

City of Philadelphia

Food & Nutrition Security Task Force

Actionable, Equity-Centered Solutions To One Of Our Most Persistent & Urgent Challenges

Recommendations | June 2026



About This Report

This report presents the recommendations of the Philadelphia Food and Nutrition Security Task Force (FNSTF) – a body authorized by Philadelphia City Council through Resolution #240125-A, introduced and championed by Council President Kenyatta Johnson, to develop actionable, equity-centered solutions to one of Philadelphia's most persistent and urgent challenges.

The Task Force was explicit from the outset: Philadelphia does not need another plan that describes the problem well. The framing of this report reflects that. Every recommendation is paired with specific actions, and the cross-cutting section maps what accountability, philanthropy partnership, and lived-experience integration must look like in practice.

These recommendations mark a turning point: from fragmented crisis response toward coordinated, accountable, and community-rooted systems change. They are grounded in more than a year of work – working group deliberation, public testimony, community listening sessions, and engagement with residents most directly affected by the gaps in Philadelphia's food system.

In executing this work, Just Strategies used AI-assisted tools to support synthesis, editing, and communications development. The foundational work - convening, listening, wrestling with contradictions across the four domains, and developing the recommendations - was human-led. Just Strategies retained full responsibility for analysis, interpretation, and final content.

The report also takes seriously what prior efforts have surfaced: the Urban Agriculture Plan; the legacy of the Food Policy Advisory Council; the Feed Philly Coalition's analysis; the Ending Food Insecurity in Philadelphia unified plan; and the community-led Food Summit convened by the Community Connections Collaborative. These are not footnotes – they are the foundation. The FNSTF's role has been to synthesize, align, and sharpen what already exists, not to start from scratch.

Finally, this report is honest about the moment. The federal policy environment is actively dismantling infrastructure that Philadelphia's food system depends on. These recommendations are not written for a stable policy environment. They are written for a city that must build durable, community-rooted systems precisely because it can no longer count on federal support to hold the floor.





Council President's Message

Dear Residents of Philadelphia,

Food and nutrition security are fundamental to the health, dignity, and opportunity of every Philadelphian. Yet for too many individuals and families across our city, consistent access to affordable and nutritious food remains uncertain.

To address this urgent challenge, I convened the Food and Nutrition Security Task Force to bring together stakeholders, examine the root causes of hunger and inequitable food access, and to develop actionable recommendations to build a healthier, more resilient food system for all Philadelphians.

This report reflects months of engagement with community organizations, healthcare providers, educators, advocates, small businesses, urban agriculture leaders, public agencies, and residents. Its recommendations are grounded in data, research, community expertise, and lived experience.

The Task Force's findings make clear that lasting progress will require coordinated investment and sustained partnership across every level of government, the nonprofit and private sectors. We must strengthen local food systems, support neighborhood-based food access initiatives, expand nutrition education, improve benefit enrollment and utilization, and ensure that every child, senior, and working family can obtain healthy food with dignity.

I extend my sincerest gratitude to the Task Force co-chairs Mark Edwards of The Food Trust and George Matysik of Share Food Program, whose leadership and advocacy guided this work from vision to completion. I also want to recognize Dwayne Wharton and the Just Strategies team for their thoughtful coordination, research, and facilitation throughout the development of this report.

Finally, I want to extend my deepest appreciation to every member of the Task Force and to the residents, advocates, and community partners who shared their time, expertise, and lived experiences throughout this process. Your contributions have helped shape a roadmap for a healthier and more equitable Philadelphia.

Philadelphia City Council remains committed to advancing policies that reduce hunger, improve nutrition outcomes, and build stronger communities. We look forward to working alongside our partners to transform these recommendations into action and ensure that every Philadelphian has the opportunity to thrive.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kenyatta Johnson".

