



2013

Community Engagement

EXECUTIVE REPORT

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A big thank you to Shepherd Community Center and Tracey Horan for translating our materials into Spanish. Thank you volunteer facilitators, Tracey Horan and Sarah Robb.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Big Car
Charles A. Tindley Accelerated School
Evoke Arts and Media
Fall Creek Gardens
Garfield Park United Church of Christ
IUPUI School of Public and
Environmental Affairs
KI Eco Center
Near West Collaborative
Shepherd Community Center
Tabernacle Presbyterian Church
Westminster Neighborhood Ministries

FOOD DONATIONS

Big City Farms
Distelrath Farms
Pogue's Run Grocer
Tabernacle Presbyterian Church
Trader Joe's
U-Relish Farms

PHOTOGRAPHY

Jeremy McLean

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2013, the Indy Food Council (IFC) organized 13 community forums to gain a better sense of what community members want from their food system and the IFC. Of the 13 forums, five were held in the Platform, a centrally located building in downtown Indianapolis, and the other eight were held in selected venues throughout Indianapolis to increase participation of individual community members. Total attendance at these events was 295, with 185 attendees at the Platform sessions, referred to as 'Breakout Sessions', and 111 at the neighborhood sessions, referred to as "Community Conversations." This report is informed by attendees' comments at all 13 forums as well as surveys gathered from participants in the Community Conversations.

Key Focus Group Findings

- Participants want the IFC to promote collaboration and the sharing of skills, knowledge, and resources.
- Participants want the IFC to include racially, ethnically, and economically diverse community members at events, in working groups, and in leadership.
- Participants want the IFC to have a policy agenda, advocating for issues such as SNAP, local farms, better wages, and an easier system for gaining access to vacant land.
- Participants think education is needed on a variety of topics, from healthy food preparation to composting.
- Participants see gardening/agriculture as a solution to food access issues, an avenue for education, and a way for residents to make money.
- The theme that emerged most frequently was food access. Major barriers to food access include lack of a local farmers' market, farm stand, or grocery store. Additionally, high prices, lack of public transit, and low wages and unemployment were cited as barriers to meaningful food access.

Key Survey Findings

- 87% of respondents reported they were able to eat a healthful meal (defined as including fruits, vegetables, and a lean protein) "always" or "often" in the previous six months.
- 37% of respondents reported eating a fruit or vegetable at every meal.
- 87.4% of respondents reported using their own vehicle for getting to the store or market for groceries; those who did not use their own vehicle tended to have lower incomes and live downtown, or northwest and west of downtown.
- 29% of respondents reported worrying they would run out of food before getting money to buy more at some point in the previous six months.
- Food insecurity was associated with less healthy eating behaviors and with having a diet-related health condition.
- Lower income, "an individual whose family's taxable income for the preceding year did not exceed 150 percent of the poverty level amount,"¹ was associated with placing higher importance on price as a factor in food selection, and placing a higher importance on price was associated with less frequent consumption of produce and less attention to the purchase of local food.
- Freshness, enjoyment, and health concerns were the most important factors in food selection to respondents.

¹ Federal TRIO Programs Current-Year Low-Income Levels. (2014). Retrieved from: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/incomelevels.html>



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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

About the Indy Food Council

In Marion County, two thirds of adults are obese or overweight,² and one in five does not know where their next meal will come from.³ However, nationally, an estimated 31% of food suitable for consumption is wasted by consumers and retailers.⁴ Hoosiers spend nearly \$16 billion on food annually, 90% of which comes from out of state.⁵ And according to USDA economists, Indiana farmers' net profits in 2011 were lower than they were in 1929, accounting for inflation.⁶ The Indy Food Council was created to find solutions to these, and other food system problems.

In 2012, a group of about a dozen organizations and other community stakeholders formed the Food System Action Group for the purpose of integrating stakeholders in Indianapolis's food system, and created the Indy Food Fund, a micro-granting fund. In 2013, The Indy Food Fund (IFF) awarded approximately \$50,000 to nine organizations to support local food projects designed to improve health, enhance ecology, and create meaningful economic and civic opportunities for Indianapolis residents and neighborhoods.

With the first part of the granting process complete, many in the now-expanded Food System Action Group contemplated ways to mobilize IFF connections and energy into something more permanent. Food System Action Group participants looked to other communities for ways to increase connectivity and catalyze ideas among food system participants, and found the food council idea to be the best option.

In 2013, the Food System Action Group transitioned into the IFC Organizing Committee. This group met once a month to plan how the Council was going to form and operate. The Organizing Committee agreed that the IFC's work should support four focus areas, or nodes: Health/Nutrition, Ecology, Economy, and Social Justice. These nodes would tie into the overall vision of the IFC.

Community Engagement Efforts

To prepare for the official launch of the IFC in January 2014, the Organizing Committee sought community input on our plans and goals through a series of community events. The purpose of this outreach was to introduce the goals and mission of the IFC to community members and stakeholders and gain input on what was needed from a food council. Additionally, we hoped

Indy Food Council Vision

To create a food system that provides everyone access to healthy and nutritious food, enhances ecology, and creates meaningful economic and civic opportunities.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012) *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/>.

³ Feeding America. (2010, January) *Hunger in America 2010*. Retrieved from <http://feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/hunger-studies/hunger-study-2010.aspx>.

⁴ Buzby, J., Wells, H., and Bentley, J. (2013) *Food loss data help inform the food waste discussion*. USDA Economic Research Service. Retrieved from http://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2013-june/ers-food-loss-data-help-inform-the-food-waste-discussion.aspx#.Uxj_i-NdWSp.

⁵ Meter, K. (2012) *Hoosier farmer? Emerging food systems in Indiana*. Crossroads Resource Center. Retrieved 2014 from www.crcworks.org.

⁶ Ibid.

these efforts would increase involvement by building interest and energy in work to improve the food system.

The community engagement effort began with a series of five community forums, referred to as “Breakout Sessions,” that took place from May through November of 2013. Each of the first four Breakout Sessions focused on one of the four nodes, and the final session focused on the food system as a whole. The sessions were led by an expert in the respective field.

Knowing that the Breakout Sessions might not be accessible to all interested parties, the Organizing Committee made efforts to engage people in their own neighborhoods by holding community forums in eight neighborhoods across Indianapolis. These events, referred to as “Community Conversations,” were held at trusted community locations in the evening or on the weekend. While each Breakout Session focused on one topic, each Community Conversation covered each of the four nodes.

This report compiles the information gathered from the five Breakout Sessions and eight Community Conversations. The mixed-methods approach, utilizing both focus groups and surveys, provides the IFC with needed input on what community members would like to see in a food council. This information will guide the goals and strategic plan of the IFC.

