

FeedBack Nashville Project: A Food System Transformation Initiative for Metro Nashville American Rescue Plan Act Funding Request

Contact Information

- FeedBack Nashville Project: CJ Sentell, CEO, The Nashville Food Project, cj@thenashvillefoodproject.org.
- Fiscal Sponsor Contact: Hal Cato, CEO, The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, hal@cfmt.org.

Budget Information

- Budget requested: \$621,750 over two years

Summary

Food insecurity is a complex challenge that negatively affects hundreds of thousands of Nashville residents as well as the general well-being of Nashville as a thriving city. Based on Feeding America data, Davidson County is ranked #27 of the top 50 counties in Tennessee based on food insecurity rates. More than 1 in 10 Nashville residents lack reliable access to food. This number is even starker for children; in Nashville, 1 in 5 of the city's young people, experience food insecurity. Myriad public and private stakeholders are working to address food insecurity in Nashville, but the problem persists due in large part to the ways in which we are collectively striving to solve the problem. Currently, Nashville's solutions to food insecurity are fragmented and ad hoc and primarily mitigate the problem's symptoms instead of its underlying root causes. This approach limits our shared ability to build a Nashville food system that is just and sustainable for all. Yet, with improved coordination and collaboration between food system stakeholders and community members, Nashville is well-positioned to transform the current food system into one that enables all residents to experience food security. This proposal outlines the vision for the FeedBack Nashville Project, a two-year food system transformation initiative that builds on ongoing food security solutions in the city and engages a citywide, inclusive network of food system actors and community members in using a systems change approach to collaboratively design short- and long-term pathways and partnerships to establish a food secure future for all Nashville residents. The proposed project is conceptualized and coordinated by a multi-stakeholder coalition of food system actors known as the FeedBack Nashville Steering Committee, with support from Forum for the Future, a leading international sustainability organization that facilitates systems transformation with businesses, governments, and civil society around the world. This committee requests \$876,750 over two years from the COVID-19 Financial Oversight Committee and the CARES Act and the ARP Act and Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to support the design and implementation of the proposed project, outlined in detail below. The funds will be administered by the Community Foundation of Middle TN, which will act as the fiscal sponsor for the project.

The Problem

Food insecurity means that households are unable to acquire adequate food for one or more household members because they have insufficient money and other resources for food. It is also compounded by individuals' access to housing, transit, healthcare, and education, extenuating circumstances that can exacerbate food insecurity in people's lives. According to Feeding America (2022), 12.4% of Davidson County individuals experience low food security and 19.1% of those are children. Of those who are food insecure, Feeding America (2021) projects that 18% experience very low food security, meaning that eating patterns of one or more household members are disrupted and their food intake reduced, at least sometime during the year. A deeper dive into Feeding America's (2022) food insecurity data also shows a disparity exists between ethnicities in Davidson County with Black Persons experiencing food insecurity at a rate of 21% (one in five), Hispanic Persons at a rate of 20% (one in five), and White Persons at 9% (one in eleven). This disparity illustrates the ways in which food insecurity is also tied to social, economic, and environmental inequities, with BIPOC communities often experiencing less access to the food, housing, transit, and educational resources they need to achieve food security in their lives. Based on data from the USDA's National Food Acquisition and Purchase Survey, it is also important to note that food insecurity affects individuals' dietary quality and dietary quantity, with low-income food-insecure households spending less on food, purchasing fewer calories overall, and having lower quality food purchases than food-secure households

(Gregory et al., 2019). In summary, food insecurity is a complex social, economic, and environmental challenge that negatively affects thousands of Nashville residents' livelihoods as well as the general well-being of Nashville as a thriving city with upward economic and social mobility.