Council President Kenyatta Johnson

Councilmember, 2nd District

A Message from the Co-Chairs

To every member of the Food and Nutrition Security Task Force —

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you. What you gave to this work — your time, expertise, lived experience, and unwavering commitment to the people of Philadelphia — has been extraordinary. You showed up, session after session, holding fast to what this city deserves: a food system that is equitable, dignified, and built to last. This report is the result of that dedication, and we are proud to have served alongside each of you.

We are deeply grateful to Council President Johnson for the vision and leadership that brought this Task Force into being, and to Brett Nedelkoff and her remarkable team for their steadfast support every step of the way.

Our sincere thanks to Just Strategies for their skilled facilitation and for delivering a report worthy of this moment — and to the Pew Charitable Trusts for the generous support that made this work possible.

This is not the end. It is the foundation. And it was built by all of you.

With gratitude and deep respect,

Mark Edwards & George Matysik

Co-Chairs, Food and Nutrition Security Task Force



How We Got Here

Food insecurity in Philadelphia is not a new problem. But the conditions shaping this moment demanded a different kind of response. The challenge has never been a lack of ideas. It has been a system with no mechanism to align them – across sectors, across agencies, and between institutional decision-making and the realities of how people actually live.

Federal Cuts Accelerating Crisis

Federal budget legislation eliminating or drastically reducing SNAP and cutting SNAP-Ed has accelerated a crisis already underway. Philadelphia lost more than 25,000 residents from SNAP rolls due to new work requirements, while SNAP-Ed – a low-cost, high-return investment in nutrition education – was eliminated from schools and community sites across the city. WIC access faces similar threats. At the same time, many community-based and nutrition access organizations operate on unstable funding, including eight organizations that recently lost approximately \$12 million supporting nutrition education and food access efforts in schools, libraries, community centers, and farmers markets.

Significant Local Assets Exist

Philadelphia enters this moment with significant assets. Community fridges provide more than 200,000 meals annually. The Food Justice Initiative has invested more than \$2.5 million in neighborhood-level access. The Growing from the Root Urban Agriculture Plan offers a 10-year roadmap for community-centered food production.

BenePhilly, SNAP navigation partners, and a dense network of community-based organizations have been building trust and capacity for years.

The Scale of the Crisis

210K+

Residents Food Insecure

Philadelphians experience food insecurity, with disproportionate impact on communities of color and low-income households.

25K+

Lost SNAP Access

Residents removed from SNAP rolls due to new federal work requirements.