Indy Food Council Mission

The Indy Food Council connects food system stakeholders, catalyzes ideas, and advances initiatives to grow a sustainable food system that improves the health and quality of life for all.



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METHODS

METHODS

The purpose of this report is to 1) provide a basis for the IFC to replicate community forums in the future, and 2) summarize key findings to inform the goals and strategic plan of the IFC.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

How We Selected Locations

Eight Indianapolis locations (inside the I-465 loop) were chosen for the Community Conversations, balancing the desire to reach all neighborhoods with the reality that available resources were finite. The locations were chosen to obtain diverse viewpoints. We hosted the conversations in conjunction with well-known community organizations with which we had strong partnerships.

Marketing

In each neighborhood, we partnered with a non-profit, school, faith- or community-based organization already established in the community. The partner organizations assisted the IFC by advertising to clients and members. Additionally, marketing was undertaken by tabling at local events, such as the Garfield Park Better Blocks festival. The event was also advertised at local businesses, institutions (e.g. schools, health clinics), social services agencies, listservs, and on social media.

Structure of the Conversations

All conversations were family-friendly and included refreshments, often from a local farm or business. The series of eight Community Conversations ran from September through December of 2013. The conversations took place on a Tuesday evening or a Saturday morning, for ninety minutes, as we determined that these times were most accessible to community members. Each conversation was facilitated by one of the Presbyterian Hunger Program AmeriCorps*VISTAs and a representative from the partner organization. The conversation structure was adjusted based on neighborhood issues and size of each event, but the conversations generally followed this structure:

- 1) Facilitator introduced the IFC and purpose of the conversation.
- 2) Attendees and facilitators introduced themselves.
- 3) Attendees brainstormed food-related neighborhood assets and needs.⁷
- 4) Facilitator led 10 to 15 minute discussions on each of the four nodes. The first part of the discussion involved reading the IFC goals and asking attendees what they thought about them. The second part was open discussion, encouraged by discussion questions. The partner organizations assisted the IFC in planning these questions as appropriate to the community.
- 5) Facilitator led 15 minute discussion to cover any topics that were missed. At this time, attendees brainstormed ideas and solutions, utilizing their community's assets to address their community's needs.
- 6) Attendees filled out a survey and had time for networking.

⁷ We did not include brainstorming of needs, assets, and solutions at the Westminster Neighborhood Ministries conversation.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

The Breakout Sessions were held on Thursdays at the Platform from noon to 1:30pm. The sessions took place roughly every six weeks, with one session for each of the four nodes (Health/Nutrition, Social Justice, Economy, and Ecology), and an additional session entitled *Building a Better System*. The attendees included individuals and representatives of organizations, governmental entities, and businesses in the Indianapolis community. Members of the IFC Organizing Committee led the sessions. Each session included a presentation of the goals of the respective node and background information on the topic and a discussion period where participants could voice opinions on goals and strategies.

DATA COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Focus Group Data

A note taker was assigned for each Community Conversation and Breakout Session. These notes were shared with the attendees as part of a follow-up email. Each comment collected from participants was entered separately into Excel and identified by conversation, location, and whether it was a need, asset, idea/solution, or part of Health/Nutrition, Social Justice, Ecology, Economy, or Additional Comments. We coded each statement based on topic to aggregate comments by topic for the purpose of discerning patterns.

Survey Data

The Organizing Committee developed a survey for Community Conversation attendees to collect information on demographics, shopping and eating behaviors, and food security. The surveys were anonymous and were assigned an ID number for data entry. SPSS Statistical Software was used for survey data management and analyses. Survey data from all of the Community Conversation locations was analyzed together because the sample size was not large enough to examine group differences based on location.

EXAMPLES OF CONVERSATION STARTERS

Health/Nutrition:

- What concerns do you have about eating healthfully?
- Do the current offerings at area grocery stores fulfill your needs?

Social Justice:

- Do you and your neighbors have adequate access to the food that you want?

Economy:

- Is job creation a concern for the neighborhood?
- What food-related businesses would you like to see?

Ecology:

- How do gardens play a role in the area food system?
- What are the environmental challenges in this community? How do they relate to food?



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FINDINGS:
Event Attendance

PARTICIPANTS

An average of 37 participants attended each of the five Breakout Sessions and an average of 14 participants attended each of the eight Community Conversations. The 13 events had a total attendance of 295 people (185 at Breakout Sessions and 111 at Community Conversations). Surveys were collected from 97 of the 111 Community Conversation participants. IFC Organizing Committee members were not counted in attendance numbers.

The Community Conversations and Breakout Sessions had a total attendance of 295 people.

Breakout Session Attendance

Breakout Session	Attendance
Health/Nutrition	48
Ecology	30
Economy	35
Social Justice	49
Building a Better System	23
Total	185

Community Conversation Attendance & Survey Response Rates

Conversation Locations	Number of Attendees	Number of Surveys Collected	Survey Response Rate
Westminster	10	10	100%
KI Eco Center	7	7	100%
Mapleton	13	11	84.6%
Near West	10	8	80.0%
Garfield Park	16	15	93.8%
Broad Ripple	39	32	82.1%
Tindley Academy	9	8	88.9%
Shepherd	7	6	85.7%
Totals	111	97	87.4%



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FINDINGS:

**Focus Group Data from Breakout
Sessions & Community
Conversations**

QUALITATIVE DATA FROM BREAKOUT SESSIONS and COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Major Themes	Number of Comments
Access	124
Education	90
Business	86
Gardening/Agriculture	70
Connectivity	63
Environmental Concerns	49
Land Usage	29
Inclusivity	25
Public Policy	18

ACCESS

Accessibility of quality food was the most frequently discussed topic across all of the events, with a total of 124 comments. Most of the discussions about access fell into the categories below, which are ordered from most to least frequently discussed.

Food Businesses and Access

Participants think food businesses play a large role in food accessibility. Participants like farmers' markets, but find the locations inconvenient for many of the neighborhoods. Many neighborhoods, therefore, want their own local farmers' market. Participants in some neighborhoods are also discontent with grocery stores and reported leaving their neighborhoods for better grocery shopping options. They also voiced the importance of promoting local food through positive messaging and advertising. Finally, participants see small-scale entrepreneurship as a way to address food access issues. For example, one participant voiced an idea of partnering with Freewheelin'⁸ to create a business for transporting groceries, and a group of participants liked the idea of promoting "food hustlers"⁹.

FOOD BUSINESS & ACCESS

"Educate Kroger to talk to community to realize opportunity. They think the community doesn't want certain food, when in reality they just go elsewhere for it."

Near West Community Conversation

Jobs and Wages

Participants are very concerned with low wages, unemployment, and under-employment. They see these issues as one of the root causes of hunger and food access problems. Participants see food businesses as a way to create jobs and to improve food access. They also think job-training programs in farming are important.

