

# Equitable Food Oriented Development (EFOD) Stakeholder Work Group

Hosted by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

10:00 AM – 12:30 PM

## AGENDA

- 10:00 Call Meeting to Order
- 10:05 Welcome  
*Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Bettina Ring*
- 10:10 Let's Get to Know One Another
- 10:35 What Brings Us Together?  
*Delegate Delores McQuinn*  
*Senator Jennifer McClellan*  
*Senator William Stanley*
- 10:50 The Virginia Food Access Investment Fund (HB 1509 and SB 1073)  
*Chelsi Bennett, American Heart Association*  
*Kevin Schmidt, VDACS Office of Policy, Planning, and Research*
- 11:00 What is Equitable Food-Oriented Development (EFOD)?  
*Trisha Chakrabarti, DAISA Enterprises*  
*Rudy Espinoza, Inclusive Action*
- 11:20 How Will the EFOD Work Group Be Structured?  
*Jennifer Perkins, VDACS Office of Agriculture and Forestry Development*
- 11:30 What is the EFOD Work Group to Accomplish Today and Beyond?  
*Commissioner Jewel Bronaugh, VDACS*
- Grant making decisions
  - Sub-committee work
  - Request for Proposal to hire a CDFI
  - Next Steps
- 12:00 Public Comment Period
- 12:30 Adjourn

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Members of the public may listen to the meeting via the Cisco WebEx platform using the link, access code, and password below.

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# Unique to area, lifetime farmer grows chickpeas



James Brown, a lifetime farmer from Clover, VA is one of the first in Virginia to plant chickpeas

# VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2020 SESSION

## CHAPTER 956

*An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 36 a chapter numbered 10.2, consisting of sections numbered 36-156.3 through 36-156.6, relating to the Virginia Food Access Investment Program and Fund.*

[H 1509]

Approved April 9, 2020

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Title 36 a chapter numbered 10.2, consisting of sections numbered 36-156.3 through 36-156.6, as follows:**

### CHAPTER 10.2.

#### VIRGINIA FOOD ACCESS INVESTMENT PROGRAM AND FUND.

##### **§ 36-156.3. Definitions.**

*As used in this chapter, unless the context requires a different meaning:*

*"CDFI" means a community development financial institution that provides credit and financial services for underserved communities.*

*"Department" means the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.*

*"Fund" means the Virginia Food Access Investment Fund.*

*"Funding" means loans, forgivable loans, and grants made from the Fund.*

*"Grocery store" means a for-profit or not-for-profit self-service retail establishment that primarily sells meat, seafood, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, dry groceries, household products, and sundries.*

*"Innovative food retail project" means an innovative project, including a mobile market or a delivery model, that addresses food access issues in an underserved community.*

*"Program" means the Virginia Food Access Investment Program.*

*"Small food retailer," also referred to as a small-scale store, neighborhood store, small grocery, farmer's market, or bodega, means a small retail outlet of under 2,500 square feet that sells a limited selection of foods and other products.*

*"Underserved community" means a census tract determined to be an area with low supermarket access either by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), as identified in the USDA Food Access Research Atlas, or through a methodology that has been adopted for use by another governmental or philanthropic healthy food initiative.*

##### **§ 36-156.4. Virginia Food Access Investment Fund.**

*There is hereby created in the state treasury a special nonreverting fund to be known as the Virginia Food Access Investment Fund. The Fund shall be established on the books of the Comptroller. All funds appropriated for such purpose and any gifts, donations, grants, bequests, and other funds received on its behalf shall be paid into the state treasury and credited to the Fund. Interest earned on moneys in the Fund shall remain in the Fund and be credited to it. Any moneys remaining in the Fund, including interest thereon, at the end of each fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund. Moneys in the Fund shall be used solely for the purposes of establishing collaborative and cooperative projects with public and private sector partners to improve food access in Virginia. The Fund shall be used to provide funding for the construction, rehabilitation, equipment upgrades, or expansion of grocery stores, small food retailers, or innovative food retail projects in underserved communities. Expenditures and disbursements from the Fund shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by the Comptroller upon written request signed by the Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.*

##### **§ 36-156.5. Selection of CDFI; Program requirements; guidelines for management of the Fund.**

*A. The Department shall establish a Program to provide grants funding the construction, rehabilitation, equipment upgrades, or expansion of grocery stores, small food retailers, or innovative food retail projects in underserved communities. The Department shall select and work in collaboration with a CDFI to assist in administering the Program and carrying out the purposes of the Fund. The CDFI selected by the Department shall have (i) a statewide presence in Virginia, (ii) experience in food-based lending, (iii) a proven track record of leveraging private and philanthropic funding, and (iv) the capability to dedicate sufficient staff to manage the Program. Working with the selected CDFI, the Department shall establish monitoring and accountability mechanisms for projects receiving funding and shall report annually the number of projects funded; the geographic distribution of the projects; the costs of the Program; and the outcomes, including the number and type of jobs created, and health initiatives associated with the Program.*

*B. The Program shall:*

*1. Identify food access projects that include grocery stores, small food retailers, and innovative food*

retail projects;

2. Provide grants for the purposes described in subsection A;

3. Require that grant recipients (i) accept expenditures of benefits provided under the supplemental nutrition assistance program in accordance with the federal Food Stamp Act (7 U.S.C. § 2011 et seq.) and (ii) participate in a program that matches or supplements the benefits identified in clause (i), such as Virginia Fresh Match;

4. Provide technical assistance; and

5. Bring together community partners to sustain the Program.

C. The Department shall develop guidelines to carry out the Program to meet the intent of the Fund. Up to 10 percent of the moneys in the Fund may be designated for the CDFI's administrative and operations costs to assist in administering and managing the Program, unless those costs are provided for in other budgets or in-kind resources.

**§ 36-156.6. Annual reports.**

On or before December 1 of each year, the Department shall report to the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, the Governor, and the Chairmen of the House Committee on Appropriations and the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations on such other matters regarding the Fund as the Department may deem appropriate, including the amount of funding committed to projects from the Fund, or other items as may be requested by any of the foregoing persons to whom such report is to be submitted.