\$425M

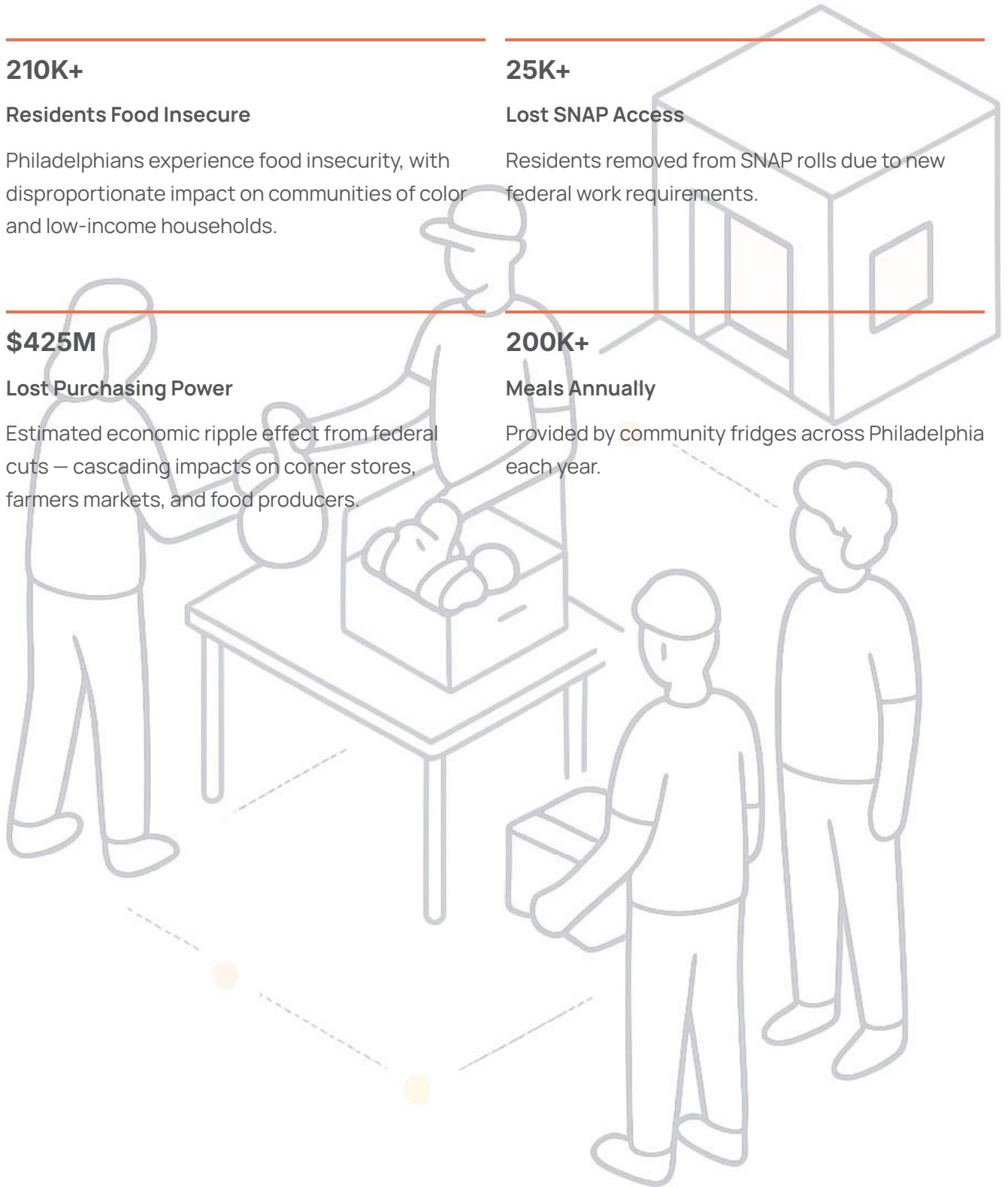
Lost Purchasing Power

Estimated economic ripple effect from federal cuts – cascading impacts on corner stores, farmers markets, and food producers.

200K+

Meals Annually

Provided by community fridges across Philadelphia each year.



The Task Force Structure

The Philadelphia Food & Nutrition Security Task Force was established through City Council Resolution #240125-A and launched its inaugural meeting on February 5, 2025. It brought together leaders across food systems, public health, community organizations, government agencies, philanthropy, and the private sector.

Food Access

Working group focused on neighborhood-level access strategies and distribution models.

Emergency Food & Benefits

Working group on emergency distribution, SNAP, WIC, and benefits navigation.

Nutrition

Working group addressing nutrition education, food quality, and health outcomes.

Funding & Procurement

Working group on financing, procurement reform, and philanthropic alignment.

Food Production

Working group on urban agriculture, local food systems, and production infrastructure.

Council President Johnson's mandate was clear: this process must deliver more than a report. It must serve as a policy roadmap that drives legislation, informs budget advocacy, and coordinates philanthropic investment around a shared, community-rooted vision.

Engagement Timeline

February – July 2025

1

- Working Group Development – Five working groups met across spring and summer to assess Philadelphia's food system, surface priorities, and develop early recommendations.

2

November – December 2025

- Just Strategies was engaged to guide the synthesis and recommendations development process - facilitating strategic priority-setting, leading public engagement, and translating a year of working group insight into recommendations and a final report.
- Strategic Priority-Setting – A public hearing on SNAP was held at City Hall.
- Just Strategies facilitated two sessions with Task Force leadership.
- Just Strategies met with a number of community stakeholders, moving from insight to alignment.

