](#), [cardiovascular diseases](#), various types of cancer, [hypertension](#), and high cholesterol among both adults and children.<sup>[29]</sup>

In a 2004 study done by medical doctors and public health professionals of New York's [Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai](#), a community coalition study was done to compare the availability and cost of diabetes-healthy foods in a Black populated neighborhood in East Harlem with that of the adjacent White, wealthy Upper East Side in New York City. Researched surveyed 173 East Harlem and 152 Upper East Side grocery stores to find whether or not they stocked 5 basic diabetes-diet recommended foods. Results showed that only 18% of East Harlem stores stocked the recommended foods, compared with 58% of stores in the Upper East Side. Further, they found that only 9% of East Harlem bodegas (convenience stores) carried all 5 recommended items while 48% of Upper East Side bodegas carried the items.<sup>[30]</sup> This discrepancy is huge, and is a representation of many communities in America. Since health conditions such diabetes are more prevalent in Black communities than White communities, this creates a cycle in which type 2 diabetes continues to thrive.

### Victim Blaming<sup>[edit source]</sup>

In recent times policymakers have acknowledged that access to food disproportionately affects minority communities, yet their victim blaming narratives however suggest that some disparity in food access stem from choice. For example, an article published by the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#), Economic Research Service entitled "Access to Affordable, Nutritious Food is Limited in "Food Deserts," it is explained that consumers' demographic and economic characteristics, buying habits, and tastes can explain why stores do not locate in some areas or carry particularly healthy foods. This argument blames the communities themselves for the lack of access to healthy food and fails to acknowledge the historical influences and governmental policies that have marginalized these minority communities.<sup>[31]</sup>

## Food Sovereignty and the Global South<sup>[edit source]</sup>

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The issue of Food justice is not a foreign concept as the global south epitomizes the situation of how the lack of resources can have dire consequences. There are several factors that come into play one is that higher prices for affect the global poor.<sup>[32]</sup> However each region is affected in different ways causing the food justice movement to take different forms. For instance, Food sovereignty revolves around the issues of , "self determination, global uneven development, and ecological degradation," and commonly associated with the global south and rural U.S.<sup>[33]</sup> Food justice on the other hand is mostly concentrated within developed nations such as the U.S. and Canada and its issues revolves around inaccessibility and consumption of healthy food.<sup>[34]</sup> Other common issues within food

sovereignty include not enough food due to issues of scarcity, environmental factors, as well as population and allocation a lot of these factors also correlate to the lack of rights to land of indigenous and small scale farmers.<sup>[35]</sup> Colonialism is also a big source to much food insecurity both in the present and in the past. colonialism had a direct impact on those especially in the african continent who depended on seasonal farming due to prolonged droughts in certain regions, however, British policy made important pasture and water resources, during these critical times, legally inaccessible.<sup>[36]</sup> The food riots of 2007 and 2008, are very much reminiscent of the colonial past as todays food regime led to the inflation of food prices as more cropland was aggregated for biofuels and feed crops for animals displacing land available for food crops.<sup>[37]</sup> Similarly Muna Lakhani notes that this practice occurred under colonialism, where African farmers had to grow cash crops for export, over planting crops that would be able to feed their families.<sup>[38]</sup> In fact, this trend continues as over consumption by 25% of the global population, predominantly western nations, consume 80% of the resources.<sup>[39]</sup> This reaping of land and resources which either creature barriers or detroys the local ecosystem then forces many of these developing nations and tribes to become dependent on food aid from these post colonial nations.<sup>[40]</sup> Although food justice is in a different region and is racially bound, they both aim to achieve an end to food insecurity. Together both movements help to bridge a gap between institutional divides that the food movement as a whole has not been able to achieve.<sup>[41]</sup>