**2. That the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services shall establish an Equitable Food Oriented Development stakeholder work group to develop recommendations for design elements for the Virginia Food Access Investment Program created by this act.**

# VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2020 SESSION

## CHAPTER 957

*An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 36 a chapter numbered 10.2, consisting of sections numbered 36-156.3 through 36-156.6, relating to the Virginia Food Access Investment Program and Fund.*

[S 1073]

Approved April 9, 2020

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

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**2. That the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services shall establish an Equitable Food Oriented Development stakeholder work group to develop recommendations for design elements for the Virginia Food Access Investment Program created by this act.**



# AUTHORS & SUPPORT

## Steering Committee Members

Krysten Aguilar, La Semilla Food Center  
Lorena Andrade, La Mujer Obrera  
Mariela Cedeño, Mandela Partners  
Rudy Espinoza, Inclusive Action for the City  
Rashida Ferdinand, Sankofa Community Development Corporation  
Hilda Roque, Nuestras Raíces  
Neelam Sharma, Community Services Unlimited  
Malik Yakini, Detroit Black Community Food Security Network  
Haleh Zandi, Planting Justice  
Olivia Rebanal, Capital Impact Partners\*  
Veronica Saldaña, Self-Help Federal Credit Union\*  
Susan Schempf, The Wallace Center at Winrock International\*

*\*Ally members representing national support organizations*



**DAISA Enterprises** works at the nexus of food, health, economy and community. We provide strategic, operational and evaluation services to social enterprises and investors, and innovate new programs and technologies to develop a more equitable food system. DAISA serves as a national strategic partner with an extensive network, with decades of food and agriculture sector experience as practitioners, leaders, and consultants.

[daisaenterprises.com](http://daisaenterprises.com)

### Research Team

Trisha Chakrabarti, Affiliated Consultant  
Daniel Ross, Partner & CEO  
Christa Drew, Principal  
Calandra Chaney, Associate

### Design & Layout

Rochelle Bellin, Research & Graphic Design

THE  
KRESGE  
FOUNDATION

This white paper was supported by **The Kresge Foundation**. The Kresge Foundation is a private, national foundation that works to expand opportunities in America's cities through grantmaking and social investing in arts and culture, education, environment, health, human services and community development in Detroit.

[kresge.org](http://kresge.org)

# INTRODUCTION

## The Vision of Equitable Food Oriented Development

Food is central to the health, well-being, economic resilience, cultural heritage, and self-preservation of communities. Healthy, sustainable, accessible foods can relieve crucial threats such as diet-related illnesses, food insecurity, social isolation, and environmental degradation.

However, interest in food enterprises and projects has more recently been used to distance many communities from their power, becoming instead a trend to be capitalized on, with public and private investments in grocery store development, vertical farming, meal delivery kits, or commercial shared-use kitchens - projects with many positive outcomes but that can often exclude low-income residents, are imposed on communities with little input, and contribute to land loss and gentrification, and loss of community identity and cohesion.

The stakes for food-based community development that builds power are high. Increasing economic and health disparities prevent people of color, immigrants, and other marginalized groups from benefiting from economic gains felt throughout the country as a whole. A recent Brookings analysis found that of the 30 U.S. metro areas that increased their productivity, average wages, and standard of living from 2010 to 2015, only 11 metros achieved inclusive economic outcomes, measured by improving the employment rate, middle-class wages, and relative poverty.<sup>1</sup>

Equitable Food Oriented Development (EFOD) is a framework, and growing movement, to reap the powerful benefits of food projects and

enterprises as vehicles for community development and health, while investing deeply in the self-determination and leadership of community residents.

## Who We Are

The impetus and driving force for this EFOD thinking has come from a collaborative of practitioners, leaders, organizers, and holistic thinkers with deep connections to community, driving food oriented development by and with historically marginalized communities. We have joined together as the EFOD Collaborative to urge food system leaders, lenders, and funders to join us in changing the way community-led work is supported.

## History of the EFOD Collaborative

As leaders in the field of community development, Dana Harvey, the late and much-beloved Founding Executive Director of Mandela Partners, and Neelam Sharma, Executive Director of Community Services Unlimited, talked frequently about the holistic nature of the work being catalyzed by their respective organizations, which explicitly served the communities of color in their neighborhoods. They shared a frustration that funders and investors bypassed investment in their organizations in order to fund largely outsider-led and -serving enterprises, failing to recognize or measure the deep social, health, and economic impacts possible when investments are made in the expertise of on-the-ground leadership.

In 2015, Mandela Partners, Community Services Unlimited, Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, and the Social Justice Learning Institute gathered in Oakland, CA, to discuss

<sup>1</sup> Shearer, C. and Berube, A. (2017), The surprisingly short list of US metro areas achieving inclusive economic growth, Brookings Institute "The Avenue" blog.

what was at the very heart of their work. The gathering sought to take ownership of the language that bound the group, in part to prevent its co-optation or dilution by conventional developers, funders, or other non-practitioners. This initial meeting led to a series of dialogues, gathering more practitioners and allied stakeholders to document and differentiate their innovative community initiatives from conventional food-based projects. The EFOD Collaborative that emerged has since **jointly developed the common values and defining criteria of EFOD work**. The Steering Committee of the EFOD Collaborative includes organizations that are both embedded in communities and are also leading national voices such as Mandela Partners (Oakland, CA), Community Services Unlimited (Los Angeles, CA), Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (Detroit, MI), Nuestras Raíces (Holyoke, MA), La Mujer Obrera (El Paso, TX), Inclusive Action for the City (Los Angeles, CA), Planting Justice (Oakland, CA), and Sankofa Community Development Corporation (New Orleans, LA). Self-Help Federal Credit Union, Capital Impact Partners, and the Wallace Center at Winrock International have been key thought partners. It continues to expand with new members and allies.