January – April 2026

3

- A Virtual Public Meeting and an In-Person Public Meeting at Parkway Central Library (120 participants)
- Philanthropy Information Session with eight foundations and philanthropic advisors
- Immigrant community focus session with the City's Office of Immigrant Affairs, Esperanza, Community Legal Services, and AFAHO
- Youth focus group at Lankenau High School; follow-up with the Mayor's Office of Education and Fab Youth Philly
- Conversations with Project HOME leadership and other homelessness and aging experts.

4

April 2026

- Generocity published coverage of the work reflecting the cross-sector attention it has generated.
- Final Full Task Force Meeting at City Hall, including Council President Johnson.
- FNTST leadership presented FNSTF as a case study at the FRAC Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.

June 2026

5

- Delivery and presentation of recommendations

Executive Summary: A 3-Part Answer

The recommendations in this report answer the central question this Task Force was convened to address: What would it take to build a food system in Philadelphia that is equitable, coordinated, and built to last?

A Permanent Coordinating Structure

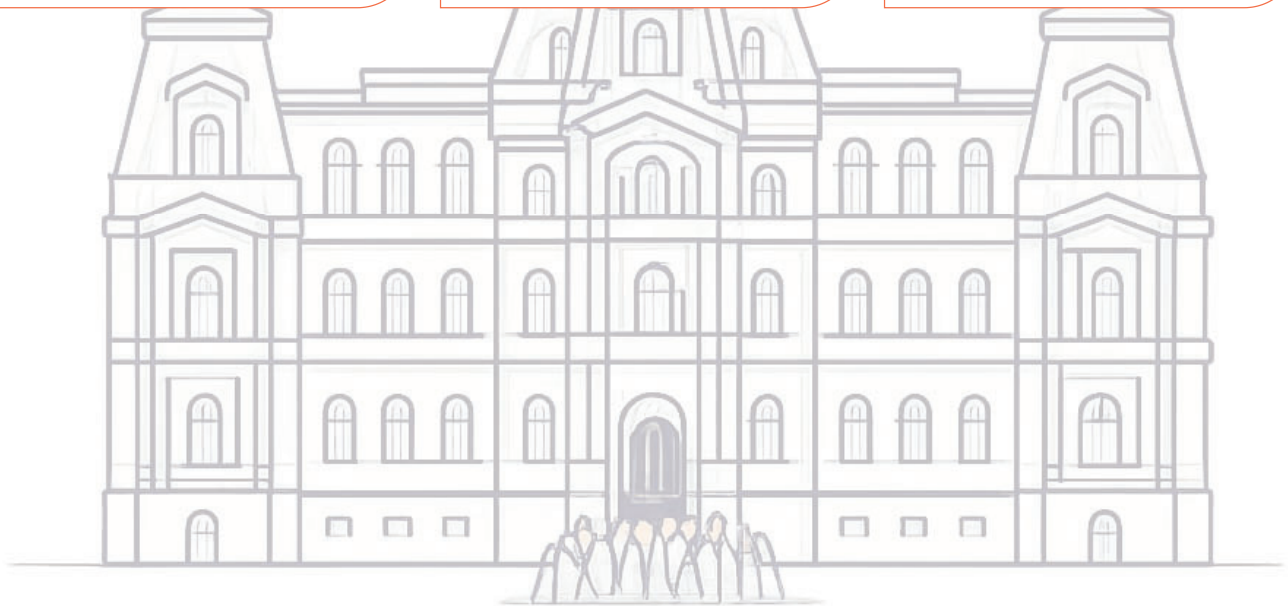
Philadelphia needs a permanent coordinating structure with real authority – with defined responsibility, dedicated staffing, multi-year funding, and public accountability. This is the air traffic controller the system currently lacks.

Immediate Stabilization

The federal environment has created an acute crisis in benefits access, nutrition education, and emergency food capacity. These cannot wait for long-term governance to be built. Near-term stabilization is essential parallel work, not a sequenced afterthought.