⁸ Freewheelin' is a community based bike and repair shop focusing on youth empowerment through a youth bicycle maintenance program.

⁹ Food Hustler was a concept introduced by a participant that identifies a person(s) to promote and push local food through the community.

Hunger and Food Assistance

Participants think food pantries need to carry more fresh produce. Representatives from several local food pantries, however, had a different impression of demand. This may be related to the *type* of produce offered; knowledge of preparation techniques may foment demand. Participants also discussed the use of SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) at farmers' markets. They think there is not enough awareness that using SNAP at markets is an option, nor are the vouchers easy to obtain. Farmers' markets may also be difficult to access.

Key Barriers to Food Access: Price and Transportation

Inconvenient food business location, a lack of food variety, the price of food, and a dearth of transportation were the most frequently discussed barriers to accessing healthy food. Participants criticized the city for its lack of public transportation and want the IFC to advocate for an improved public transit system.

Food Deserts

Participants criticized the term "food desert." Their feedback was that the term is too simple and does not accurately reflect on-the-ground conditions. The term does not account for community assets, such as gardens and Hispanic grocery stores, and does not describe whether residents shop at the local grocery store if there is one. There is also concern that addressing a food desert by building a grocery store could lead to gentrification, which may push out the current residents.

Solutions to Food Access

Participants want local, community-based solutions to increase food access. There is interest in work-exchange at farms, the co-op business model, and wholesale buying clubs. Participants also want residents with gardens to be able to sell their surplus within their own neighborhoods.

JOBS AND WAGES

"It's not a food access problem it's an economic problem."

Mapleton Community Conversation

"Instead of having people coming in from outside neighborhoods to do volunteer days to clean up, they should donate money and then pay locals to beautify their neighborhood."

Garfield Park Community Conversation

HUNGER AND FOOD ASSISTANCE

"Fresh Bucks needs to be located closer. It is hard to go to the farmers' market when there are stores on the way."

Shepherd Community Center Community Conversation

PRICE AND TRANSPORTATION

"It is cheaper to buy fast food than it is to buy fresh produce."

Shepherd Community Center Community Conversation

"It comes back to transportation. It causes lots of access issues."

Garfield Park Community Conversation

FOOD DESERTS

"We need a more holistic approach to food deserts. It's not just 'if you build it they will come.'"

Tindley Community Conversation

SOLUTIONS TO FOOD ACCESS

"We should set up facilities in each neighborhood organization for [food] distribution."

Westminster Community Conversation

EDUCATION

Participants think there is a need for education for people of all income levels on nutrition, food preparation, shopping healthfully within a budget, and gardening. They also think more people should be educated about why local food is important. Within the theme of education, there was a sub-theme of youth. Youth are seen as our future and as a target for educating families about nutrition and food preparation. Participants think it is important to develop increased demand for healthy foods among youth. There is also some interest in involving youth in solutions to increase food access by placing them in paid positions or internships.

BUSINESS

Over half of the comments about business were in the context of food access. Participants tend to view businesses as community assets, which could improve food access, create jobs and support the local economy.

GARDENING/AGRICULTURE

Participants see gardens as a tool to increase food access and promote education. They think gardening has caught on as a cultural norm and has become a status symbol in some neighborhoods. Participants are concerned about chemical contamination of land that could be used for gardening and about people taking from community gardens. Participants want year-round growing to be encouraged and want ways for gardeners to sell their surplus. Finally, growing food was seen as a way to take back power over food choices.

CONNECTIVITY

The need for collaboration and sharing of resources, skills, and knowledge emerged as a strong and consistent theme across all of the community forums. Participants noted we need to talk to each other and know what people in our community are doing to promote a healthy food system. We need to support existing efforts, rather than reinventing them. Participants also emphasized the importance of sharing knowledge. Participants want to know what resources are available to help them and what organizations are doing food-related work so they can get involved. Participants are interested in addressing community needs through collaborative solutions like promoting an informal economy and creating a community kitchen where members take turns cooking for each other. Additionally, participants want listings with information such as locations of community gardens, food pantries, vacant lots, and food-related work being done in the city. They also want resources to inform them how to get started with their own projects.

EDUCATION

“People need to be more informed and take a stand against issues in communities.”

Mapleton Community Conversation

“People need to know that healthy can be convenient.”

Shepherd Community Center Community Conversation

“Inform the kids to change the parents. We have the kids for 8 hours, what about what we feed them? Critical thinking in schools about food is needed.”

KI Eco Center Community Conversation

BUSINESS

“[We need] competition between food stores.”

Near West Community Conversation

GARDENING/AGRICULTURE

“Food security is about more than grocery stores. It’s about gardening too. What happens if we have a natural catastrophe? Personal gardens are a way to improve access.”

KI Eco Center Community Conversation

“Year-round growers – we need more, we need to encourage it.”

Near West Community Conversation

CONNECTIVITY

“A communication strategy that helps community and stake holders know what is going on... communication between people working in food to promote partnerships.”

Economy Breakout Session

“People are not talking and connecting.”

Mapleton Community Conversation

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Participants are interested in composting, recycling, promoting energy efficiency, and sustainable farming practices. They see the city charge for curb-side recycling as a disincentive to recycle, especially when trash pickup is free. Participants think increased consumption of local food will increase energy efficiency. They also want people to be aware of the energy consumption involved in driving to buy food and storing it at home. Finally, participants want to promote water conservation, soil health, and biodiversity.

LAND USAGE

There are concerns about barriers to acquiring vacant land for gardening and farming, and participants want the IFC to work on policies addressing this issue. Participants are also concerned about accessing water for growing food on vacant land.

INCLUSVITY

Participants at several of the Community Conversations and Breakout Sessions voiced concerns over the inclusivity of the IFC and the healthy food movement in general. There were concerns about the lack of racial/ethnic and economic diversity at IFC events and in IFC leadership. Participants recommended engaging the community with events that are fun, family-friendly, and less intellectual.

PUBLIC POLICY

Participants want the IFC to have an agenda advocating for public policies that promote a healthy food system. They are particularly interested in a food council that advocates for better public transportation, SNAP, local farmers, and an easier system to gain access to vacant land. Additionally, there is concern over policies that affect ease of access to unhealthy foods (e.g. farm subsidies and lack of tax for sugary drinks).

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

“We use more fuel driving to purchase food, storing and cooking food than trucking. How do we address personal energy consumption?”

KL Eco Center Community Conversation

“Establish systems for eliminating food waste for restaurants and grocery stores.”

Ecology Breakout Session

“There are a lot of problems with [acquiring] vacant land owned by the county, and there are a lot of hoops to go through to acquire the land. It can take years.”

