

<b>City</b>	
<b>Country</b>	USA
<b>Population</b>	602,495
<b>Title of policy or practice</b>	Resident Food Equity Advisors
<b>Subtitle (optional)</b>	A socially equitable approach to food policy development and implementation
<b>URL video</b>	
<b>Category</b>	Social and Economic Equity
<b>SDGs</b>	SDGs: 1, 2, 3, 10, 17.
<b>Brief description</b>	<p>The Baltimore Food Policy Initiative (BFPI) uses food as a catalyst to address health, economic, and environmental disparities in Healthy Food Priority Areas/Food Deserts. BFPI expanded its governance structure to include 1) an interagency collaboration, 2) multi-stakeholder engagement through Food Policy Action Coalition (Food PAC), and 3) the Resident Food Equity Advisors (RFEA). This newly created third pillar seeks to directly address social and economic equity by expanding the governance structure to elevate resident representation and leadership. Advisors work with BFPI to collectively drive equitable food policies through an inclusive, resident-led process. Baltimore City is submitting RFEA for award consideration under Social and Economic Equity.</p> <p>RFEA are Baltimore residents who influence and advise the City's Healthy Food Environment Strategy, policies, and plans. Advisors are selected through an application and interview process. Each cohort consists of 14 residents, representing each city council district, with emphasis on areas located in food deserts. As valued collaborators, each advisor receives a stipend for their participation. RFEA completed its third cohort in spring 2019.</p> <p>The 2018 Food Environment Report shows that corner and convenience stores are the most prevalent type of food retail in Baltimore and have very low Healthy Food Availability Index scores. In response to these findings and feedback from the 2017 advisors, the 2018 and 19 RFEA cohorts discussed these stores from multiple angles, including legislation, zoning and land use, safety and security, community engagement, and business support. Over the course of seven meetings, BFPI staff provided briefings and presentations from subject matter experts on the state of small food retail and potential policy and programmatic tools. Advisors shared their expertise related to small food retail created a set of recommendations in 2018, and guidance on implementation in 2019.</p>
<b>Date of start and state (ongoing/completed)</b>	03/2018 Ongoing
<b>Actors and stakeholders involvement</b>	<p>Advisors: 14 city residents, one per City Council District. Each year, 80-100 applicants for 14 spots.</p> <p>City Agencies: Department of Planning, Health Department, Baltimore Development Corporation, Mayor's Office.</p> <p>Partners: Baltimore City Council, Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, Microbiz Network LLC.</p> <p>Funders: Local Foundation funded the pilot year. Since 2018, funded through City budget.</p>
<b>Approach</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. BFPI developed RFEA to center voices of Black residents who are more likely to live in food deserts and be impacted by food policies;</li> <li>2. Applications: 1 Advisor per council district;</li> <li>3. Advisors sign participation agreement;</li> <li>4. BFPI staffs and facilitates meetings, coordinates presenters;</li> </ol>