## Possible Solutions<sup>[[edit source](#)]</sup>

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Food insecurity recognized as one of the world's current most pressing issues. In fact, agricultural food scientists and corporations argue that responding to the issue using food justice practices is not sufficient in regards to the urgency of the issue.<sup>[42]</sup> Such argumentation is the basis for defending the use of GMOs to feed the world. However research from scholars, farmers, and NGO's go to disprove this by presenting that smaller scale farming has been proven to be not only environmentally friendly but can in fact 'feed the world.'<sup>[43]</sup>

### Urban/Community farms<sup>[[edit source](#)]</sup>

One of the first tactics to battle the food injustice and scarcity found in both rural and urban areas is by the use of community or urban gardens. Community gardens, according to the American Community Gardening Association's (ACGA) mission statement, are essential catalysts for the neighborhood and surrounding community by not only helping combat food insecurity in providing healthy food options but it is also economically and environmentally sound, these gardens also provide a source for recreation, therapy, beauty and education.<sup>[44]</sup> In addition, having communal gardens may also benefit immigrants and refugees who use gardening as a tactic to immerse themselves in new surroundings while also getting a chance to reconnect with their culture and receive food for their family and community.<sup>[45]</sup> This epitomizes how the Center for Rural Affairs sees the working of the community food system of which may take many forms but at its core aims to, form a connection between the producers locals who grow or make the food and the consumers, the community.<sup>[46]</sup> Despite the great change and development community gardens bring, many in these communities had to fight for the right to use the land for gardening which was evident in the 1960's with "guerrilla gardening" tactics to combat land scarcity and resist the, "inequalities between the powerful and powerless."<sup>[47]</sup> Today, according to the ACGA annual report, 61% of community or urban gardens are found on government lands, indicating the important role local governments play in the allowing or blocking the use of community gardens through the implementation of opposing legislation or strict land use policies.<sup>[48]</sup>

### Produce Availability<sup>[[edit source](#)]</sup>

Equity in both the decision making process and the distribution of resources is the core of the food justice movement and can be achieved through government policies. One possible course of action to combat food deserts may be in mandating that corner stores and such in food deserts provide some variation of fruits and vegetables. For instance in Minneapolis :the Department of Health and

Family Support understood that residents in food deserts find themselves purchasing their staple foods from corner stores, unable to travel to grocery stores or 'local' farmers markets, however more often than not convenience stores carry more unhealthy quick foods rather than fresh produce.<sup>[49]</sup> To combat this issue the Minneapolis City Council passed an ordinance requiring Minneapolis corner stores to carry, "five varieties of perishable produce" and the Minnesota Department of Health requires, "WIC-certified stores to carry a minimum of seven varieties (and thirty pounds) of fresh produce."<sup>[50]</sup> However even with the ordinances North Minneapolis residents who, "shopped most often at corner stores...did not purchase produce from them," due to factors such as produce being out of site or not fresh.<sup>[51]</sup> This indicates however that ordinances as such may not always be enough. In the case of Minneapolis, the MDHFS created the Healthy Corner Store Program to ensure the success of the ordinance by providing assistance from a grocery store consultant to store owners to, "making healthy foods and fresh produce more visible, affordable, and attractive to neighborhood residents."<sup>[52]</sup> Another possible solution to food injustices and specifically food injustice, may be in making new regulations providing that there be more grocery stores in urban and rural areas. The USDA also sees this as an issue in stating that 2.2 million Americans have difficulty in accessing large grocery stores due to have to travel over a mile in urban areas or more than 10 in urban areas may increase reliance on convenience stores and restaurants(fast food), resulting in a poor diet and diet-related health problems.<sup>[53]</sup> The USDA recognizes that the limited food access in Urban core areas, "are characterized by higher levels of racial segregation and greater income inequality." In small-town and rural areas with limited the lack of transportation infrastructure."<sup>[54]</sup> However not all chain groceries will go into small neighborhoods due to the risk and upkeep, For places like West Oakland in California, where just about half the residents don't have a car, access to grocery stores is even more so a struggle, so Brahm Ahmadi, decided to open his own full service grocery store na health center by selling bonds directly to the public.<sup>[55]</sup>

