

Jefferson County Food Policy Council Commitment to Equity and Justice

The Jefferson County Food Policy Council recognizes that the place many of us work and call home, today known as Jefferson County, rests on [stolen land](#) and is the homeland of the [Ute, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe tribes](#). The genocide of indigenous people is just one piece of [our country's history](#) which also includes, but is not limited to colonialism, displacement, slavery, and generational education and economic disadvantage.. The impacts of these injustices are both ongoing and systemic and have resulted in the racism, inequity, and inequality that are deeply embedded in our food system. Due to these [systemic injustices](#) Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) [disproportionately face barriers to accessing healthy and culturally appropriate food and are at increased risk for chronic diseases](#). Additionally, according to the [USDA](#), agricultural workers continue to be “among the most economically disadvantaged working groups in the U.S.” and many, due to citizenship status, are vulnerable to exploitation and [labor abuses, including sub-poverty earnings, and denial of common workplace protection](#).

In taking time to reflect on the history of the food system and our work, we recognize that our work and our council has not often been inclusive or representative of the voices of those most impacted by the policies, systems, and environment that the council aims to improve. This is, in part, because the council operates through a structure that has created barriers which have excluded communities of color and has fostered an environment where BIPOC people have not always felt welcomed, valued, or included. We apologize to members of our community who have had these experiences with the council. Acknowledging past mistakes and present shortcomings is our first step in creating a more inclusive, diverse, and equitable group.

This statement is just the first step in the work we need to accomplish, and we know that racial equity is both an action and an outcome. Therefore, we are committed to:

- Removing barriers, procedures, and policies within the council's structure to foster a more accessible and inclusive environment.
- Critical self-reflection, empathetic and courageous dialogue, authentic collaboration and engagement, and group/self accountability.
- Respecting and supporting the existing leadership and expertise of communities of color through opportunities for continued leadership and capacity building not only in the council but also in local food system advocacy, education, and development.
- Co-creating mutually beneficial relationships where we can explore solutions to address issues that exist in our food system.

We view this statement (and the actions/work we are committing to herein) as a living document and know that this will change and evolve as the council membership evolves and we learn and grow in our personal understandings of racial equity in the food system. Please feel free to email argoto@jeffco.us or msilver@jeffco.us with any feedback you might have on this statement and for any additional comments you may have on the food policy council.