EFOD practitioners during the Spring 2019 Convening, at New Communities' 1,600 acre retreat in Albany, Georgia.

## FIELD RESEARCH AND FINDINGS

### Research Approach

In 2017, the growing EFOD Collaborative invited DAISA Enterprises, a firm with a deep history of food systems, entrepreneurship, and social change work, to support drafting a body of work that would encompass the collaborative's collective understanding. A field scan and analysis were conducted to document, better understand, and define a practitioner-led EFOD framework. **This research analyzed over 800**

**organizations** throughout the United States and identified 88 'EFOD qualified' organizations. DAISA then conducted an in-depth exploration of 48 of these organizations, including an analysis of community demographic indicators,<sup>2</sup> organizational metrics and online presence, and interviewed executive-level staff at 27 EFOD organizations and 5 key stakeholders in community development finance and policy.

<sup>2</sup> For a list of all 88 identified EFOD organizations, including an analysis of budget and staff size, visit [www.efod.org](http://www.efod.org).

# Summary of Findings

## 1. EFOD is a growing field of work happening in the most under-resourced communities in the country.

The communities within which EFOD organizations work are intimately familiar with built environment or political challenges to health and wealth creation. These communities are often isolated from the strategies, resources, and institutions that promote economic opportunity – and EFOD organizations use community-based knowledge and expertise in food enterprises to spur localized physical and financial investment to upend those dynamics. By pairing the entrepreneurial experience and expertise of marginalized communities with technical training, market access, and financial and civic resources, EFOD organizations leverage food to support threatened communities and increase self-determination and socioeconomic inclusion.

### WHY FOOD?

Food systems are particularly useful in health and community development precisely because many low-income communities have a rich heritage of expertise in food production (over 50% of refugees have agrarian backgrounds)<sup>3</sup>; calling upon this expertise is an approach to asset-based development. Food and culinary practices are often expressions of cultural identity, and provide ways of engaging all ages and skill levels, lending themselves to inclusive community development in highly-visible ways. Lastly, food enterprises, though requiring capital, are accessible and have relatively low barriers to entry for low-income entrepreneurs. Community food systems work can holistically contribute to multiple elements of a vibrant, healthy community - environment, nutrition, social cohesion, and economic.



The family of Los Originales Tacos Arabes de Puebla, one of the businesses supported by Inclusive Action's micro-loan fund in Los Angeles, CA.

## 2. There is a need for greater connections between practitioners, including a community of practice.

Most interviewed EFOD organizations described lacking an adequate field of practice to further their work. Though they referenced multiple forums and conferences in the food/agriculture and community development space, none were seen as matching their specific needs for peer learning, growth, or shared identity. They cited a desire to strategize around shared challenges and complex social change.

<sup>3</sup> Mancari, J. (2017), Refugee Farmers Growing in Houston's Food Desert, Bittersweet Monthly.

### **3. There is a demand for clear guidelines and practitioner leadership from relevant lenders and funders.**

Many national foundations, regional funders, and investors are involved in supporting food- and agriculture-based organizations and initiatives. Interviewed supporters in these allied fields also recognized that more can be done to support grassroots movements for justice and equity, rooted in building a local food economy. They identified shortcomings of existing lending and philanthropic financing products, which do not provide capital access to community-led food system solutions. EFOD practitioner expertise is needed to educate funders and investors so their practices can realistically support community-led work.

### **4. EFOD work requires different financial instruments than those which serve FOD or traditional community development.**

The emerging EFOD field of practice recognizes that to realize the visions of impacted communities, existing finance products and underwriting mechanisms used by banks and community development lenders are often insufficient.<sup>4</sup> As we seek to promote equity in food oriented development, we must also seek to grow an environment around these projects that will help them flourish-- an equity-driven finance industry is critical to this. EFOD projects to date have all relied on complex and unusual lending programs and bold investments to start and grow. EFOD requires strong connections between philanthropy and community development finance to provide appropriate capital for different phases of organizations and projects. From character-based loans to “patient” investments with forgivable principals, the growth of EFOD projects will require more innovation in financial services in order for projects to acquire the capital they need to serve the communities they are located in.

### **5. EFOD practitioners want and need the values, frameworks, and impacts of their work rigorously defined and articulated.**

The desire to articulate the vision of organizations using an EFOD framework reflects the importance of self-definition and -identification by practitioners, recognized by key allies in the health and development fields. By devoting their programming upstream on the social and environmental factors that create equitable development, EFOD organizations are dedicated to the necessary - and difficult - work of long-term change. However, the effectiveness of this work is notoriously challenging to measure in easily-understood data metrics. Interviewed organizations shared a desire for further study of the connections between community power-building and health and economic equity, as well as the development of shared metrics across the field to demonstrate such movement.

<sup>4</sup> More information on financing obstacles encountered in our research can be found on [www.efod.org](http://www.efod.org).

# DESCRIBING THE PRACTICE OF EFOD

## Why Now, A Unified Larger Purpose

This field building work is itself a response to the call for a paradigm shift in how communities are built. While there are now many conferences and forums for community food systems and development, there is a gap and need for a clear definition and a field of practice. Both EFOD philosophy and physical projects must be transparent and democratic so others can learn and replicate. EFOD projects are themselves their own “call to action,” and the field of practice intends to share the work in such a way that the concepts, tools, and systemic approaches are accessible to all value-aligned practitioners.

There is often overlap between EFOD and the practice of creative placemaking. EFOD initiatives prioritize protecting and preserving the cultural identity of a community, and then celebrating and sharing that culture across communities and generations. EFOD initiatives produce and may sell cultural foods, create shared cultural spaces, construct buildings with strong cultural icons or architectural markers, showcase public art in food production spaces, sell food alongside crafts in markets, and celebrate that cultural identity with vibrant displays of food and arts.



Plenero dancers at Nuestras Raíces' annual Harvest Festival in Holyoke, MA.