Tindley Academy Community Conversation

INCLUSIVITY

“The IFC should Serve as a learning body; It should be a continuous learning opportunity that engages community members and have them part of the IFC; Learn issues in communities through people’s experiences and the people most affected by the issues.”

Building a Better System Breakout Session

“We need to get people in poverty to come talk.”

Garfield Park Community Conversation

“[We need to] address social justice on the Food Council itself.”

KL Eco Center Community Conversation

PUBLIC POLICY

“The Food Council should work on changing or supporting policies to help local farms.”

Shepherd Community Center Community Conversation

COMMENTS ON GOALS¹⁰

Participants at the Community Conversations criticized the goals for being too academic and including words that the general public may not know. They also wanted the goals to be more consistent and measurable. Additionally, participants wanted the IFC goals to include education. Below is an outline of the comments participants had about the goals of each node:

Participant Comments	Food Council Goals
Health/Nutrition	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Food desert does not describe the complexities of the true situation. ● The goals should more directly address health and nutrition. ● The two goals are very similar. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve access to healthy food for Indianapolis residents. ● Eradicate food deserts and increase food security.
Social Justice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social justice goals should address fair wages and job creation related to food. ● The goals do not address the root causes of poverty and food inequities. ● The goals are only focused on hunger, but there are many social justice issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure that anyone who is hungry can access nutritious food. ● Fully utilize national food access programs (SNAP). ● Increase awareness of and engagement with food insecure community.
Economy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The goals do not address fair wages and just jobs. ● The first goal should address distribution and transportation issues to increase access. ● Farm-to-restaurant projects may not meet the needs of mixed-income communities, as these efforts tend to result in expensive foods. “Farm-to-restaurant” should be changed to “farm-to-fork” to include institutions and consumers. ● The second goal should include urban grocery stores among the types of food businesses listed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase the amount of food grown locally; create and serve the demand for local food. ● Spur economic development and create jobs through farmers’ markets, urban farms, and farm-to-restaurant projects. ● Create a sense of place, foster civic engagement, and beautify our neighborhoods.
Ecology	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Industrial-scale composting could cause problems, like needing to truck out the waste. Smaller-scale composting efforts are preferred. ● Education is an important component in working to promote a healthy environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve degraded land and re-use of vacant land in your neighborhood through urban growing. ● Maximize energy efficiency in food production and distribution. ● Eliminate waste through industrial-scale composting

¹⁰ The goals have been revised to reflect the feedback heard in the conversations. They can be found in the appendix section.



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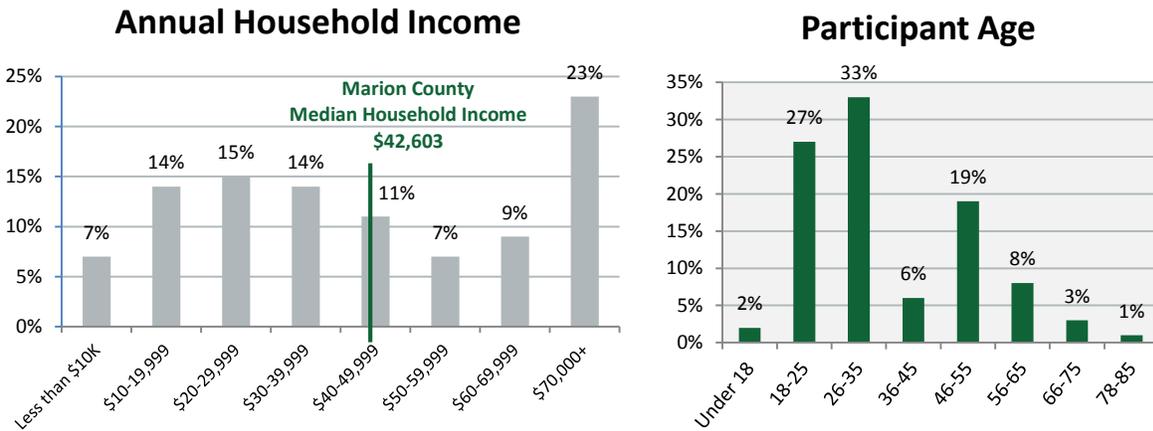
Community Engagement

FINDINGS:

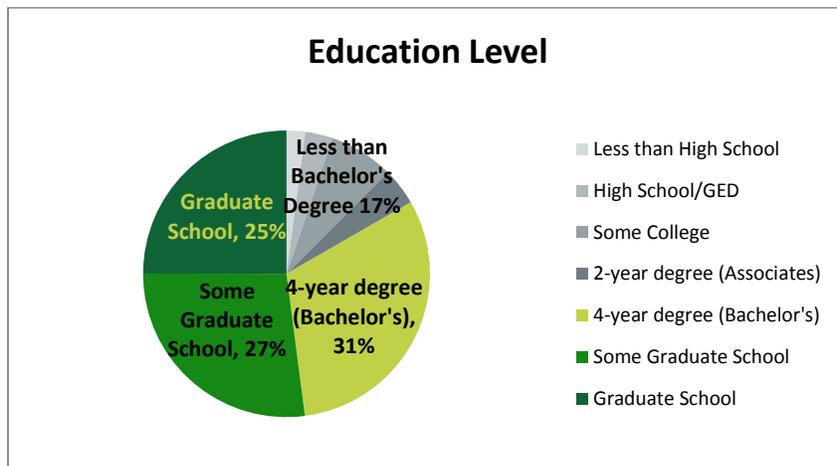
**Community Conversations
Survey Data**

PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

59.4% of respondents were female and 62.5% were 35 years old or under. Respondents had higher education levels than the larger Marion County population, with 83.3% having a Bachelor’s Degree or higher, compared to 27.6% of residents in Marion County.¹¹ 50% of respondents reported an annual household income under \$40,000.¹² Education level was not associated with income level in this sample. Respondents’ average household size was 2.64. 37.2% of respondents reported being married or in a domestic partnership. 20% had children under 18 years old in their household. 79.5% of respondents identified as White, 14.8% identified as Black/African American, and 5.7% identified as Asian, Multiracial, or Other. 10.1% identified as Hispanic.



Respondents’ income distribution was similar to the income of the general Marion County population.



83.3% of respondents had a Bachelor’s Degree or higher compared to 27.6% of Marion County residents.

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2010) *State & County Quickfacts: Marion County, IN*. Retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov>.

¹² From 2008 to 2012, 50% of Marion County residents had an annual household income under \$42,603. Ibid.

