



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



BALTIMORE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

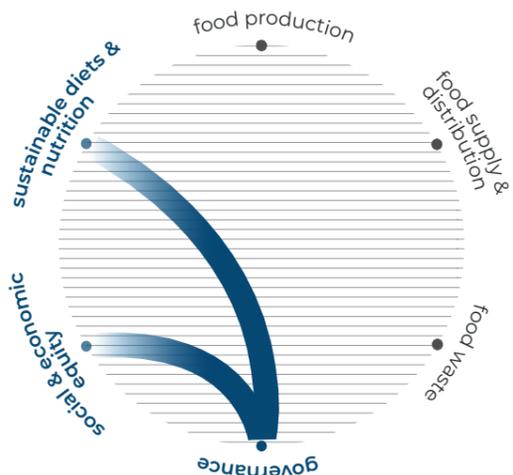
Title of Practice

BALTIMORE: A FORMAL COLLABORATION BETWEEN MUNICIPAL AGENCIES

Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Category
GOVERNANCE



Main impacts on other MUFPP categories



Contact
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Context

Understanding that food does not fit solely into one government agency, the City of Baltimore hired a full-time Food Policy Director, in charge of building stakeholders' capacity and fostering inter-agency collaboration. In 2010, the Food Policy Director created the **Baltimore Food Policy Initiative** (BFPI), a formal collaboration between the Department of Planning and its Office of Sustainability, the Health Department, and the Baltimore Development Corporation to address the complex and systemic problems of access to healthy affordable food and sustainable food systems. BFPI's main goals are:

- "Create a food system where all residents achieve food security, food resiliency, and food sovereignty" (Baltimore Sustainability Plan, forthcoming 2018).
- "Ensure communities that historically have been excluded from equal access to land and fresh, healthy, and culturally-appropriate food benefit most from urban agriculture opportunities" (Baltimore Sustainability Plan, forthcoming 2018).

Overview of the food practice

BFPI created a three tiered approach to food policy in Baltimore:

- Five staff members across the three key agencies are ensuring the **interagency collaboration**. Their main task is to develop strategic partnerships with and provide technical assistance to 15 City agencies to address food system policies, strategies and programs.
- The **Food Policy Action Coalition** (Food PAC) is a network of over 60 organizations and individuals working across Baltimore's food system.
- **Resident Food Equity Advisors** are a 16-member advisory group that brings resident voice and lived experience to drive food policy-making.

Together, City staff, organizations and residents address the new sustainability goals above.

As a result of the food policy governance structure and stakeholders' commitment, BFPI secured over USD 2 million in grant funding for food access and local food systems; created extensive media exposure and awareness of racial and spatial food access inequities and local food issues; developed over ten urban food plans; researched, drafted and advocated for 14 city, state and federal policies; helped develop an Urban Agricultural Plan and passed an urban farm tax credit and a land-leasing initiative for urban farmers. Moreover, Baltimore City and Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future (CLF) have collaborated since 2009 on food environment mapping, which has resulted in new food policies and increased city funding. The latest report released in 2018 includes a city-specific map and definition for "**Healthy Food Priority Area**" in a move away from the

term "food desert". In addition, BFPI used the information from the report and maps to create 14 city council briefs and six state legislative briefs to better **inform policymakers** on food system issues. Recently, the City collaborated with the CLF on the Baltimore Food System Resilience Advisory Report to examine the food system in the context of resilience and disaster risk reduction. The report looks at community adaptive capacity and provides recommendations to **enhance the resilience** of urban food systems, through the lens of Baltimore.

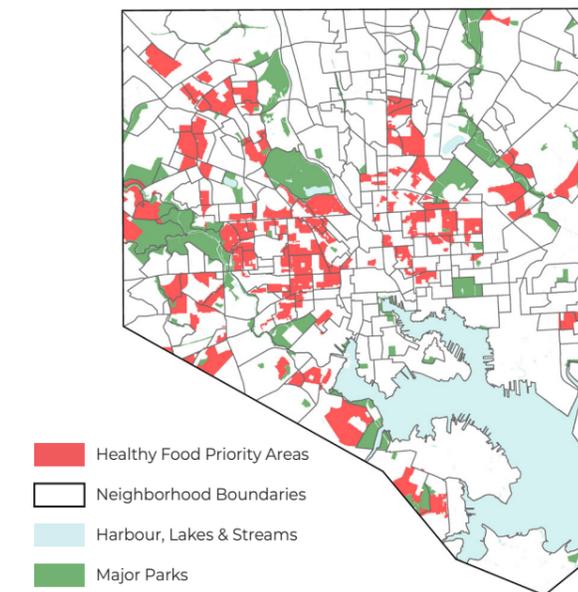
Results and lessons learned

In the past eight years, BFPI has transformed a set of food systems recommendations into action and has used that momentum to create a movement much bigger than just one City agency, establishing Baltimore as a national leader and model for food governance. BFPI developed, advocated and implemented 12 city & state food policies to address healthy food access and sustainable food systems. Moreover, thanks to the Food Environment Map developed in collaboration with the CLF, BFPI could brief each council member on the food environment of their districts, highlight district-specific food related issues, and identify populations disproportionately impacted by **healthy food access inequities**. Providing the City Council with in-depth knowledge and **personalized briefings** facilitated the unanimous passage of a tax credit for supermarkets that locate in or near Healthy Food Priority Areas, further enhancing the food security of the entire population.

Building on an effective governance structure that includes food system positions in multiple agencies, BFPI has recently expanded its scope to include Resident Food Equity Advisors (RFEA) as a vital component of policymaking. Through RFEA, BFPI meets consistently with a cohort of 16 residents to discuss its work in a transparent way, giving residents voice in government and policymaking, as well as in-depth knowledge of the complexities of food access issues. RFEA acknowledges that top down policies can fail to achieve their desired results, but that **resident-driven policies** can be transformative. One component of the RFEA strategy will be linking each advisor with their respective councilperson to serve as "go-to" points of contact on food issues in the district, broadening BFPI's policy platform.

BALTIMORE CITY HEALTHY FOOD PRIORITY AREAS 2018

*A Healthy Food Priority Area is an area where: 1) The average Healthy Food Availability Index score for all food stores is low, 2) The median household income is at or below 185% of the federal Poverty Level, 3) Over 30% of households have no vehicle available, and 4) The distance to a supermarket is more than one-fourth mile.



Source: **Misiaszek, C., Buzogany, S. & Freishtat, H.** 2018. *Baltimore City's Food Environment: 2018 Report* [online].

BALTIMORE FOOD POLICY: MAIN ACTORS & THEMES



- <https://bit.ly/2sA69ak>
- **City of Baltimore.** 2013. *Homegrown Baltimore Urban Agriculture Plan*. Baltimore, Maryland.
- **City of Baltimore.** 2018. *Food Environment Report*. Baltimore, Maryland.

Source:
Baltimore Food Policy Initiative - Department of Planning