Shared Power, Not Just Shared Goals

Residents with lived experience of food insecurity must hold paid, decision-making roles in governance, implementation, and accountability. Advisory status is not enough. Compensation is not optional. This is an implementation requirement.



Report Structure: Four Domains

The twelve recommendations in this report are organized across four domains:

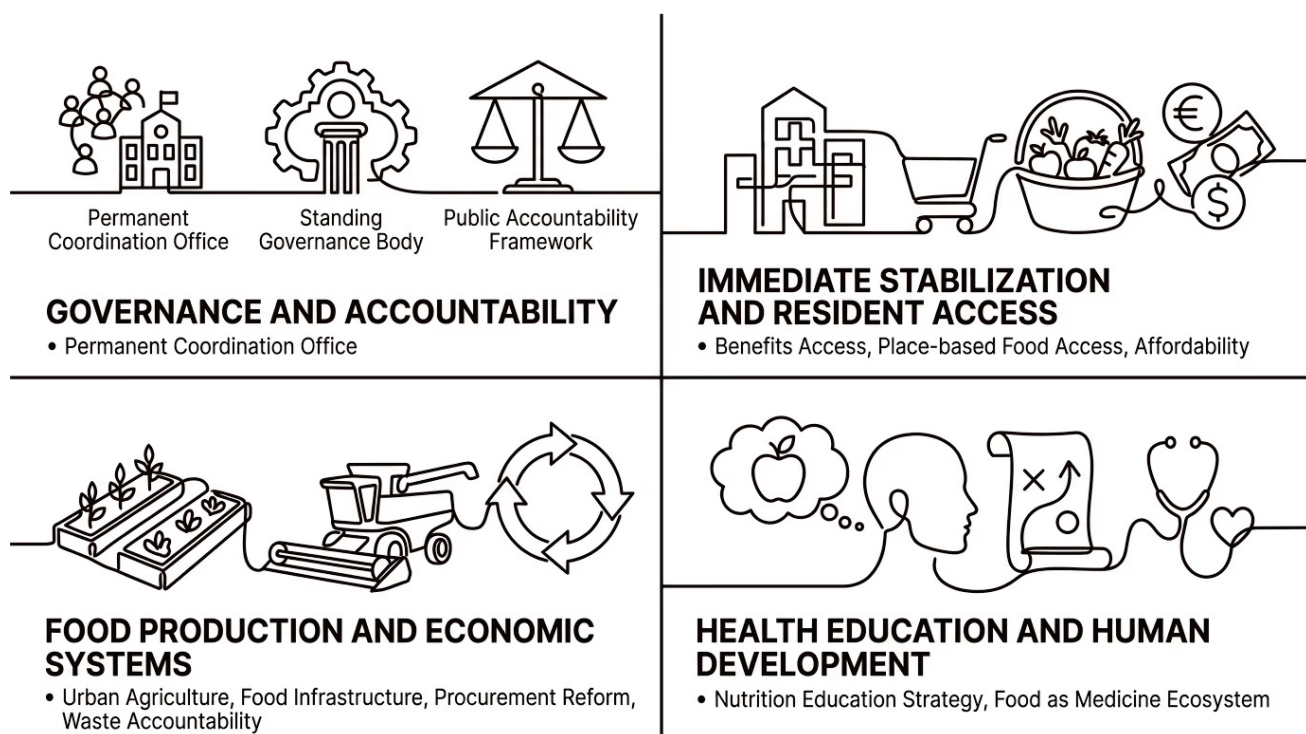
Governance and Accountability establishes the foundational structure needed for all other recommendations to succeed – including a permanent coordinating office, a standing governance body with shared power, and a public accountability framework.

Immediate Stabilization and Resident Access addresses what must happen now – strengthening benefits access, building community-led food access in every district, and treating affordability as a system-wide design requirement.

Food Production and Economic Systems moves beyond emergency food to invest in the local food economy – urban agriculture, cold storage and logistics, procurement reform, and corporate accountability.