In Nashville, more than 100 public and private stakeholders are working to address food insecurity and its effects on adults and children living in our city. Yet, food insecurity persists due in large part to how we are collectively striving to solve the problem. Currently, Nashville's solutions to food insecurity are fragmented and primarily mitigate the problem's symptoms instead of its underlying root causes. For example, one organization may focus on providing meals to the hungry while another may focus on helping low-income families access food assistance benefits like SNAP. While these types of interventions provide a service to people in crisis, they largely focus on addressing discrete symptoms of food insecurity. They do not address the underlying social, economic, and environmental inequities in the current food system that prevent people from choosing and accessing nutritious foods in their communities. In addition, public health and economic effects of the Coronavirus pandemic, as well as some pandemic-related changes to assistance programs, began in 2020 and continued in 2021, and reversed the trend in rising food security, adding another layer of complexity to how we address equitable access to healthy, nutritious foods in our city. Last, due to gaps in coordination, communication, and knowledge sharing between service providers, current food insecurity interventions are often duplicative and/or competitive.

While these challenges are real, Nashville is well-positioned to make meaningful progress towards food systems transformation and food security for all residents. With improved coordination and collaboration between food system stakeholders and community members, we will gain capacity, efficiency, and effectiveness in our shared ability to resolve the root causes and effects of food insecurity. In addition, we will realize new opportunities to design collaborative human-centered solutions to food security that fulfill the needs and desires of Nashville residents who most chronically and acutely experience food insecurity in their lives.

Inspired by this potential, a coalition of food system stakeholders in Nashville—referred to as the FeedBack Nashville Steering Committee—requests \$876,500 funding over two years from the COVID-19 Financial Oversight Committee and the CARES Act and the ARP Act and Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to support the implementation of the FeedBack Nashville Project (FBNP or “The Project”). The FeedBack Nashville Project is a two-year food system transformation initiative that engages a citywide, inclusive network of food system actors, stakeholders from adjacent fields including housing, transit, health, and workforce development, and community members in identifying, designing, and implementing near- and long-term pathways and partnerships to build a just and sustainable food system for all Nashville residents. The project is conceptualized and coordinated by a multi-stakeholder coalition of food system actors known as the FeedBack Nashville Steering Committee, all of whom have been working together since Summer 2022 to design collaborative opportunities to address food insecurity in Nashville. The Steering Committee conceptualized the proposed project drawing on case studies from other cities and experiential knowledge of the Nashville food system. They also received guidance and support from Forum for the Future, a leading international systems transformation and sustainability non-governmental organization. The funds for the FeedBack Nashville Project will be administered and fiscally monitored locally by the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee.

The Solution

The **FeedBack Nashville Project** (FBNP or “the project”) is a 2-year community-engaged systems transformation initiative that drives Nashville's food system towards equity, justice, and sustainability by facilitating increased collaboration and collective impact between non-profits, businesses, governments, and community members. The project is guided by the theory and practice of systems change, an approach that will empower Nashville to move beyond piecemeal, reactive solutions to food insecurity and towards lasting, community-led transformation.

According to Forum for the Future, systems change approaches to addressing complex challenges like food insecurity shift the focus of problem-solving from individual parts of a system—causes or singular actors, for example—to how the parts interact to perpetuate the problem. They acknowledge that complex problems like food insecurity are not static and constant, but rather dynamic and fluid. Because of this dynamic nature, complex problems cannot be solved with one-off, ad hoc solutions and instead, require coordinated interventions between differently positioned stakeholders. In this way, systems approaches move beyond piecemeal, reactive

problem-solving and identify and develop opportunities for individuals and organizations to work together to leverage their unique resources and relationships to dismantle the root causes and effects of the problem.

The FBNP employs a systems approach to catalyze food systems transformation in Nashville and address ongoing food insecurity in our communities. The project achieves this goal by convening organizations, businesses, public offices, and community members in facilitated, collaborative spaces to envision and develop strategies, partnerships, and co-creative problem solving to ensure that everyone in Davidson County has equitable access to, and knowledge of, nourishing, affordable foods in the communities within which they live.