### **Food Vending**[\[edit source\]](#)

Food trucks and other local services provide another option to help provide food to food deserts and other rural areas. In some places these food trucks like the Second Harvest Food Bank's Produce Mobile Program help communities and neighborhoods in need by providing them with high-quality and fresh produce.<sup>[56]</sup> Food trucks are another important source of food, and are unique in their mobility but also in their locations. Food trucks are found in cities, towns, and universities all over the United States and Canada although they have a longer history in places like Portland where there was little laws preventing them or Los Angeles where immigrants carried on traditions.<sup>[57]</sup> Other spaces for these vendors became fairly recent in places like Montreal where trucks and cultural spaces were previously regulated.<sup>[58]</sup> Although often overlooked because they may not always supply the most 'healthy' food, they help combat food insecurity by supplying food to communities that either have no other means of getting food or simply bringing more food options into the community.<sup>[59]</sup> Food trucks have also been labeled, "powerful affirmation of pop-up urbanism," that are controlled by ordinary people creating culturally different and creative spaces.<sup>[60]</sup> However, food trucks and other street vendors have often been banned by cities if they did not have permits or if they were considered a competitive threat to establishments nearby.<sup>[61]</sup> Yet recently, new legislation in California (SB946)and Arizona ( HB 2371) are aimed to not only legalize food trucks state wide but also decriminalize the sidewalk vending.<sup>[62]</sup> Legislation like these will not only help to boost the local economy but it will also allow vendors to safely and securely provide food to the community. However food trucks are not just an American or Western phenomenon, they are part of a phenomenon that has been quite common in much of the Global South.<sup>[63]</sup> Food vending in the Global South slightly differs as food vending enables many to simply survive, hang on, and cope with urban towns.<sup>[64]</sup> It also allows them to develop networks and strategies to get by in these towns by forming relationships with commercial and small-holder irrigation farmers.<sup>[65]</sup> Food delivery services are another way from either local grocery stores or market boxes sent to your door. However, some of these tend to be expensive or require internet accessibility to control your account, depending on the community especially those in rural areas this option may not be possible.



## **SNAP and other Food Assistance Programs**[\[edit source\]](#)

Another solution to potentially combat the food injustice, both in terms of quality and quantity of food, is in government provided subsidies and vouchers to help alleviate financial burden in affording food, as well as making healthier options available. The U.S. Federal government, as many other governments has put in much of its resources, approximately 50 billion dollars per year towards nutrition assistance programs.<sup>[66]</sup> SNAP is one of these programs, mitigated by the federal government under the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) in the 1960's that according to one of their publications, "improves health, enhances self-sufficiency, and alleviates food insecurity."<sup>[67]</sup> The Public Policy Institute has conducted research showing that since the introduction of food stamps, they have reduced illnesses attributed to poor diet such as diabetes and increased average birth weights among adults who had access to the program from youth.<sup>[68]</sup> Food vouchers such as CalFresh had success in reducing, "food insecurity among low-income households" during the recent recession.<sup>[69]</sup> However despite the efforts made by these comprehensive assistance networks the United States has failed to make little to no advancement towards reducing food insecurity to 6% , relative to 1995 when measurements of food inequity within households began.<sup>[70]</sup> With prevalent ideas/facts like these as well as the fear of fraudulent cases the federal government has proposed a new way to alleviate food insecurity and provide what it deems as healthier choices in the Food Harvest Program.<sup>[71]</sup> The harvest program would cut the budget for SNAP by 30% over the next ten years by using a food delivery service to provide a box of non-perishable "surplus" goods to the recipients including a set box with canned fruits, vegetables, meats, peanut butter, and canned or frozen meat, and shelf stable milk, each box will be sized to the family size and granted benefits.<sup>[72]</sup> However other sources note that those with more than \$90 a month in benefits, additional to the box will have any remaining balance put on to their EBT cards.<sup>[73]</sup> In terms of what the impact on food insecurity is unknown however there is a lack of choice in terms of what food the participants can have. Even though many still purchase foods that are deemed unhealthy much of this is due to the fact that some may live in substandard housing or not have a functional kitchen so these foods, although some may be healthy will not always be suitable for all recipients.<sup>[74]</sup> In comparison to SNAP, the administration's new program would only cover 90,000 people, while the former helped millions to come out of poverty.<sup>[75]</sup> There are still many questions left to answer, like delivery and how recipients will receive their boxes, as the use of delivery may pose a risk for delays.<sup>[76]</sup>