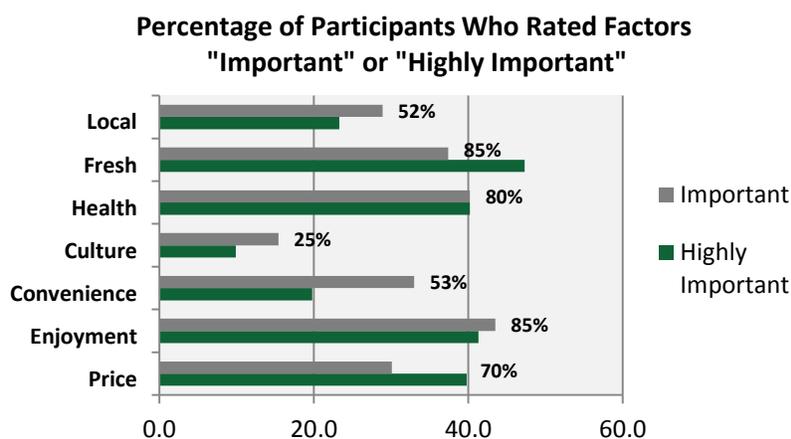
Summary of Key Participant Demographics

Participant Characteristics	Percentage	<i>N</i>
Gender (<i>N</i> = 96)		
Female	59.4%	57
Male	50.6%	39
Marital Status (<i>N</i> = 94)		
Coupled	37.2%	35
Un-Coupled	62.8%	59
Race (<i>N</i> = 88)		
White	79.5%	70
Black	14.8%	13
Asian	2.3%	2
Other	2.3%	2
Multiracial	1.1%	1
Hispanic Ethnicity (<i>N</i> = 89)		
Hispanic	10.1%	9
Non-Hispanic	89.9%	80

EATING HABITS

Eating Preferences

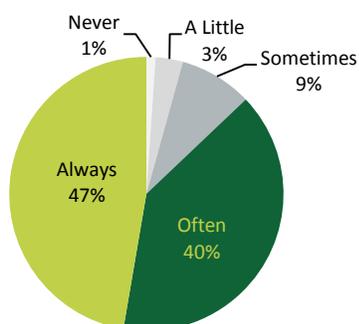
Respondents were asked how important seven factors were in determining their food choices. 80% or more of respondents rated freshness, healthiness, and enjoyment as either “important” or “highly important” (84.7%, 80.4%, and 84.8% respectively). 69.9% rated price as “important” or “highly important”. Only about 52% rated local food or convenience “important” or “highly important”. Most respondents reported that culture was not important in determining their food choices. Lower income was associated with higher importance placed on price, and higher importance placed on price was associated with less importance placed on local food.



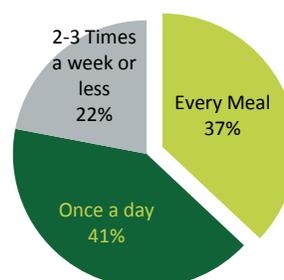
Eating Behaviors

87.1% of respondents reported they were able to eat a healthful meal “always” or “often” in the previous six months. However, 63% reported eating fruits and vegetables once a day or less frequently. Notably, higher importance of price was associated with lower frequency of eating produce. Income, however, was not directly associated with frequency of produce consumption.

A healthful meal was defined as one including fruits, vegetables, and a lean protein.



How often were you able to eat a healthful meal in the last 6 months?



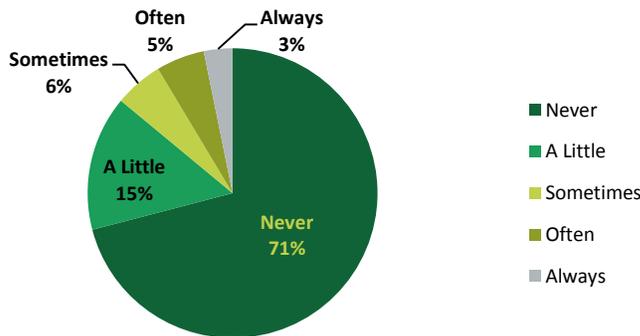
About how often did you eat fresh fruits and vegetables in the last 6 months?

FOOD SECURITY

21.8% of respondents reported using a food assistance program (e.g. SNAP, WIC, food pantry) in the last 6 months.

What food assistance did participants use? (N = 87)	Percentage	N
SNAP	12.6%	11
Food Pantries	9.2%	8
WIC	5.7%	5
Soup Kitchens	4.6%	4
Free School Lunch	3.4%	3
Child Summer Feeding Program	3.4%	3

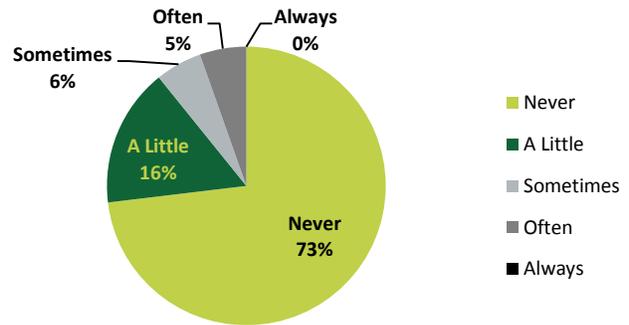
How often did you worry that food at home would run out before your family got money to buy more? (In the last 6 months)



29% reported worrying they would run out of food before getting money to buy more at some point in the previous 6 months

How often did you NOT have money to buy more food when you ran out? (In the last 6 months)

27% reported not having money to buy more food when they ran out at some point in the previous 6 months.



Food Security, Income, and Education

Respondents with lower education tended to *run* out of food more frequently. However, *worrying* about running out of food was not associated with education level. Lower income was associated with higher frequency of *worrying* about running out of food and *running* out of food. Household size did not affect the strength of the association. No other demographics were associated with food security.

Unmet Needs

Of the respondents who reported using one or more food assistance programs in the previous six months, one third did not use a federal program (SNAP or WIC). These individuals may have benefited from enrollment in a federal program, but they either did not qualify or did not enroll for another reason. Sixteen respondents, who reported worrying their food would run out due to monetary constraints, did not use any food assistance program in the last six months. Some of these individuals earned more than \$50,000 annually; it is unclear whether they were actually worrying about running out of food due to monetary constraints, or whether they misunderstood the question.

Food Security & Eating Behaviors

Lower income was associated with more importance placed on price of food, and the higher the importance placed on price as a factor in food choice, the lower the intake of fruits and vegetables.

Higher frequency of *worrying* about running out of food due to money was associated with less frequent produce consumption and healthful meals. *Running* out of food due to

monetary constraints was associated with lower frequency of eating a healthful meal. Higher frequency of *worrying* about running out of food was associated with less importance placed on eating local foods.

Food insecure individuals were at risk for less healthy eating behaviors.