The project entails three primary areas of work, each of which are facilitated through a collaboration between the FBNP Steering Committee and a third-party, neutral consulting firm with a track record of convening and facilitating food systems transformation projects in diverse communities and cities around the world. The three areas of work that will be accomplished through FBNP include:

1. **Diagnose the root causes and effects of food insecurity in Nashville to reveal the current barriers to and opportunities for food systems transformation.**

FBNP will complete a systems research analysis to understand the root causes and effects of food insecurity in Nashville. This process will engage community members and food system stakeholders in sharing their perspectives on the root causes of food insecurity and the opportunities and barriers to transformational action. This research will also provide insight into the current solution landscape, to include how differently positioned stakeholders are working independently, and/or in collaboration with others, on behalf of food security. This analysis will reveal our most glaring impact gaps—places in the food system where actions are falling short—and our greatest opportunities for transformational impact through improved coordination and collaboration.

2. **Facilitate inclusive opportunities for community members and food system stakeholders to co-create visions and solutions for a just and sustainable food system for Nashville.**

FBNP will convene and facilitate community forums, working groups, and other community engagement spaces that bring together diverse food system stakeholders and community members to design shared visions for the future of the Nashville food system. Through future visioning workshops, participants will identify how the current food system is changing; reimagine what a just and equitable food system may look like for Nashville; and collaboratively identify how food system stakeholders may use resources and relationships in the present to increase food security across the city.

3. **Establish capacity and governance among Nashville community members to lead the city's transition to a just and sustainable food system in the present and future.**

As its third area of work, FBNP will build capacity among community members and food system stakeholders to think and act systemically through workshops on systems change leadership. These workshops will enable participants to work together to turn insights from the project's extensive community engagement process into transformational action in the near- and long-term. In addition, FBNP will bring together food system stakeholders and the FBNP Steering Committee to establish governance structures that enable ongoing collaboration, accountability, and progress towards food system transformation goals during and after the culmination of the project.

Through these three areas of work, the FeedBack Nashville Project will establish a community-driven systems approach that, according to the Harvard Kennedy School (2019) “[builds and mobilizes] alliances of diverse stakeholders around a shared vision for systemic change, [empowers] widespread collaboration, innovation, and action; and [enables] mutual accountability” in order to transform Nashville’s food system into one that is just and sustainable for all Nashville residents. As mentioned previously, the project will be collaboratively coordinated and facilitated by the FeedBack Nashville Steering Committee—a multi-stakeholder coalition of food system actors and community members—a local Systems Change Coordinator, and a third-party, neutral consulting firm with expertise in facilitating food systems transformation with diverse stakeholders. Working in concert, these three entities will serve as the orchestrators of the FeedBack Nashville Project and undertake the community engagement and field-building efforts that will be required to forge and maintain Nashville’s citywide pursuit of a just and sustainable food system, now and in the future.

Scope of Work

To fulfill the project goals, FBNP will build a community engagement infrastructure via coalition building and partnerships, design and facilitate community engagement strategies and activities, and compile and analyze information gleaned from these processes to inform community-driven projects and policy proposals that will advance food security in our city. Specifically, FBNP will:

Goal 1: Diagnose the root causes and effects of food insecurity using collaborative systems mapping.

Strategy: FBNP will diagnose the current Nashville-Davidson County food system using a community-engaged approach. This research will reveal the interacting root causes and effects of food insecurity, investigate the opportunities and limitations of the existing solution landscape, and identify what is needed now and in the future to achieve a just and sustainable food system. Primary actions:

- Hire a systems transformation consultant to lead facilitation of goals 1, 2 and 3
- Identify a food systems coordinator in the Nashville food system to lead coordination and accountability of community engagement activities
- Undertake a collaborative systems mapping and systems diagnosis process involving local organizations, policymakers, front-line communities, community members, and the private sector
- Convene and facilitate community conversations with local community stakeholders to understand how food insecurity impacts our community in the current food system
- Complete a stakeholder analysis to understand how our current solutions interact to support or impede food system transformation
- Analyze qualitative and quantitative insights to create a report that discusses existing barriers to food security in Nashville, identifies scalable solutions that already exist, and establishes core priorities that are needed to establish just and sustainable responses to food insecurity in Nashville

Goal 2: Create a shared vision for a just and sustainable food system for Nashville.