## Defining EFOD

The origins of the term “Equitable Food Oriented Development,” and the desire to articulate the vision of organizations using such a framework, reflects the importance of co-creation between practitioners and key allies in the health and development fields. After several months of EFOD Steering Committee meetings, research and drafting by DAISA, and building upon a white paper written by Dana Harvey<sup>5</sup>, the following working definition of the EFOD practice was co-developed:

**Equitable Food Oriented Development is a development strategy that uses food and agriculture to create economic opportunities, healthy communities, and explicitly seeks to build community assets, pride, and power by and with historically-marginalized communities.**

## Defining Criteria of EFOD in Practice

The criteria on the next page represent practitioner-defined intentions behind EFOD initiatives and the vision for community self-determination that builds on the histories of food-based struggles for economic autonomy and civil rights and recognition. More importantly, however, these criteria provide a way for organizations to self-assess their alignment with the principles of EFOD practice, as well as the starting point for a set of assessment criteria for developers, funders, and investors.

<sup>5</sup> Harvey, D. (2017), Equitable Food Oriented Development, [www.mandelapartners.org/efod](http://www.mandelapartners.org/efod).

# EFOD Criteria

	INDICATORS OF EFOD	CONTRADICTION OF EFOD
<b>Equity- and justice-first</b>	Equity & justice are part of mission, unapologetically represent a historically marginalized community, clearly working on systems change, power change & accountability in operations; ongoing commitment to teaching/including larger transformation; involved in other organizing, advocacy, or policy work – it’s not just about food	Language and mission is general or just development or food related (i.e. “all lives matter”); community transformation is an intention but not yet in practice
<b>Place-based</b>	Embedded in a community or regional network with strong community identity; prioritize culture and artistic and cultural expression; a history of work in this community; leadership has historical connection to social justice in that community	Not connected to community; national or regional without accountability to particular community with distinct identity
<b>Use market-based/ business strategies</b>	Developing new markets and enterprises, creating real economic opportunities, sustainable	Exclusively education, policy, or awareness building; no direct service programming; solely community gardens, no sales or marketing aspect
<b>Community leadership development/ community organizing</b>	Board of Directors and top leadership is representative of the community organization serves, often People of Color-led; work is by & for community members; critical convener role in development projects, serving to maintain community sovereignty, local/county planning involvement	Community served has no real power, decision-making, living-wage jobs in organization
<b>Community ownership</b>	Building community-member assets, equity. often uses alternative economic structures and decision-making processes so community members can have ownership (i.e. co-ops); representative board membership	Outside capital, business owned by outside institutions or people; primarily job creation or training

# AN ILLUSTRATION: THE POWER OF FOOD-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## Equitable Food Oriented Development

Ashland Market & Cafe, a project of Mandela Partners (Oakland, CA)

“It was a very focused effort to work with community to determine food access gaps and economic development opportunities... through that process we were not only able to launch a community-directed project, but we also deepened our own connection with the neighborhood we serve.”

- Mariela Cedeño, Interim Executive Director, Mandela Partners

Long-time community organization Mandela Partners worked alongside local residents and stakeholders to develop the Ashland Market and Cafe, a 2,100-square-foot food hall, incubator, and community space on the ground floor of an affordable housing complex. The project was catalyzed in partnership with a resident-led advisory committee that eventually selected four local food entrepreneurs as the facility's inaugural tenants. Ashland Market & Cafe vendors live in the surrounding neighborhoods and sell foods that reflect their heritage and family histories. To support and encourage community-based entrepreneurship, kiosks rental rates are kept well below market and tenants are offered business development workshops, micro-loans, and legal assistance. Ashland Market & Cafe was funded using an innovative, but cumbersome, mix of financial instruments including revolving loans, \$360,000 in federal Healthy Food Financing Initiative funds, and \$1.3M in public and private investments.



LaShawn Raybon celebrates the opening of I Am Café, in the Ashland Market, with her family. Photo credit: Nader Khouri.

## Conventional Food Oriented Development

Plentiful Kitchens, a project of West Boylston Food Council (Boston, MA, and New Haven, CT)

West Boylston Food Council (WBFC) is a regional nonprofit organization founded by a council of farmers, local government and business leaders, and consumers to promote local agriculture. WBFC developed two multi-tenant food production facilities, Plentiful Kitchens, operating in both Boston, MA, and New Haven, CT. Plentiful Kitchens supports small food entrepreneurs through reduced rents and business mentoring, but it specifically targets national brands to drive revenues. The facilities create a combined 600 sustainable, living wage jobs in their respective communities. The WBFC board is actively involved with tenant and employee relations, yet maintains full governing power over the facilities. The \$23 million initiative was fully funded using loans and investments, including \$9 million from MDE, a national community development finance institution. City officials in Boston and New Haven also provided tax incentives.

***Both Ashland Market & Cafe and Plentiful Kitchens are food development projects with positive outcomes for economic development, however, equitable food oriented development centers actual ownership of the initiatives and resources within the local community.***

# EFOD UNIQUE IMPACTS

Impacts and outcomes attributed to EFOD are distinct from those of traditional community development or food oriented development (FOD). EFOD allows for holistic systemic community changes rather than addressing surface symptoms, with long-term community understanding and engagement in change.