Beyond money there are children and summer food programs enacted in various states including California that allows either free or reduced lunches for those in food deserts and underprivileged neighborhoods. These initiatives allow these individuals to have food security in having necessary access to food they wouldn't be able to have otherwise. Being that schools are pivotal institutions in securing food availability, the USDA has, done its part in having healthy/wholesome options available by adding new items to school lunches such as frozen rather than canned mixed berries and vegetables, grilled chicken breast fillets, egg patty rounds, and white whole wheat flour.<sup>[77]</sup>

## **Education**[\[edit source\]](#)

Many argue that simply increasing availability and providing vouchers will not solve the food justice issue in regards to food deserts, which is where the argument for nutrition education comes in. Studies have been shown that eating habits don't change when put grocery stores in poor neighborhoods as reiterated by Barry Popkin, a professor of Nutrition at the University of North Carolina stated that simply adding a grocery store in poor neighborhoods, will not make a huge impact as food prices and people's shopping and eating habits undermine convenience.<sup>[78]</sup>

## **GMO's**[\[edit source\]](#)

Many solutions target how to improve conditions in urban areas or rural areas however the food injustice and food sovereignty issue is a global one that also deals with resource availability and scarcity. Food Scarcity is and has been a motivating force behind companies such as Monsanto who campaigned on feeding the world by using genetic engineering of plants. Such plants that Monsanto and other companies create include, Herbicide-tolerant soybeans, herbicide-tolerant corn, and Bt or



insect repellent corn.<sup>[79]</sup> However, according to recent reports in comparison to conventional methods, GMO's and herbicide tolerant plants have failed to increase intrinsic or operational yields.<sup>[80]</sup> The report does acknowledge the possibility of genetic engineering eventually contributing to increase crop yields, however, the Union of Concerned Scientists note that when using farming practices that use minimal pesticides and synthetic fertilizers such as organic farming, "can more than double crop yields at little cost to poor farmers in such developing regions as Sub-Saharan Africa."<sup>[81]</sup> According to a study, within the first year government-subsidized supermarkets in high need neighborhoods households were reported to have a significance effect on food availability and consumption habits.<sup>[82]</sup> Reasoning behind this includes that individuals formed reliance on their usual supermarkets and the abundance and affordability of processed foods.<sup>[83]</sup> Due to these reasons, overall lower income families bought less healthy food than wealthier families, however their were even greater disparities found, "between families with and without a college education."<sup>[84]</sup> These results suggest that in order to improve a person's diet and change perceptions it is essential that their be education on diet and health on top of increasing food accessibility and affordability.<sup>[85]</sup> However the affordability of food may in fact influence food choice if the government chose to not only subsidize fruits and vegetables but also tax fast food, "to improve weight outcomes among children and adolescents."<sup>[86]</sup>





### Notable Food Justice Advocates/ Food Justice Groups<sup>[edit source]</sup>



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See also<sup>[edit source]</sup>

-  [Sustainable development portal](#)
-  [Hunger relief portal](#)
-  [Food portal](#)
-  [Globalization portal](#)

- [Food Security](#)
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- [Food sovereignty](#)
- [Fair Trade](#)

- [Fair Food Program](#)
- [Agroecology](#)
- [Right to food](#)

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