Strategy: Through participatory workshops, focus group discussions, community dinners, and other community engagement opportunities, FBNP will engage an inclusive network of community members and food system stakeholders in future visioning to co-create a shared vision for a future for Nashville's food system. Primary actions:

- Create an inclusive and accessible community engagement and outreach strategy in collaboration with the FBNP Steering Committee, food system stakeholders, and other local organizations
- Convene community conversations, focus group discussions, 1:1 interviews, and other participatory events with community members to collectively imagine what a just and sustainable food system may look like for Nashville
- Collaborate with participants to identify how we may maximize resources, opportunities, and creative problem-solving in the present to drive food systems transformation in the future
- Translate insights and ideas from community conversations into a visual roadmap that communicates the shared vision for a just and sustainable food system for Nashville and how we get there in the present and future

Goal 3: Establish capacity and governance among stakeholders to lead food systems transformation.

Strategy: FBNP will build capacity and governance among community members and food system stakeholders to effectively design and implement new pathways, partnerships, and approaches for building a food secure future for all Nashville residents. Primary actions:

- Facilitate an accessible systems change workshop series for community leaders to develop capabilities in leading and coordinating ongoing food systems transformation efforts in Nashville
- Establish and implement a guiding framework for systemic governance to help guide partners and participants through Nashville's transition to a just and sustainable food system
- Identify and develop a network of systems change leaders across the Nashville community who will lead follow-on action, coordination, and accountability following the culmination of the FBNP

Target Communities

Food insecurity affects Nashville residents living in diverse communities and neighborhoods throughout the city, but it most acutely affects low-income, working class, immigrant and refugee, and BIPOC community members. The FeedBack Nashville Project prioritizes community engagement activities in all three areas of work that center the voices and perspectives of residents and organizations living and/or working in these communities that are most acutely and chronically affected by food affordability and accessibility challenges. By adopting this approach, FBNP dismantles long-standing silos that routinely overlook and/or exclude the creative changemaking strategies that exist among community members and organizations who most intimately interact with the challenges of food insecurity. The FeedBack Nashville Project connects with community members through the social networks of participant organizations in the FeedBack Nashville Steering Committee to achieve the project's community engagement priorities. In addition, the FBNP and its steering committee offers language accessibility and multilingual engagement capacity, ensuring that community members who speak languages other than English are able to participate in the project's activities.

The Team

The FeedBack Nashville project is conceptualized by the FeedBack Nashville Steering Committee, a group of organizations who are committed to working in collaboration with one another to lead the design and coordination of the proposed project. These organizations currently act as direct service providers to individuals and communities who experience food insecurity in their lives, and therefore already have extensive relationships of community trust. As its most important contribution, the Steering Committee will coordinate community outreach and engagement activities to ensure the project engages an inclusive, representative network of community members and food system stakeholders in project activities. The committee is composed of a diversity of organizations who possess varied resources, relationships, and knowledge and as a result, are uniquely positioned to ensure the project's success. Organizations who are already committed to serving in this capacity are listed below:

1. **The Nashville Food Project** brings people together to grow, cook and share nourishing food, with the goals of cultivating community and alleviating hunger in our city. We embrace a vision of vibrant community food security in which everyone in Nashville has access to the food they want and need through a just a sustainable food system.
2. **The Store** is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit operates as a year-round free grocery store allowing people to shop for their basic needs. The organization adopts a philosophy of community empowerment and aims to solve hunger issues in our community by developing programs to meet the needs of the community, including partnering with other organizations on issues of food security.
3. **Brooklyn Heights Community Garden** is a non-profit, USDA-certified urban farm located on formerly vacant lots in the Brooklyn Heights neighborhood in Nashville, TN. Our .56 acre farm & community hub serves our historically Black and low-income neighborhood that experiences food apartheid.
4. **Tennessee Local Food Summit** is a 501(c)3 organization that supports a healthy local food system for Middle Tennessee by hosting events that educate and connect. We promote food sovereignty through educational empowerment and provide the collaborative space necessary to develop a resilient local food economy.
5. **Patchwork** is a group of chefs based in Nashville, TN who believe that food is not only nourishment, but an expression of love and dignity. Patchwork began as a grant during the pandemic and evolved into a partnership focused 501(c)3 organization dedicated to providing community members in need with access to quality food.
6. **Porter Road Grocery** is a chain of small, local grocery stores based in Nashville, TN that connects the community to high-quality, locally-sourced foods. The grocery store strives to build resilience in the local food economy by reliably connecting consumers and local food producers.
7. **The Nashville Community Garden Coalition** is a coalition of community gardens working together to cultivate food sovereignty and organize for food justice in Nashville, Tennessee.
8. **The Metro Human Relations Commission** is Metro Nashville's civil and human rights agency charged with protecting and promoting the personal dignity of all people in Nashville and Davidson County.

In addition to this local network, the FeedBack Nashville Project is supported by Forum for the Future, an international non-profit with extensive experience working in collaboration with communities, cities, and industries to develop meaningful transitions to just and sustainable food systems. Last, the proposed project is informed by food system transformation models and case studies that have been successfully developed and implemented in other cities. For example, the project takes inspiration from the Austin Texas Healthy and Equitable Food System Initiative¹, the Louisville Food in Neighborhoods Community Coalition², American Climate Futures³, and Growing Our Futures USA.⁴ Together, these models and case studies provide supporting evidence illustrating how systems change approaches, community engagement, and coalition building may be leveraged together in Nashville to drive transformation towards a just and sustainable food system.

Tentative Timeline

Month & Year	Action	Goal Supported
Year 0: Aug. '22 - June '23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FeedBack Nashville Steering Committee establishes vision for FBNP and develops community engagement strategy ● Steering Committee develops outreach and engagement protocol and process ● Steering Committee researches and identifies prospective consulting firms ● Identify priority target communities and participating food system stakeholders and community organizations and integrate into preliminary community engagement strategy 	1, 2, 3
Year 1: June-July '23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Third-party consulting firm hired to lead facilitation of areas of work 1-3 ● Local food system stakeholder formalized as Systems Change Coordinator to lead coordination of community engagement and liaise between steering committee and consulting firm ● Preliminary community engagement protocol, process, and strategy is finalized and community outreach and engagement begins ● Project management plan developed for Area of work 1 & 2 ● KPIs and evaluation and monitoring protocol established for goals 1-3 ● Governance protocol is established to guide decision-making and community engagement best practices throughout project 	1, 2, 3
Year 1: July '23 - Jan '24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborative systems mapping process completed through community forums, workshops, focus group discussions and other events ● Stakeholder analysis and solution landscape analysis completed to reveal opportunities and limitations of current food insecurity interventions ● Systems mapping research summary published by third-party consulting firm, in collaboration with FBNP Steering Committee 	1
Year 1: Jan. - June '24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consulting firm and Steering Committee coordinates and facilitates citywide future visioning workshops with community members and food system stakeholders most impacted by food insecurity in Nashville ● Convene public forum series to share insights of systems mapping and diagnosis and recommendations with food system stakeholders including Metro Nashville government, NGOs, private sector, community members, and other actors 	1, 2

¹ <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/austins-healthy-and-equitable-food-system>