While food initiatives not explicitly focused on equity can have positive outcomes on food access and economic development, they can also have negative impacts on long-term community strength and health. Examples include urban gardening that can lead to increased property values and displacement, or supermarket attraction programs that grant precious resources to national chain grocers headquartered outside the community. While conventional food systems work – often supported by philanthropic resources, municipal leaders, investment capital, or tax incentives – may unintentionally attract higher-income residents or the outsider-owned businesses that will cater to them, **EFOD results in powerful outcomes addressing social determinants of health and economic development, such as new social capital networks, equitable asset development, and increased civic engagement.**

A small sample of comparative impacts that are being considered:

Related to health

- Conventional food oriented development impacts: healthy food access/availability, nutrition education outcomes
- **EFOD impacts: environmental changes, availability of culturally appropriate foods, and adoption of community-designed healthy and nutrition priorities**

Related to economic development

- Conventional food oriented development impacts: new food businesses, smallholder farm sales, job growth
- **EFOD impacts: new food businesses owned by low-income people and people of color, capital that circulates locally, dignified jobs with equitable wages**

Related to environment

- Conventional food oriented development impacts: greenspaces created, preserved farm acreage, organic food sales
- **EFOD impacts: community-owned greenspaces, community members are activated in their own environmental interests**

Related to culture

- Conventional community development impacts: creation of public art, engagement of artists
- **EFOD impacts: neighborhood identity preserved, engagement of culture-bearers**

Related to civic engagement

- Conventional food oriented development impacts: select community members on project boards
- **EFOD impacts: community members in leadership roles and public positions, community members involved in decision-making roles in public projects, policy changes accomplished**

**“Our neighborhood is majority low-income, a third Black and a third Southeast Asian, and has historically been stripped of resources and been disinvested for decades. Many people have very little assets, especially property. They are renters and their landlord's don't live in the neighborhood. Food will allow us to create ownership for our businesses and families.”**

**-- Va-Megn Thoj, Executive Director, Asian Economic Development Association**

Elaboration of EFOD impacts and methodologies for evaluation are ongoing, led by experienced community-based practitioners and supported by allies from philanthropy and academia. A more robust set of impacts and related metrics will be available on [www.efod.org](http://www.efod.org), with ongoing updates from our research and development work.



**Neighbors at one of IMAN's Corner Store Cyphers - a wellness and healing event featuring music and spoken word at a store participating in their Healthy Corner Store program on the southwest side of Chicago.**

# MOVING TOWARD A ROBUST EFOD FIELD

## Scaling the Field

EFOD principles, which are currently specific for an organization's founding and programmatic execution, can be adapted into a framework to guide and support equitable development and investment by a broad set of actors, much like LEED standards can help define positive environmental practices in building. As revitalization and growth efforts take shape, EFOD organizations can be key partners in informing public policy and supporting residents so that they benefit and build assets as development happens. Specific ways in which developers and policymakers can partner with EFOD organizations can be seen in the table below:

Role of EFOD Organizations as Partners	Role of Developers/Policymakers as Partners	Community Benefit
Own physical assets (land, buildings, etc.) for community direction and use	Alleviate pressures in high-cost real estate markets by making space in mixed-use or commercial developments available for EFOD organizations	Preserving space for local control and long-term community ownership
Reflect community needs and existing assets, engage community members in decision-making, because of long-established history and trust in community	Integrate EFOD voice into public-sector planning, policies and investments	Decreased community alienation from local seats of power
	Community Benefits Agreements reflective of EFOD	Increased public accountability and transparency

### Overall role for philanthropy:

Supporting a larger EFOD knowledge base in the community economic development industry  
 Supporting EFOD organizations to maintain accountability to/advocate for their local communities.

# Recommendations for Field Building

EFOD organizations often operate within a context of limited resources and recognition from power agents in their communities. Interviews revealed a strong sense of misalignment with financial and public resources. While there are several prominent EFOD projects that have been financed by national CDFIs and supported by philanthropic funders, in order for EFOD to scale we must move from reliance on a few heroic champions to better institutionalized systems which consistently deliver appropriate financing to the projects that most deserve them. The year of research and interviews inform the following recommendations on how to better direct resources and areas for further development of the EFOD framework:

## **Recommendations for Field Supporters.**

The growth in lender-funder partnerships, such as statewide healthy food financing initiatives, is incredibly promising for food access advocates. However, these initiatives maintain conventional underwriting standards that often prevent EFOD organizations and the communities they work with from accessing needed funds. Food system funders and mission-aligned investors are important allies for EFOD organizations, and can support EFOD initiatives in several important ways:

- **Increase collaboration between foundations and mission-aligned investors to fund EFOD**

Explore collaborative funding models with multiple funding vehicles, including the development of philanthropic “soft money” instruments that help EFOD projects leverage financing and increase investor comfort with EFOD. These could include pre-development grants, and are strengthened by guarantee pools, credit enhancement dollars, loan loss reserve funding, or equity pools. These collaborations should be structured in such a way that investors confront and change institutional discriminatory practices and seek out opportunities to involve community-based practitioners in decision-making for shared power. Funders and investors must work alongside EFOD

practitioners to invest in the growth and development of EFOD organizations, strengthening relationships and building EFOD organizations’ financial capacity.

- **Resources for organizing and community building**

While EFOD organizations need investment capital for a variety of economic ventures, these investments should be paired with sustained funding of community-building work. In order to create a vision of thriving communities that are reflective of neighborhood needs and opportunities, EFOD organizations need funding that allows for the creativity to integrate their base-building work with their economic development work.

- **Capital that is community-responsive and quick to deploy, for time-sensitive and longer-term development projects**

EFOD organizations operate in a market economy where land can be acquired quickly and opportunities are awarded to the fastest and most capitalized bidder. To be successful, EFOD organizations need access to capital sources that can be deployed quickly enough for organizations to compete with private parties. Too often, mission-aligned lenders are bogged down by restrictive assessments, cumbersome on-boarding processes, and strict underwriting criteria that lead to EFOD organizations missing key opportunities. New systems need to be created to “pre-approve” organizations and grant them access to funds when a project needs them.

- **Develop and extend EFOD guidelines and protocols for mission-aligned investors**

Along with mission-aligned investors, explore application of EFOD principles and criteria as part of underwriting. Develop rigorous case studies from successful examples and extrapolate lessons. Explore a pilot fund to demonstrate these applications. Support existing opportunities to share EFOD principles with CDFI food lenders. Ensure that the incorporation of EFOD principles is institutionalized in lending practices.

