

February 07, 2023

**MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN  
AND LINDSEY P. HORVATH**

**The Future of the Food Equity Roundtable**

Food insecurity as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture is the economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food. This issue continues to prevail due to systemic biases and injustices, which disproportionately puts people of color and other vulnerable groups at higher risk than others. We know that being unable to afford sufficient, quality food correlates with experiences of unemployment and poverty - which became especially clear during the COVID-19 pandemic, as evidenced by record levels of food insecurity affecting more than one in three households (or 34%) in Los Angeles County (County), further demonstrating the importance of long-term strategies that address persistent inequities and help prevent future crises.

At the start of the pandemic and in response to surging rates of food insecurity as a result of the pandemic, the County established a Food Security Branch (FSB) within its Emergency Operations Center to support the expansion and adaptation of existing food programs, led by the Chief Sustainability Office (CSO). In further action taken by the Board of Supervisors (Board) to this crisis, on February 9, 2021, the Board adopted a [motion](https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/153656.pdf) [directing the CSO to engage in long-term collaboration with cross-sector stakeholders for the purpose of developing and implementing strategies to address food insecurity, while making the food system in the County more equitable, resilient and sustainable.](https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/153656.pdf) Then, in October of 2021, the CSO, Annenberg Foundation, California Community Foundation, and Weingart Foundation worked together to launch the Food Equity Roundtable (Roundtable) - a pilot collaboration between 20 cross-sector leaders dedicated to achieving equity in food systems across the County. Since that time, Roundtable members and staff have worked with more than 200 partners to develop a Strategic Plan (Plan) outlining potential actions for:

- Improving the affordability of healthy foods

MOTION

SOLIS \_\_\_\_\_

MITCHELL \_\_\_\_\_

HORVATH \_\_\_\_\_

BARGER \_\_\_\_\_

HAHN \_\_\_\_\_

- Increasing equitable access to healthy foods
- Building market demand and consumption of healthy food
- Supporting sustainability and resilience in the food supply chains

Last year, the Board also established a ninth Board-Directed Priority to alleviate poverty, which hopes to touch upon the thousands of Angelenos that struggle to remain food secure, often balancing competing housing, transportation, healthcare, and food costs. Now, the Roundtable has brought forth a thoughtful and data driven Plan containing policy recommendations to address food insecurity in Los Angeles County. The Board is proud to have co-chaired this important effort and will continue to support County departments and staff in moving the Plan forward. Notably, implementation of the Plan cannot be achieved by the County or philanthropy alone; it will require leadership and prioritization across multiple sectors and organizations.

As the end of the two-year pilot approaches, we must identify a structure and methods for supporting the implementation of this Plan to further solutions that can help undo long-standing inequities, because every Angeleno deserves consistent access to healthy, safe, and affordable food.

**WE, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Utilize the Food Equity Roundtable's (Roundtable) Strategic Plan (Plan) as a roadmap to equitable food access for Los Angeles County (County) and direct the Acting Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO), to report back in writing within 90 days with the following to:
  - a. Identify County leads and implementation steps for Roundtable priorities, by working in

consultation with the Roundtable and County departments listed, but not limited to, the Department of Public Social Services, Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Public Health, Department of Aging and Disabilities, Department of Regional Planning, Department of Public Works, Department of Youth Development, Probation Department, Department of Economic Opportunity;

i. Have the aforementioned and County departments to engage with the Roundtable in support of this work moving forward;

b. Include a recommended set of priorities from the Plan, their associated implementation timelines, and the departments relevant to implementation;

2. Direct the Acting CSO to include in the same report back a proposed structure, placement, staffing plan, etc., for an Office of Food Equity to facilitate future County efforts in support of implementing the Plan; and

3. Direct the Chief Executive Office's Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations branch to continue working with the CSO to advocate at state and federal levels in support of the Roundtable's policy platform to improve food equity and food system resilience in the Los Angeles region.

# # #

**JH:mk**