Food Security & Health

Higher frequency of *running* out of food was associated with having a diet-related health condition (e.g. high blood pressure, obesity, type II diabetes). Higher frequency of *worrying* about running out of food was associated with lower produce intake and less frequent healthful meals. Additionally, *running out* of food was associated with eating healthful meals less often.

Running out of food frequently was associated with having a diet-related health condition.

HEALTH

29.2% of respondents had at least one diet-related health condition. 46.2% of those with a diet-related condition had more than one. High blood pressure and obesity were the most common diet-related conditions. 16.9% of our sample was obese, compared to 30% in Marion County.¹³

Having a diet-related health condition was associated with eating healthful meals less frequently. Frequency of eating fruits and vegetables was not associated with having a diet-related condition.

Frequency of Diet-Related Conditions

Condition	Percentage	N
Type II Diabetes	7.9%	7
Obesity	16.9%	15
High Blood Pressure	19.1%	17
High Cholesterol	10.1%	9
Heart Disease	4.5%	4

¹³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012) *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/>.

TRANSPORTATION

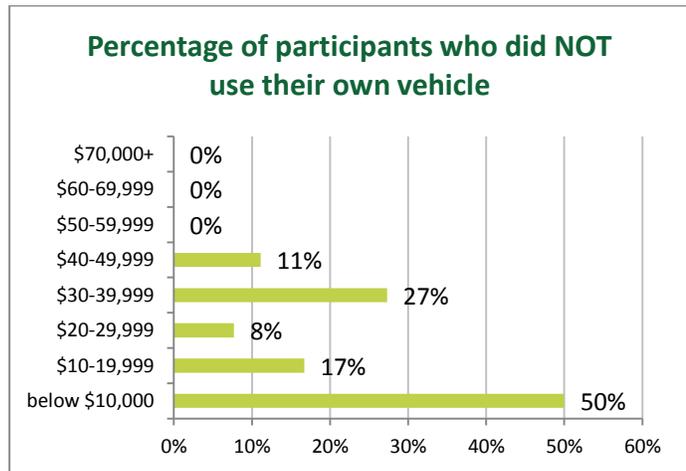
87.4% of respondents reported using their own vehicle as a method for getting to the store or market for groceries.

Eight respondents reported using more than one form of transportation. Of these eight, seven drove their own car as one form of transportation. Five of these eight used their own car and bicycle. In this sample, bicycling was mostly a supplemental form of transportation to get to the market or grocery store.

How do you usually get to the store or market to buy food? (N = 95)	Percentage	N
My own vehicle	80.0%	76
Someone else's vehicle	6.3%	6
Walk	4.2%	4
Bicycle	1.1%	1
More than one method	8.4%	8

Transportation Mode by Income Level

Most respondents reported using their own vehicle to go to the market or store for groceries. However, those who did not use their own car tended to be low to middle income. All participants earning \$50,000 or more a year reported using their own car to buy groceries.



Transportation by Zip Code of Residence

Of the 26 zip codes respondents lived in, six contained respondents, who reported not using their vehicle as a primary method to get their groceries. Three zip codes were most commonly represented: 46202, 46208, 46222. These zip codes included downtown, and the areas immediately west and northwest of downtown (See map in Appendix C).



2013

Community Engagement

**Summary of Findings
And Recommendations**

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS: FOCUS GROUP DATA

FOOD ACCESS

Major barriers to food access that were reported:

- Lack of local farmers' market, farm stand, or grocery store with good selection of healthy foods at an affordable price
- High price for healthy foods
- Lack of public transit
- Low wages, unemployment, and underemployment

GARDENING/AGRICULTURE

Gardening/Agriculture is seen as a solution to food access issues, an avenue for education, and a way for residents to make money.

CONNECTIVITY

Participants want the IFC to promote collaboration and sharing of skills, knowledge, and resources. Participants are particularly interested in a clearinghouse of information on the IFC website.

INCLUSIVITY

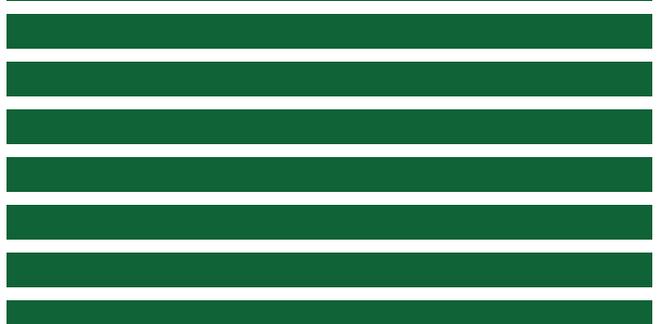
Participants want the IFC to have a more democratic voice by including racially/ethnically and economically diverse community members at events, in working groups, and in leadership.

EDUCATION

Participants think more education is needed across income levels and for a variety of topics from healthy food preparation to composting.



KEY FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS: SURVEY DATA

The sample of 97 respondents, who filled out surveys at the Community Conversations, represented diverse incomes and zip codes of residence. The IFC collected income data in brackets, so these numbers are not directly comparable to census data, which uses exact incomes. Despite this limitation, the distribution of income levels for this sample was somewhat similar to the income distribution for Marion County residents, in that 50% of respondents had an annual household income under \$40,000, while 50% of Marion county residents had an income under \$42,603 from 2008-2012.¹⁴ This sample, however, was much more educated and somewhat less racially and ethnically diverse than the general Marion County population.¹⁵ The overall high level of education and resulting lack of variance in education level may explain why it was not associated with income in this survey, as well as the large numbers of young respondents who might have been low-earners because they were early in their careers. Survey results are useful, but caution is advised when interpreting findings, as our sample was not fully representative of the population in Marion County. The survey findings may have been different if data were collected from a more representative sample.

Most respondents ate fresh fruits and vegetables infrequently.

Although 84.7% of respondents reported that freshness was important to them when choosing food, most ate fresh fruits and vegetables only once a day or less frequently. 87.1% reported eating a healthful meal “always” or “often”, though. It seems that participants may have defined a healthful meal differently than we did (as including a lean protein, fruit, and vegetable). Notably, higher importance placed on price as a factor in food choice was associated with less frequent consumption of produce and less importance placed on eating locally.

Food security was a concern for almost one third of respondents.

21.8% of respondents reported using a food assistance program in the previous six months, but 29% reported worrying they would run out of food and not have money to buy more. This indicates there were people who suffered from food insecurity who were not able to or chose not to seek assistance. Of great concern was the association of food insecurity with less healthy eating habits and having a diet-related health condition.

Most respondents used their own car as their primary way to get to the store or market to buy groceries.

Participants who reported using a different method of transportation had annual household incomes below \$50,000 and tended to live in a zip code within a several miles of downtown, specifically north or west of downtown.

¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. (2010) *State & County Quickfacts: Marion County, IN*. Retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE IFC

The focus group findings provide insight into what Indianapolis residents want from their food system and what they hope a food council will work towards. Participants did not see food system issues as divisible into the IFC's four nodes. Their comments cut across nodes, falling mostly into the categories of Education, Access, Connectivity, and Community Engagement and Inclusivity. Additionally, the survey had striking findings on the relation of food security to eating habits. Below are the community's recommendations to the IFC based on the information we gained in our outreach efforts.

Education

The Indianapolis community recommends that the IFC incorporate education into their goals. Participants see a need for more education on food system issues, nutrition, shopping, food preparation, gardening and ecological issues. They also want education on how to start small-scale projects (e.g. training on securing funding).

Food Access

Residents think 'food desert' is an inaccurate term. Because food deserts are defined as an absence of grocery stores¹⁶, the natural solution would seem to be adding a grocery store in the affected neighborhood. Participants have mixed feelings about this solution because they are concerned a new grocery store could lead to gentrification and their ultimate displacement from their community. They also question whether community members would shop at the grocery store and whether it would offer quality foods at a reasonable price. Participants recommend creative solutions to food access issues and believe small-scale community initiatives and small food businesses like produce trucks or stands could make a large impact. Finally, improved public transit is needed to improve food access.

Connectivity

Participants consistently commented that food work in our community is fragmented; people are putting in enormous efforts, but are repeating what others are doing. Participants see collaboration and partnerships as a strong solution to our food system problems. This feedback aligns well with the IFC's mission to "connect food system stakeholders..." To continue this work, a clearinghouse of information, including comprehensive information on what work is being done to improve the food system, would be helpful. Participants want this resource to include separate listings of programs and initiatives, community gardens, and food pantries. They also want a listing of volunteers and organizations in need of volunteers.

Community Engagement and Inclusivity

Community members want the IFC to increase efforts to promote community engagement and inclusivity, by, for example, actively involving racially/ethnically and economically diverse community members. The community recommends the IFC hold events targeting the involvement of diverse community members, in partnership with local organizations. These events should be located in easily-accessible and familiar places and be held during evenings or on weekends. Community engagement can also take the form of one-on-one conversations with individuals to better understand their concerns and try to get them involved in food-related work.

¹⁶ United States Department of Agriculture. (2010). *Creating access to healthy, affordable food*. Retrieved from <http://apps.ams.usda.gov/fooddeserts/AccessHealthyFood.pdf>.

Note, that there is a difference between grassroots organizations and community organizations. Grassroots organizations tend to be made up of people who live in the community and are seen as community members, whereas community organizations are often made up of non-residents, who are doing good work in a community, but are not seen by that community as members. While partnering with community organizations can be an effective strategy, partnering with grassroots organizations tends to result in more widespread community involvement and support.

Accessibility of Healthful Eating for Low Income and Food Insecure Residents

Up to 29% of survey respondents may have suffered from food insecurity, compared to 19.5% of residents in Marion County.¹⁷ Most concerning were our findings that food insecurity was associated with less healthy eating behaviors and diet-related health conditions

Final Conclusions:

- Respondents of the survey were individuals, who were interested in attending a community discussion on their food system and may have been more health conscious than the general population.
- Based on the survey findings, the IFC might consider supporting networking events throughout the year.
- The themes that emerged in the conversations and comments from participants about what they wanted from a food council could have been affected by their high education level.
- It is important going forward to work to increase the availability of unprocessed foods for people experiencing food insecurity. Additionally, it will be important to increase the availability of affordable options for produce and local foods, as price-conscious respondents tended to eat less produce and placed less importance on eating locally.

¹⁷ Feeding America. (2010) *Hunger in America 2010*. Retrieved from <http://feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/hunger-studies/hunger-study-2010.aspx>.



2013

Community Engagement

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Survey

This survey is entirely anonymous and voluntary.

We appreciate your time and input, thank you.

Event Evaluation

What did you like about this event?

What would you change about this event?

Food Access Survey

This survey is meant to help us understand the food availability in your neighborhood and learn about challenges you may face.

What is your gender?

- Female Male Other _____

What is your age?

- Below 18 18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 66-75 76-85 85+

What zip-code do you live in? _____

What is your highest level of education?

- Less than High School 2-year degree (Associates) Some Graduate School
 High School/GED 4-year degree (Bachelor's) Graduate School
 Some College

What is your household's yearly income?

- Less than \$10,000 \$20,000-29,999 \$40,000-49,999 \$60,000-69,999
 \$10,000-19,999 \$30,000-39,999 \$50,000-59,999 \$70,000+

What is your level of employment?

- Paid employment, full-time (35-40 hrs/week)
 Paid employment, part-time
 Unemployed and looking for a job

- Unemployed and NOT looking for a job (e.g. on disability benefits)
- Retired
- Student

What is your marital status?

- Single, Never Married
- Married
- Widowed
- Domestic Partnership
- Divorced/Separated

Are you of Hispanic origin?

- Yes
- No

What is your race? (Select ALL that apply)

- White/Caucasian
- American Indian
- Pacific Islander
- Black/African American
- Asian
- Other _____

How many **adults** live in your household including yourself?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9 or more

How many **children under the age of 18** live in your household?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9 or more

Food Access Questions

1. How do you usually get to the store or market to buy food (Choose the ONE you use the most)?

- My own vehicle
- Someone Else's Vehicle
- Taxi
- Bus
- Walk
- Bicycle

2. Have you used any of the following food assistance programs in the **last 6 months**? (Check all that apply)

- SNAP (formally known as food stamps)
- Free School Lunch
- WIC
- Child Summer Feeding Program (e.g. Summer Servings)
- Food Pantries
- Other _____
- Soup Kitchens
- None

3. About how often did you eat fresh fruits and vegetables (in the last 6 months)?

- Every meal
- Once a day
- 2-3 times a week
- Once a week
- Less than once a week
- Never

4. In the **last 6 months**, how often were you able to eat a **healthful meal** (that included lean protein, fruits/vegetables, and whole grains)?