- **Advance EFOD guidelines and protocols for public and private development**

Continue to develop EFOD framework<sup>6</sup> and assessment rubric as a set of practices that developers could follow, advancing new norms and expectations around the “return on investment” for economic development projects. Include leading planning and development agencies in this discussion. Consider pilot applications.

**Recommendations for Field Builders.**

Support organizations and fellowship opportunities provide needed spaces for EFOD organizations, and can support the development of the field in the following ways:

- **Increase financial capacity-building opportunities**

Some EFOD organizations demonstrate an incredible amount of financial savviness, utilizing a complex mix of resources. However, other EFOD organizations are still purely grant-funded and in a constant cycle of persistent underfunding and lose out on vital resources. Additional and explicit financial technical assistance and capacity-building, would help EFOD organizations hire and retain the talent pool or leadership development needed to continue to build capacity.

- **Increase opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and exchange**

EFOD practitioners see a need for leadership development and peer-to-peer exchange that challenges and stimulates their organizations and builds relationships with peers elsewhere in the U.S. While there are organizations represented on the EFOD Steering Committee that are over 25 years old, over 60% in the survey have been founded within the last five years. Practitioner leaders articulated the need for EFOD gatherings to include intentional time for practices to be passed from experienced leaders to younger leaders as well as new ideas to be shared by newer organizations – all fostering mutual learning.



**The Community Services Unlimited team at the groundbreaking of the Paul Robeson Community Wellness Center.**

**Recommendations for EFOD Practitioners.**

- **Advance and educate on the evaluation and metrics of the EFOD sector**

The outcomes of EFOD are more complex than normal community development interventions that define “impact” as job creation, income growth, increased rates of homeownership, or decreases in negative health outcomes. The effectiveness of EFOD’s upstream work is notoriously challenging to measure in data points. Further study of the connections between community power-building, health outcomes, and economic equity, as well as the development of shared metrics across the field would help advance the movement. In order to accurately portray the systemic nature of EFOD work, the development of these metrics should be practitioner-led.

**There is great opportunity with EFOD to build on the practitioner leadership** and experience that has been cultivated with the EFOD Steering Committee, and to develop a field of practice that prioritizes the integration of racial and social equity. This group has the credibility of years of practice, systemic understanding of low-income communities, powerful voices on equity, and strong participation of leading investors as advisors. This body would like to continue to be in a position of authority to develop standards and strategies for EFOD, even as more members and advisors are added to the process.

<sup>6</sup> The EFOD theoretical framework can be found at [www.efod.org](http://www.efod.org).

# CONCLUSION

This report demonstrates how the common values and defining criteria of the EFOD framework can present an innovative approach to marrying food systems and economic development models, with an explicit aim of building community power. The information introduced here creates space for further examination, discussion, and action as the EFOD field continues to develop. While there is currently a formidable body of EFOD activity across the United States, the work can still feel daunting without peers, thought partners, and intentional ways of coming together. The powerful work spearheaded by the EFOD Collaborative presents an important opportunity for financial and philanthropic partners to support and increase the visibility of this vital work, and to ensure its ongoing success.



**Teodoro Ortíz and his fellow gardeners started La Finquita in 1996 to teach children in their Holyoke, MA, neighborhood about agriculture. The farm grew into Nuestras Raíces, an organization preserving and promoting Puerto Rican agricultural traditions.**

**Culinary training with young people at Liberty's Kitchen, a youth-centered organization in New Orleans, LA, that has a 90% employment rate for graduates.**



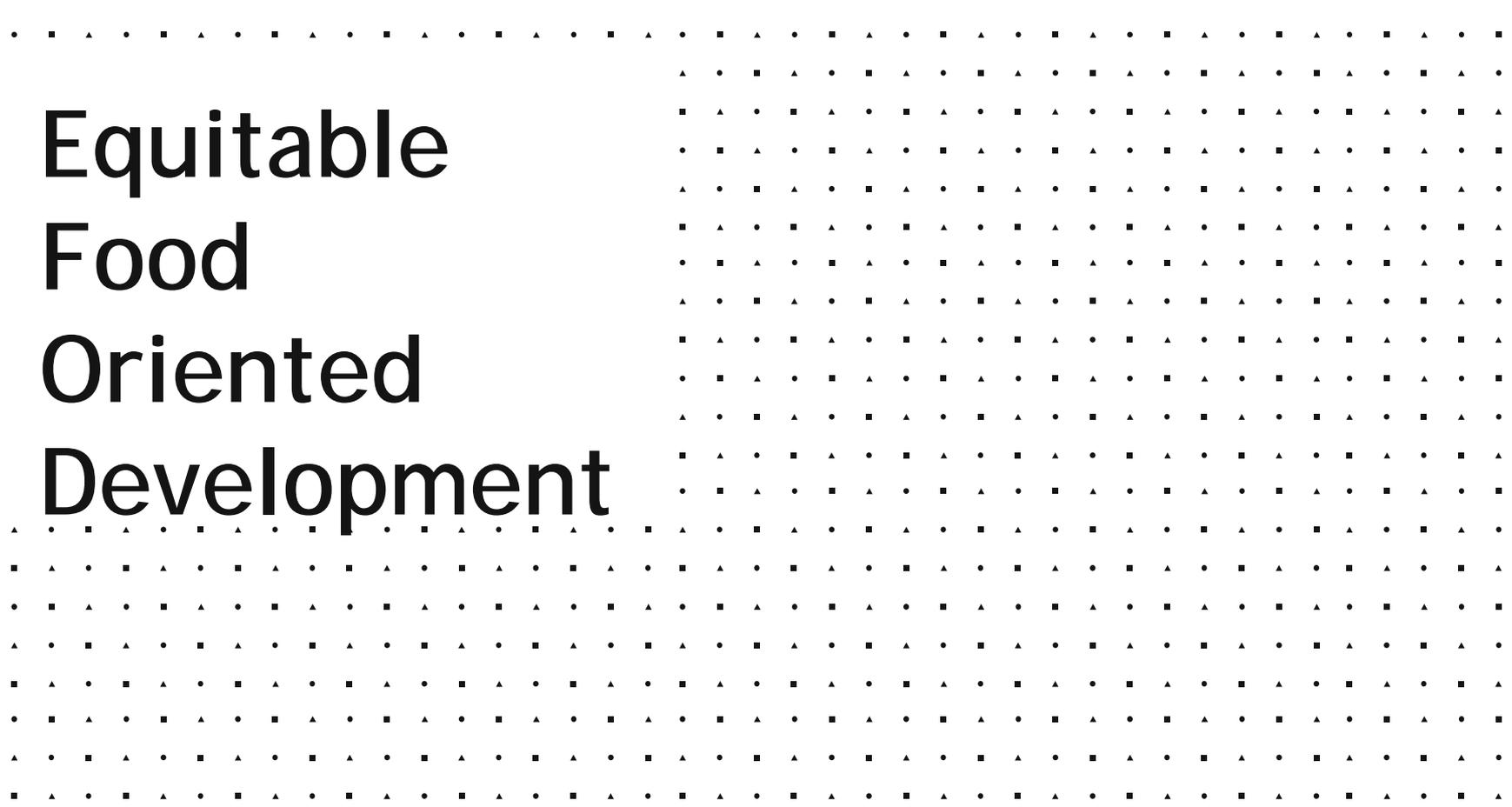
# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Leah Penniman, Soul Fire Farm, Co-Director and Program Manager  
Victoria Quevedo, La Semilla Food Center, Food Planning and Policy Coordinator  
Gavin Raders, Planting Justice, Co-Founder & Co-Director  
Olivia Rebanal, Capital Impact Partners, Director of Inclusive Food Systems  
Tom Redfern, Rural Action, Director of Sustainable Agriculture & Forestry  
Hilda Roque, Nuestras Raíces, Executive Director  
Veronica Saldaña, Self-Help Credit Union, Senior Business Development Officer  
Steve Saltzman, Charleston LDC, CEO  
Susan Lightfoot Schempf, Wallace Center at Winrock International, Program Officer—  
Community-Based Food Systems  
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Mihailo (Mike) Temali, Neighborhood Development Center, Founder & CEO  
Va-Megn Thoj, Asian Economic Development Association, Founder & Executive Director  
Brian Vadakin, Rural Action, Chief Program Officer  
Malik Yakini, Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, Executive Director  
Haleh Zandi, Planting Justice, Co-Founder & Co-Director  
Kolu Zigbi, Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation, Program Director

