

Jefferson County Food Charter

We the citizens of Jefferson County, in support of the establishment of the Jefferson County Food Policy Council, recognize that how and where food is grown, processed, delivered, sold and consumed plays a critical role in the overall health, security and prosperity of our community and environment. We recognize that many systems, policies and individual choices affect the availability, affordability, quality and safety of food in Jefferson County.

A vibrant, dynamic, local food system is an integral foundation to ensuring the health and prosperity of Jefferson County.

Therefore, we will advocate that the following values and principles guide the work of local elected officials, policy-makers and individuals in their efforts to promote food security and a sustainable food system:

Culture: Food celebrates a community's rich cultural diversity. Our food system should support, value and preserve community traditions, cherished diets and serve as a way to facilitate cross-cultural learning and discovery around a common table and a shared meal.

Health: Many citizens in Jefferson County suffer from chronic diseases associated with an unhealthy diet. Food choices can be a catalyst for improved physical and mental health, as well as reduce health care costs. Our food system should promote increasing the consumption of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low fat dairy and meats as well as less added sugar and sodium and work to reduce obesity, diabetes and other diet-related diseases.

Education: A deeper understanding of how a food system impacts our community's health, environment and economy will promote policies and individual changes that will improve food access, spur economic growth, support local agriculture and lead to a healthier Jefferson County. Our community should be provided the educational tools necessary to make informed decisions regarding food choice and food policy.

Agriculture: The climate and topography of Jefferson County is well-suited for individual and community, small and larger-scale farming opportunities. Our food system should support people's ability to grow their own produce and should empower urban and rural farmers to responsibly grow, distribute and sell their produce to individuals, institutions and businesses.

Economic Opportunity: Farming, food production, distribution and sales represent a 1.4 billion economic impact in Jefferson County. Our community's economic and land-use policies should align with a food policy system that encourages job-creation, entrepreneurship, and robust local food resources. We recognize that quality food options and availability is vitally important to neighborhood sustainability and revitalization.

Social Justice: Access to nutritious, affordable, culturally appropriate and safe food is a basic human right. Our local food resources and distribution systems should work to alleviate hunger and should be equitable and just.

For more details about how to get involved visit www.bhamfoodpolicy.com