² <https://foodinneighborhoods.org/>

³ <https://www.forumforthefuture.org/american-climate-futures>

⁴ <https://www.forumforthefuture.org/scaling-regenerative-agriculture-in-the-us>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Committee completes assessment of community engagement strategy and metrics to date to ensure inclusive and diverse participation among target communities Year 1 impact and evaluation protocol implemented and inaugural annual report completed and disseminated List of priorities and goals for the future of the Nashville food system is outlined and defined through future visioning exercise 	
Year 2: July '24 - Jan. '25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insights and ideas from future visioning participatory workshops published in visual guidebook, defining opportunities in the present and future for food system stakeholders to work towards a just and sustainable food system Consulting firm facilitates Systems Leadership workshop series to build capacity to lead systems change activities among food system stakeholders and community members FBNP Steering Committee and consulting firm convene collaborative working sessions and community dialogue to identify pathways and partnerships in the current system that may be leveraged to achieve priorities for the food system identified in goals 1 & 2 	2, 3
Year 2: Feb. - June '25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants in Systems Change Leadership course collaborate with FBNP Steering Committee and project facilitator to develop strategies and governance—engagement, accountability, funding, and capacity—for carrying forth food system transformation priorities at end of project Facilitator and Steering Committee co-create final report outlining strategic pathways and partnerships that can be leveraged within Nashville’s food system to catalyze action on behalf of a just and sustainable food system 	1, 2, 3

Budget Request (Revised from original on 4/13/23 following committee approval)

	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Total</u>
Administrative: \$25,000			
Materials & Supplies	\$25,000	-	\$25,000
Outreach: \$70,000			
Partner Stipends	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$40,000
Community Participant Stipends	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$20,000
Bus Fare Reimbursement	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
Staff: \$485,000			
Systems Coordinator	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$110,000
Systems Change Consultant Fee	\$200,000	\$125,000	\$325,000
Translation and Interpretation Services	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$50,000
Fiscal Agent Fee (\$41,750)			
Fiscal Sponsor Fee	\$20,875	\$20,875	\$41,750
TOTAL			<u>\$621,750</u>



THE NASHVILLE FOOD PROJECT

📍 5904 California Avenue | Nashville, TN 37209

📞 615.460.0172

🔗 thenashvillefoodproject.org

✉️ info@thenashvillefoodproject.org

December 7, 2022

Metropolitan Government of Nashville
COVID-19 Financial Oversight Committee
1 Public Square
Nashville, Tennessee 37201

Dear Committee Members,

The Nashville Food Project enthusiastically supports the Feedback Nashville Project proposal submitted as part of the American Rescue Plan Act funding allocated to Nashville and Davidson County. We are committed to leveraging our office space, partnership network, and staff capacity to support the design, implementation, and evaluation of this project.

The Nashville Food Project brings people together to grow, cook and share nourishing food, with the goals of cultivating community and alleviating hunger in our city. We embrace a vision of vibrant community food security in which everyone in Nashville has access to the food they want and need through a just a sustainable food system. We work toward this vision using community-driven solutions, including a community meals program in which we share an estimated 6,000 meals weekly alongside 50+ partner organizations, as well as urban agriculture programs in which we grow food and provide others with the resources to do the same.

At our organization, we understand food insecurity is a complex social problem that affects thousands of Nashville residents every single day. While we recognize that a number of public and private stakeholders—including ourselves—are working to address issues of access and affordability, food and nutritional insecurity persists in large part to the ways in which we are collectively approaching the problem. Currently, Nashville's solutions to food insecurity are fragmented, *ad hoc* and merely mitigate the symptoms of the problem rather than address its underlying causes. This proposal outlines a plan through which stakeholders from across the city can work together toward a comprehensive, community-based transformation of the food system. A systems-change approach to this set of problems is essential for Nashville to reach its full potential as a world-class city wherein everyone has regular, affordable access to nutritious food. With our deep belief in the importance of this project, I hope that this Committee will allocate funds to support this critical project that will benefit the entire city.

Gratefully,

C.J. Sentell, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer

*The Nashville Food Project brings people together to grow, cook and share nourishing food,
with the goals of cultivating community and alleviating hunger in our city.*



December 6, 2022

Dear Committee,

The Store, as a nonprofit organization serving the Davidson County area since March 2020, seeks to address nutritional insecurity in a manner that identifies root causes of poverty and reduce barriers in access to these necessary resources. It is our goal to not only provide families and individuals experiencing food insecurity with their immediate needs, but also to work directly with our customers so to connect them with better resources in support of them achieving a more stable life. We hope to do so in a manner that protects the dignity of all.