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# Equitable Food Oriented Development

Equitable Food Oriented Development is a development strategy that uses food and agriculture to create economic opportunities, healthy neighborhoods, and explicitly seeks to build community assets, pride, and power by and for historically-marginalized communities.

## Equitable

Focus on historically marginalized and divested communities, working on systems change and power change by and for those communities

## Food Oriented

Black, Indigenous, other POC have extensive experience in food production. Food is closely linked to cultural identity and the health, well-being, and economic resilience of our communities.

## Development

The creation of market opportunities through community ownership ensures wealth is built and held in Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color.

# EFOD Criteria

	INDICATORS OF EFOD	CONTRADICTION OF EFOD
Equity- and justice-first	Equity & justice are part of mission, unapologetically represent a historically marginalized community, clearly working on systems change, power change & accountability in operations; ongoing commitment to teaching/including larger transformation; involved in other organizing, advocacy, or policy work – it's not just about food	Language and mission is general or just development or food related (i.e. "all lives matter"); community transformation is an intention but not yet in practice
Place- and People-based	Embedded in a community or regional network with strong community identity; prioritize culture and artistic and cultural expression; a history of work in this community; leadership has historical connection to social justice in that community	Not connected to community; national or regional without accountability to particular community with distinct identity
Use market-based/ business strategies	Developing new markets and enterprises, creating real economic opportunities, sustainable	Exclusively education, policy, or awareness building; no direct service programming; solely community gardens, no sales or marketing aspect

# EFOD Criteria

<p><b>Community leadership development/ community organizing</b></p>	<p>Board of Directors and top leadership is representative of the community organization serves, often People of Color-led; work is by &amp; for community members; critical convener role in development projects, serving to maintain community sovereignty, local/county planning involvement</p>	<p>Community served has no real power, decision-making, living-wage jobs in organization</p>
<p><b>Community ownership</b></p>	<p>Building community-member assets, equity. often uses alternative economic structures and decision-making processes so community members can have ownership (i.e. co-ops); representative board membership</p>	<p>Outside capital, business owned by outside institutions or people; primarily job creation or training</p>

# What does EFOD *not* look like?



Food pantry

Nutrition- or health- focused food access

Charity model, with little personal agency

No long-term community assets built

Outside-owned development or project

# What does EFOD look like?



*Incubator marketplace*

Community-led decision making and ownership of solution

Businesses are supported to stay in the community over time

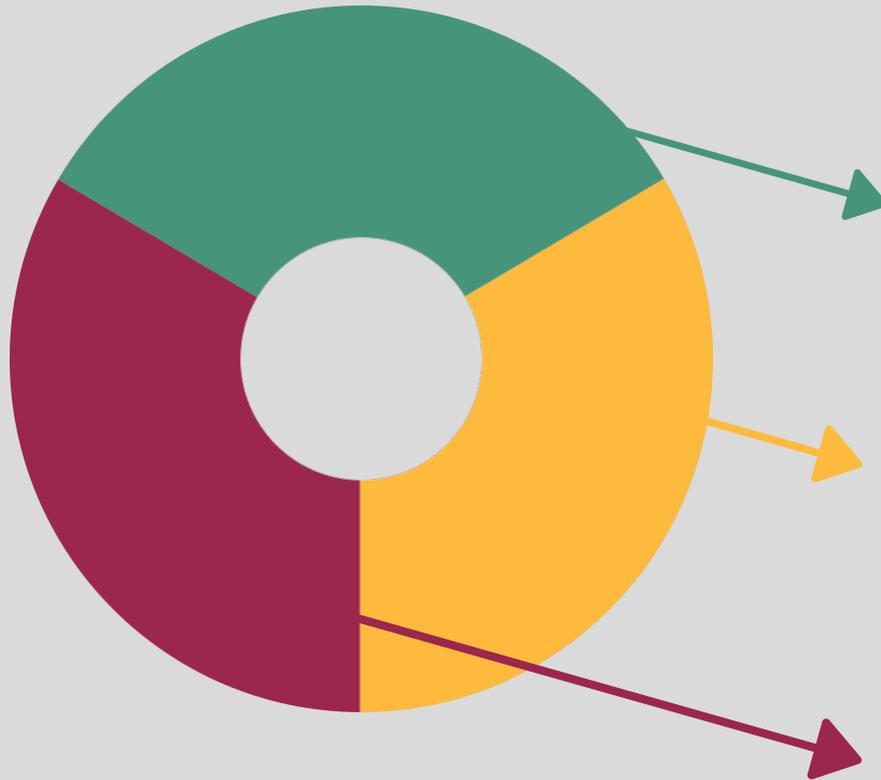
Community economic security is developed