	<p>5. Advisors attend 6+ meetings over 3-6 months; receive stipend per meeting;</p> <p>6. Advisors complete meeting evaluations;</p> <p>7. Advisors present recommendations to policymakers;</p> <p>8. Agencies implement recommendations.</p>
<p><b>Innovation</b></p>	<p>Baltimore City developed, funds and supports the Resident Food Equity Advisors as an innovative model to create food system transformation through the development of a new generation of “food leaders.” Advisors provide recommendations, strategies, and policy ideas to further Baltimore’s goal to create an equitable and resilient food system.</p> <p>The collaborative governance model BFPI developed with RFEA seeks to elevate resident-driven policies and acknowledges everyone’s expertise and the power of resident collective voice. This process ultimately provides solutions neither party could have come up with on their own. The fact that this is annually funded by the City is a progressive and meaningful innovation and institutionalizes the food equity work within city government.</p> <p>The RFEA process begins by conducting mapping and data analysis, then pairing it with ongoing resident and organizational input, in order to understand a pressing challenge. This challenge serves as the cohort’s theme. Advisors learn and discuss over the course of 6+ meetings to provide recommendations. The recommendations are presented to electeds and provided to agency implementation partners, who incorporate them into their work. The true innovation is that this process has created a model and a framework that can be applied to any topic or issue that needs resident-driven policy, including the six pillars of the MUFPP.</p>
<p><b>Impact</b></p>	<p>RFEA epitomizes Social and Economic Equity: Indicator 24 for food system-related learning and skill development and leadership opportunities for Advisors. RFEA is an exemplary model to “promote participatory training in strengthening local food system action to increase social and economic equity.”</p> <p>The most substantial outcome of the RFEA process is the creation of a line item \$250,000 Healthy Food Priority Area Fund. This fund would not have been created or passed in the budget by the City Council without the recommendations and ongoing involvement of Advisors. Understanding that equity involves accountability and implementation, BFPI will manage this ongoing flexible funding to support resident-driven projects in food deserts that will substantially address social and economic equity for vulnerable populations. This Healthy Food Priority Fund means that RFEA and BFPI are no longer reliant on grant funding for this important work.</p> <p>Now that the RFEA framework has been created and funded by the City, there will be an ongoing mechanism to develop implementation plans for the six pillars of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, as well as other subjects. Several other City agencies and other locales have contacted BFPI to set up their own versions of RFEA. This process will have a multiplier effect as more and more residents are empowered to participate in different types of policymaking throughout Baltimore and elsewhere.</p>
<p><b>Inclusion</b></p>	<p><b>Social Inclusion:</b> The very design of RFEA promotes social inclusion, and the impact on Advisors has been tremendous. Many Advisors come from vulnerable populations, and several have received food assistance. Through this process, BFPI sought to increase their access to power, build skill sets and increase knowledge of food system policy and structures. Advisors presented to the Mayor and City Council multiple times and have spoken on panels. BFPI provided professional references, letters of support for grants and nominations for boards. In building a cadre of food leaders, there are short-term personal and professional benefits, but the systemic impact comes from building a larger pipeline for, and groundswell of, Black food leaders in policy.</p> <p><b>Thematic Inclusion:</b> RFEA is one of BFPI’s three pillars of collaborative governance - the others are an interagency collaboration and the Food Policy Action Coalition. Situating RFEA with these other</p>

two arms creates natural opportunities between Advisors, agency partners and over 60 organizations working across the food system. The past two cohorts focused on small food retail, but the model allows for any subject matter. There will be agency and organizational partners working in Baltimore to collaborate with the next cohort, whatever the topic. Uplifting and equally valuing resident voice has exemplified the value of full inclusion when working on cross-cutting food issues to BFPI's agency and organizational partners.

**Adversity coefficient**

Due to histories of segregation, deindustrialization, and unequal investment in infrastructure and education, Baltimore faces many pressing social needs related to poverty, which disproportionately impact Black and other residents of color. Poverty drives food insecurity, disparate health outcomes, and other social determinants of health that impact a person's ability to access healthy and culturally appropriate food. Of 602,495 Baltimoreans:

- 22% live in poverty;
- 21% are food insecure overall, and 22% of children are food insecure; compared to 15.2% in Maryland and 12.5% nationally;
- 23% of residents and 28% of children live in Healthy Food Priority Areas (food deserts);
- 28% of Baltimore households receive SNAP (food supplement benefits);
- Approximately 78% of food retail stores accept SNAP, but only 16% accept WIC, a program that shows higher nutritional impact.

In the US, social programs are supported and more likely to be funded and implemented by Democratic leaders. Baltimore has a long history as a Democratic city, but currently faces opposition from a Republican president. The federal administration is working hard to undercut social programs and has designed new barriers for food insecure populations for both state- and federally-administered programs that act as a safety net in a city like Baltimore where residents face higher than average unemployment, under-education, and less economic mobility.

Through resident voice and an equity lens, BFPI works to overcome the federal leadership that is trying to undermine the social compact and instead, infuse an ethos that those most affected by a problem are the best to create solutions to it. If a city that faces as much adversity as Baltimore can commit to funding and implementing this resident-driven process, it can be replicated across the country and internationally. BFPI is participating in an URBAL project on collaborative governance using Resident Food Equity Advisors as a tool. The tool will launch at the MUFPP event in October so that cities around the world can use this model.