As such, The Store stands in support of the FeedBack Nashville Project and its goals to address root causes and inherent barriers to accessing appropriate food goods, regardless of one's circumstances or location in the Nashville area. It is The Store's hope that this plan will allow the various areas of food industry to better join together as a community to ensure that all Nashvillians have a better life, which starts with securing the essential elements of survival.

Respectfully,

Courtney Vrablik
Executive Director
The Store



December 7, 2022

Davie Tucker, Jr.
Executive Director

Metro Government COVID-19 Financial Oversight Committee

Maryam Abolfazli, Chair

Re: Feedback Nashville Proposal

Edubina Arce

Garlinda Burton

Dan Cardenas

Amy Charlton

Pratik Dash

Dakota Galban

Genma Stringer Holmes

Kosar Kosar

Laurea Kwakye

Marcus Buggs

Ariel Safdie

Jorge Salles Diaz

Ben Vu Tran

Charles Traugher

Irwin Venick

Alicia Wynn

Dear Committee Members,

The Metro Human Relations Commission is proud to support the Feedback Nashville proposal. We have worked in tandem with all the partners to develop a plan we see as fundamentally necessary to understand, and, ultimately, address the systemic barriers to food security.

In Nashville's massive social justice landscape, food justice, oftentimes, takes a back seat to other important issues. Many direct and social services agencies provide food and nutrition services as part of their work, however, until this group was formed, there was not a coalition in Nashville dedicated to confronting the fundamental problems that create and perpetuate food insecurity. As you probably know and can clearly see in the proposal, it's one of the most pervasive and detrimental issues facing our residents and the city as a whole.

Moreover, given the acute disruption caused by the pandemic, as a community, we must not only address issues that currently persist in our food system, but, also, prepare for threats that may arise in the future. We cannot achieve this with the piecemeal approach that has been utilized thus far. It's imperative that we work as a city to create equitable, affordable food access for all residents as well as protect our food system from potential harm that would exacerbate our ability to ensure everyone has access to proper, consistent nourishment.

The Metro Human Relations Commission is excited and honored to be part of this virtuous, necessary endeavor with such dedicated and passionate collaborators.

Please reach out to the MHRC should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Davie Tucker
Executive Director
Metro Human Relations Commission

404 James Robertson Parkway
Suite 130
Nashville, TN 37219-6300
(615) 880-3370
MHRC@Nashville.gov
www.1City4AllPeople.com



12/06/2022

Patchwork

1600 Riverside Drive #2

Nashville, TN 37216

Re: Support for Feedback Nashville American Rescue Plan Funds Request

To Whom it may concern,

I, Benjamin Tyson of Patchwork Nashville, am writing on behalf of Feedback Nashville to express support for FeedBack Nashville's American Rescue Plan Act Funding Request.

Feedback Nashville's ARP request, whose goal is to: Diagnose the root causes and effects of food insecurity using collaborative systems mapping, create a shared vision for a just and sustainable food system for Nashville and design practical pathways, partnerships, and capacity to build a just and sustainable food, will help centralize the fragmented approach to food access in our city and lead us on a path towards equality and food justice.

Being a chef and founder of a meals-focused nonprofit; this project is extremely important to me. I feel this plan is critical to identify food insecurity, collaborate and cooperate among individuals and organizations that are working in the food justice and food security space. Nutrition is everything and the Feedback Nashville plan will help us advocate for Nashville's most vulnerable to get the healthcare, safety, nourishment, love and dignity they deserve.

Please feel free to reach me at anytime to answer any questions you may have.