Health Education and Human Development integrates food and nutrition into the systems where people already receive care and support – advancing a citywide nutrition education strategy and a coordinated Food as Medicine ecosystem.

Cross-cutting implementation requirements – including lived experience integration, community trust, accountability mapping, and philanthropy partnership – are woven throughout all four domains.



Recommendation 1: Establish a Permanent Coordination Office

This office is the air traffic controller the system currently lacks.

Create a permanent, city-led Food & Nutrition Security Coordination Office with clear authority, dedicated staffing, and multi-year funding – responsible for aligning the city’s food ecosystem across agencies, healthcare, schools, philanthropy, emergency food, community-based organizations, and local producers.

Durable Legal Foundation

Establish through legislation, a formal charter change that survives political transitions and cannot be reduced or eliminated at administrative discretion.

Real Authority

Define authority relative to City Council, the administration, and the standing governance body – clarifying how this office substantively differs from FPAC and prior advisory structures.

Dedicated Funding

Require dedicated operating funds – not one-time or discretionary support – with responsibility for cross-agency implementation, public reporting, and data coordination.

Community-Facing Standards

Build trauma-informed, multilingual, and community-facing practices as core operating standards – ensuring accessibility for seniors, immigrant communities, unhoused people, and youth.

Philanthropy Liaison

Serve as a named liaison to philanthropy, enabling coordinated investment in citywide food infrastructure rather than parallel, disconnected grantmaking.

“It had no teeth. It was good conversation and recommendations that might move forward, but it had no real authority. Whatever the new thing is, needs to have power and authority.”

– Task Force Member (describing FPAC)

Recommendation 2: Create a Standing Governance Body With Shared Power

Transition the Task Force into a permanent, independent governance and oversight body – structured to share real power with residents and community-based institutions, not just convene stakeholders.

Who Must be at the Table

- Residents with lived experience – seniors, youth, immigrant communities, unhoused people, people with disabilities
- School meals and childcare food providers
- Urban agriculture and mutual aid representatives
- Representatives from healthcare, retail, and higher education institutions engaged in food access efforts

How Power Must be Shared

- Stipends and real decision-making authority – not advisory status
- Language access, non-digital engagement options, flexible scheduling
- Regular public meetings and published implementation updates
- Frontline operations advisory group with real-time practitioner feedback
- Neighborhood-level bodies retaining local autonomy
- No single sector domination – including large emergency food providers or government agencies

“The conversations skew so heavily toward the well-funded and more mature organizations.”

– Community-Based Organizational Representative

Recommendation 3: Public Accountability, Metrics & Reporting

Adopt a public accountability framework that tracks resident outcomes, system performance, and equity – and uses data to guide policy, investment, and course correction.

Assess Before Building

Evaluate existing city data tools, dashboards, and reporting systems – including the Health Department's food access dashboard and agency-level data across DHS, CEO, and public health – before building new infrastructure.

Equity-Centered Indicators

Define success using equity-centered and systems-level indicators, not just service volume. Move beyond the federal poverty line; incorporate more realistic measures of hardship such as ALICE.

Track What Matters

Track SNAP and WIC participation rates, unmet need, food flow, nutrition quality, affordability, geographic gaps, distribution reliability, and scheduling gaps – disaggregated for seniors, immigrants, unhoused residents, and youth.

Public Dashboards

Publish regular public dashboards tied to agency ownership and budget. Build toward a shared, real-time data platform – one resource, not 326 search results.

“Government itself can’t solve this problem alone. Philanthropy alone cannot solve this. Nonprofits alone cannot solve this. Everybody has a role to play – and no one gets to sit this out.”

– Task Force Member

Recommendation 4: Stabilize Benefits Access & Income Support

Rebuild and expand citywide benefits access infrastructure — including SNAP and WIC — while addressing the broader income instability that drives food insecurity and the federal climate that is actively dismantling it.