- Never A little Sometimes Often Always

5. Do you have any of the following illnesses? (Check all that apply)

- Type II Diabetes High Blood Pressure High Cholesterol
 Obesity Heart Disease Other _____
 None

6. Are these factors important for making food choices? Please check the appropriate response for each reason.

	Not Important	A little Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Highly Important
PRICE	<input type="checkbox"/>				
ENJOYMENT	<input type="checkbox"/>				
CONVENIENCE	<input type="checkbox"/>				
FOOD FROM MY CULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/>				
HEALTH CONCERNS	<input type="checkbox"/>				
FRESH	<input type="checkbox"/>				
LOCAL	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Please check the answer that is most true in the **last 6 months**:

7. Did you **worry** that food at home would run out before your family got money to buy more?

- Never A little Sometimes Often Always

8. How often did you **NOT have money** to buy more food when you ran out?

- Never A little Sometimes Often Always

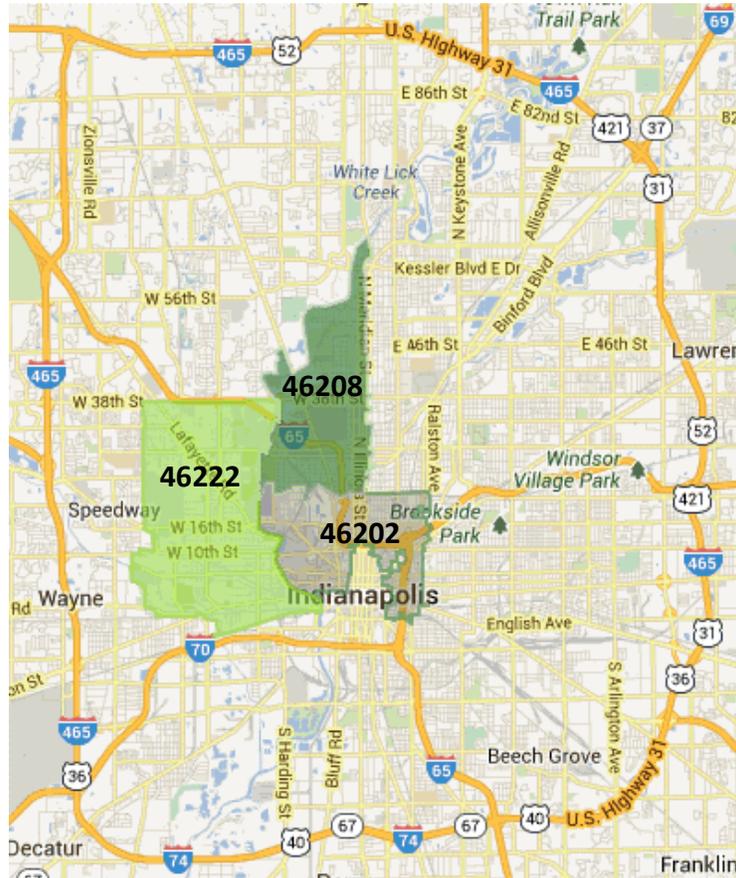
Appendix B

Summary of Categorical Participant Demographics

Participant Characteristics	Percentage	N
Gender (N = 96)		
Female	59.4%	57
Male	50.6%	39
Age (N = 96)		
Below 18	2.1%	2
18-25	27.1%	26
26-35	33.3%	32
36-45	6.3%	6
46-55	18.8%	18
56-65	8.3%	8
66-75	3.1%	3
76-85		
Education (N = 96)		
Less than High School	2.1%	2
High School/GED	3.1%	3
Some College	7.3%	7
2-Year Degree (Associate's)	4.2%	4
4-Year Degree (Bachelor's)	31.3%	30
Some Graduate School	27.1%	26
Graduate School	25.0%	24
Household Annual Income (N = 86)		
Less than \$10,000	7.0%	6
\$10,000-19,999	14.0%	12
\$20,000-29,999	15.1%	13
\$30,000-39,999	14.0%	12
\$40,000-49,999	10.5%	9
\$50,000-59,999	7.0%	6
\$60,000-69,999	9.3%	8
\$70,000+	23.3%	20
Marital Status (N = 94)		
Coupled	37.2%	35
Un-Coupled	62.80%	59

Participant Characteristics	Percentage	<i>N</i>
Race (<i>N</i> = 88)		
White	79.50%	70
Black	14.80%	13
Asian	2.30%	2
Other	2.30%	2
Multiracial	1.10%	1
Hispanic Ethnicity (<i>N</i> = 89)		
Hispanic	10.1%	9
Non-Hispanic	89.9%	80

**Appendix C:
Zip Codes with the Highest Number of Participants using Alternative
Forms of Transportation**



Appendix E: Food Security & Demographics Correlation Matrix

	Food Assistance	Food Worry	Run Out	Income	Education	Has Partner
1. Use of Food Assistance	1					
2. Frequency of Food Worry	0.59**	1				
3. Frequency of Running out of Food	0.40**	0.77**	1			
4. Household Income	0.32**	0.30**	0.34**	1		
5. Education Level	0.08	0.13	0.23*	0.12	1	

*Indicates significance at the $p < .05$ level, **Indicates significance at the $p < .01$ level.

Appendix F: Food Security, Eating Behaviors, and Factors in Choosing Food

	Food Worry	Run Out	Income	Produce Intake	Healthful Meal	Price	Health	Fresh	Local
1. Frequency of Food Worry	1								
2. Frequency of Running out of Food	0.77**	1							
3. Household Income	0.30**	0.34**	1						
4. Produce Intake	0.19†	0.17	0.01	1					
5. Frequency of Healthful Meal	0.25*	0.27**	0.02	0.55**	1				
6. Importance of Price	0.10	0.14	0.28**	0.23*	0.08	1			
7. Importance of Health	0.10	0.15	0.03	0.20†	0.41**	0.01	1		
8. Importance of Fresh	0.06	0.11	0.03	0.43**	0.60**	0.02	0.65**	1	
9. Importance of Local	0.21*	0.15	0.03	0.54**	0.50**	0.26*	0.44**	0.61**	1

†Indicates significance at the $p < .10$ level, *Indicates significance at the $p < .05$ level, **Indicates significance at the $p < .01$ level.

Appendix G: Updated and Revised Food Council Goals

Ecology

- Goals:
 - Improve degraded lands and reuse vacant land in our neighborhoods through urban growing.
 - Minimize food waste by connecting growers, distributors, consumers, food pantries, and composting operations.
 - Maximize energy efficiency in food production and distribution.

Economy/ Community Development

- Goals:
 - Increase the amount of food grown locally, create and serve the demand for local food.
 - Spur economic development and create just jobs through food projects including but not limited to food hubs, farmers' markets, urban farms, urban groceries, and farm-to-restaurant projects.
 - Create a sense of place, foster civic engagement, and beautify our neighborhoods.

Health/ Nutrition

- Goals:
 - Promote health and reduce chronic disease among Indianapolis residents through the consumption of healthful diets and increased physical activity.
 - Increase the availability and effectiveness of educational and community-based programs designed to improve nutrition and opportunities for physical activity.
 - Improve access to healthy food for Indianapolis residents.

Hunger/ Social Justice

- Goals:
 - Fully utilize national nutrition and emergency food programs.
 - Ensure that anyone who is hungry can access nutritious food.