In Solidarity,

Benjamin Tyson

Founder / Executive Director - Patchwork

978-758-1265

ben@patchworknashville.com

Tennessee Local Food Summit
5188 Old Hickory Blvd
Nashville, TN 37218

December 8, 2022

Metropolitan Government of Nashville
COVID-19 Financial Oversight Committee
1 Public Square
Nashville, Tennessee 37201

Dear Committee Members,

Tennessee Local Food Summit enthusiastically supports the Feedback Nashville Project proposal submitted as part of the American Rescue Plan Act funding allocated to Nashville and Davidson County. We are committed to leveraging our partnerships, community network, and resources to support this project.

Tennessee Local Food Summit promotes the development of a resilient local food economy by providing educational empowerment and opportunity for collaboration. Our organization hosts events that bring together farmers, gardeners and the food service industry with national experts, policy makers, and local institutions such as schools, hospitals, and universities, in an attempt to work more collaboratively in our efforts to build an equitable and sustainable food system for middle Tennessee.

We understand that food security is a complex problem. Numerous public and private stakeholders are working to address food insecurity and its effects, yet food insecurity persists in large part to the ways we are collectively striving to solve the problem. Currently, Nashville's solutions to food insecurity are fragmented, ad hoc and merely mitigate the symptoms of the problem rather than address its underlying causes.

This proposal outlines a plan through which stakeholders from across the city can work together toward a comprehensive, community-based transformation of the food System. A systems-change approach to this set of problems is critical for Nashville to reach its full potential wherein everyone has access to affordable, healthy food. We believe deeply in this project and hope that this Committee will allocate funds to support this critical project.

Thanks,

Natalie Ashker SeEVERS
Tennessee Local Food Summit
Executive Director



December 8, 2022

Re: FeedBack Nashville Project - American Rescue Plan Act Funding Request

To whom it may concern:

Forum for the Future is a leading international sustainability non-profit with offices in London, New York, Singapore and Mumbai. For more than 25 years we've been working in partnership with business, government, and civil society to accelerate the shift towards a just and regenerative future in which both people and the planet thrive. Forum for the Future US supports the American Rescue Plan Act funding request to enable the design and implementation of the FeedBack Nashville Project (FBNP), a food system transformation initiative for Metro Nashville-Davidson County.

Forum for the Future has extensive experience working in the food and agriculture space - supporting players across those systems to re-imagine how we think about, produce, consume, and value food, in ways that support our overarching vision of a just and regenerative future. We specialize in convening and collaborating - creating spaces for diverse actors to connect and collaborate, amplifying the voices of those with under-recognized power, and building capacity to think systemically and act collaboratively. As our work and others' have demonstrated countless times, enabling change actors to connect and work in new ways - to come together around a shared view of a system and its challenges, and to co-create shared visions for the future and the pathways to getting there - is critical to unlocking transformational change in complex systems. We are heartened by and supportive of FBNP's aim to do just that, in service of tackling the complex issue of food insecurity in Nashville and transforming their local food system.

We believe the FeedBack Nashville Project's approach of bringing together a citywide, inclusive network of food system actors to diagnose the root causes and effects of food insecurity; co-create a shared vision for a just and sustainable food system; and design practical pathways, partnerships, and capacity to reach that vision, is what's needed to achieve a thriving, resilient, accessible-to-all food system for Metro Nashville. Subject to the approval of this grant, Forum for the Future would be honored to partner with FBNP and its steering committee as a systems change consultant in support of these three areas of work. Forum for the Future believes that deep engagement, coalition building, and co-creation by and for food system actors from across Nashville will enable significant progress toward unlocking a just, sustainable food system for the city. We stand ready and willing to bring our expertise in systems change processes and collaboration to this work, in support of FeedBack Nashville Project's aims!

Please let me know if you have any questions about Forum for the Future's support for the FeedBack Nashville Project proposal. We hope you will consider the application favorably.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samantha Veide". Below the signature is a small, faint printed name "Samantha Veide".

Samantha Veide

Samantha Veide
Associate Director, Americas
Forum for the Future