Meet People Where They Are

Bring enrollment and navigation into places residents already use — schools, parks, community centers, laundromats, healthcare settings, libraries, shelters, senior centers, and food distribution sites.

Remove Barriers

Ensure access pathways do not require permanent addresses, government-issued ID, or burdensome documentation. Ground outreach in trusted community organizations and avoid approaches that resemble government intake systems for immigrant families. Leverage and promote existing federal nutrition programs — including FMNP, CACFP, and SFSP — as part of a coordinated benefits access and nutrition support strategy. Expand coordinated SNAP and WIC application, renewal, retention, and problem-resolution support.

Emergency Bridge Supports

Build rapid response capacity for benefit interruptions and delays during federal policy changes. Explore local direct cash or guaranteed income pilots as food security interventions.

Advocate for SNAP

Actively advocate against work requirements, categorical eligibility restrictions, and payment error rate penalties. SNAP is not background infrastructure — it is the system.

"If the city really wants to establish a presence within immigrant communities, they're probably going to have to show up with something really concrete to offer them."

— Community Advocate

Recommendation 5: Community-Led, Place-Based Food Access in Every District

Ensure every neighborhood has a durable, community-led food access strategy that supports multiple trusted access models – including supermarkets, corner stores, produce trucks, farmers markets, pantries, fridges, school food, home delivery, and after-hours access – with culturally relevant options responsive to how residents actually live.

Build on What Works

Fund and expand existing city programs and proven neighborhood-based systems – including the Philadelphia Food Justice Initiative (PFJI), BenePhilly, Community Resilience and Environmental Justice (CREJ) Fund, Office of Policy and Program Planning (OPPP), the Healthy Corner Store Initiative, Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA), cooperative purchasing models, and prepared meal and healthy grab-and-go distribution – rather than creating parallel infrastructure where trusted, scalable models already exist.

Dignity and Relevance

Ensure culturally relevant, nutritious, dignified food – not just volume. Remove barriers including IDs, sign-ups, and registration requirements where possible; model after grab-and-go, no-questions-asked distribution.

Ready-to-Eat Access

Expand access to ready-to-eat food for residents without cooking or storage capacity, including people experiencing homelessness. Ensure food can be taken into shelters, onto transit, and into temporary spaces.

School Food

Support school-based food programs that incorporate student voice and culturally relevant offerings. Standardize classroom-based morning feeding options for children who miss the before-school breakfast window.

Because neighborhoods are so different...it would be great to have neighborhood bodies – local community bodies that have power over their local neighborhood situation and report to a larger body, but it's a more intimate setting."

- Community-Based Organizational Representative



Food security requires an integrated ecosystem of access points—retail, institutional, community-based, and after-hours - working together around community needs and assets. This model centers community-led planning at the district level, recognizing that residents access food through multiple channels and that stronger coverage depends on coordinating across all of them.

Recommendation 6: Advance Affordability as a System Requirement

Treat affordability as a system-wide design requirement that addresses the full cost of obtaining healthy food – including transportation, time, price, and economic vulnerability.

Expand Nutrition Incentives

Expand SNAP/EBT acceptance across retail and emergency food settings. Scale Double Up Food Bucks, produce prescription programs, and other nutrition incentives across farmers markets, retail, and healthcare settings - connecting them to local food access infrastructure.

Affordability Is More Than Price

Transportation, travel time, delivery costs, and scheduling constraints are affordability issues – not secondary concerns. Connect affordability to broader economic supports, including wages and benefits.

Advocate for Higher Wages

Advocate for increases to the state and city minimum wage as a direct food security intervention as income instability is a root driver of food insecurity.

Reach Everyone

Ensure affordability strategies reach immigrants with status restrictions that make them ineligible for SNAP – these residents are not outside the food system's responsibility.

"Even if they have access to food in their neighborhoods, they don't have the money to afford it."

– Community Advocate

Recommendation 7: Implement the Urban Agriculture Plan

The [“Growing From the Root” Urban Agriculture Plan](#) is Philadelphia’s 10-year roadmap for advancing equitable land access, community-based food production, workforce development, and food justice across the city.