Community culture is maintained and promoted

# Impacts of EFOD vs. other food systems development

	Conventional food systems development	EFOD
<i>Related to health</i>	healthy food access/availability, nutrition education outcomes	<b>environmental changes, availability of culturally appropriate foods, and adoption of community-designed healthy and nutrition priorities</b>
<i>Related to economic development</i>	new food businesses, smallholder farm sales, job growth	<b>new food businesses owned by low-income people and people of color, capital that circulates locally, dignified jobs with equitable wages</b>
<i>Related to environment</i>	greenspaces created, preserved farm acreage, organic food sales	<b>community-owned green-spaces, community members are activated in their own environmental interests</b>
<i>Related to culture</i>	creation of public art, engagement of artists	<b>neighborhood identity preserved, engagement of culture-bearers</b>
<i>Related to civic engagement</i>	select community members on project boards	<b>community members in leadership roles and public positions, community members involved in decision-making roles in public projects, policy changes accomplished</b>

# EFOD Pilot Fund *structure*



Capital stacking is a long, drawn-out dance

Package grants and financing based on org's needs, and deploy relatively quickly.

Collateral, guarantees, or other credit enhancements are devalued due to systemic racism

An org's community history and track record are valued, and there is increased value placed on neighborhood assets.

TA costs are not funded or underestimated, and providers are outsiders with little contextual expertise

Funded TA is rolled into each step of the process, and EFOD practitioners provide peer-expert TA.

# What could this look like?

## Design

*How will the application and process reflect practitioner leadership and create space for co-creation?*



- Guidelines are specific
- Language is accessible (technically, linguistically)
- Systemic barriers are accounted for

## Delivery

*How will the opportunity reach those initiatives or projects that need this funding the most?*



- Appropriate outreach is conducted, based on community relationships
- Prioritize getting projects ready, rather than 'vetting'

## Implementation

*How will funding decisions be made, and funded projects supported for success?*



- EFOD practitioners democratically make funding recommendations
- Technical assistance is funded and provided

Virginia Food Access Investment Fund (VFAIF) Program  
Anticipated Time Line

**July**

- July 30 - Initial meeting of VFAIF Work Group

**August**

- EFOD Work Group Sub-Committee meeting
- Develop and open bid to hire CDFI
- Begin hiring process for VFAIF technical assistance position

**September**

- September 10 – Second meeting of VFAIF Work Group
- EFOD Work Group Sub-Committee meeting
- Hire CDFI
- Open VFAIF Program grant application

**October**

- Hire VFAIF technical assistance position

**November**

- November 19 – Final meeting of VFAIF Work Group
- Close grant application round
- Identify and announce grant recipients

**December**

- Submit VFAIF report to General Assembly

What are CDFIs?

Selecting the right  
CDFI partner



# CDFIs

## Community Development Financial Institution

### **CDFIs are:**

- Financial institutions providing loans, lines of credit and other financial services (like banks)
- Not-for-profits whose primary mission is community development (unlike banks)
- Licensed by US Dept. of Treasury to serve a particular target market (often low-income or marginalized communities in particular geography, can have a broad or specific target)
- Often receiving public sector and foundation grants which they lend out to projects that traditional banks would consider “higher risk” projects such as affordable housing or small business lending to achieve community development goals.

# Selecting the right CDFI partner

## **Key questions for choosing the right CDFI for you:**

- Does their target market (mission and geography) overlap with the community and clients you wish to serve?
- Do they have relevant experience serving your target clients?
- Are they the “right size” (capitalization, staff numbers, expertise, etc.) to accomplish your goals?
- Are they willing to work with you to accomplish your goals with an approach you approve?

# According to the legislation, the selected CDFI must have the following:

- A statewide presence in Virginia
- Experience in food-based lending
- Proven track record of leveraging private and philanthropic funding
- Capability to dedicate sufficient staff to manage the Program



**10. If there were any presentations (PowerPoint, etc.), were you able to hear and see them?**

Poorly  
1    2    3    4    5  
Clearly

COMMENT \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Were the members as attentive and did they participate as much as you would have expected?**

Less  
1    2    3    4    5  
More

COMMENT \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Were there differences you noticed in how the members interacted?**

**With the other members present:**

Very Different  
1    2    3    4    5  
No Difference

**With members participating from other locations:**

Very Different  
1    2    3    4    5  
No Difference

**With the public:**

Very Different  
1    2    3    4    5  
No Difference

COMMENT \_\_\_\_\_

**13. Did you feel the technology was a help or a hindrance?**

Hindered  
1    2    3    4    5  
Helped

COMMENT \_\_\_\_\_

**14. How would you rate the overall quality of this meeting?**

Poor  
1    2    3    4    5  
Excellent

COMMENT \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU. Please send your completed form by mail, facsimile or electronic mail to the FOIA Council using the following contact information:**

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