Recommendations from the FNSTF effort include moving from endorsement to implementation of the Urban Agriculture Plan with clear policy, funding, and infrastructure commitments - and connect it explicitly to youth employment and neighborhood food access.

Address Land Access

Urban agriculture is not a supplemental program - it is a food access, workforce, and climate resilience strategy that requires sustained infrastructure investment. Address zoning, land use, and long-term land access barriers while protecting community gardens from displacement.

Sustained Funding

Provide recurring, sustained funding and workforce pathways – not one-time grants that leave programs stranded. Integrate urban agriculture with neighborhood food access and distribution systems.

Youth Employment Pipelines

Build apprenticeship and workforce pipelines – including youth employment – that create livable-wage pathways across urban agriculture, food retail, nutrition education, Community Health Worker roles, food logistics, culinary entrepreneurship, and public health careers. Pay youth for urban agriculture and garden maintenance work; stipend models like Mural Arts are replicable templates.

School Garden Integration

Connect school-based gardens to citywide urban agriculture infrastructure and year-round maintenance support, prioritizing youth from communities most impacted by food insecurity.

“The urban ag plan came out of a process in 2019, really well organized, very dense – it really does spell out specifically the need to reform land access in the city.”

- Task Force Member

Recommendation 8: Elevate Food Infrastructure

Infrastructure investment must be treated as a public good – not a market opportunity. Cold storage, processing, and distribution capacity are as essential to food security as the food itself – particularly in closing the last-mile gaps that limit reliable access. Small independent food retailers, corner stores, and neighborhood grocers should be recognized as critical public health infrastructure and long-term community anchors.

Cold Storage

Invest in cold storage and refrigeration capacity at schools and community sites to hold food safely until distribution windows - closing the gap between food delivery and food distribution while strengthening reliable neighborhood access to healthy food.

Commercial Kitchens

Invest in commercial kitchens, aggregation, and processing infrastructure that supports community-based distribution, healthy grab-and-go options, culturally relevant foods, local entrepreneurship, and home delivery models.

Last-Mile Logistics

Prioritize infrastructure that supports mobile access and home delivery - particularly for seniors, disabled residents, and mobility-limited households - and strengthen neighborhood-based food access through support for trusted local retailers and community distribution models.

Climate Resilience

Align infrastructure investment with local procurement, workforce development, and climate resilience goals for long-term system durability.

"We need certification and farm jobs – creating value-added products in the communities, not just for donation, but for sale."

– Community Farmer

Recommendation 9: Reform Funding, Procurement & Public-Private Structures

Procurement reform is not just a budget question - it is a racial equity question. Who gets city contracts shapes who builds wealth and who builds the food system. Modernize funding and procurement systems to support local producers, community-based organizations, and immigrant-owned small businesses - and establish durable infrastructure for aligned philanthropic investment and long-term operational stability.

Reduce Vendor Concentration

Assess existing city food contracts to reduce concentration among large vendors. Expand local food purchasing across the school district, hospitals, and city agencies, preferencing locally-owned and Philadelphia-based businesses.

Simplify Procurement

Simplify procurement processes for smaller producers and community-based organizations. Support immigrant-owned small retailers in accessing business development resources and city contracting opportunities.

Unified Food Equity Fund

Establish a unified Food Equity Fund leveraging procurement-backed financing and blended capital. Create a clear philanthropic investment framework with defined asks and coordination structures.

Align Philanthropy

The coordinating office should anchor the relaunch of the Philanthropy Network's food funders community of practice. Align all funding strategies around equity goals, coordinated investment, and long-term system outcomes.

"Immigrants are overrepresented in small business, food sales, and grocery store ownership, yet there's a huge disconnect on the far side of things — to our most vulnerable populations."

— City Department Leader

Recommendation 10: Corporate & Institutional Accountability for Waste

Establish stronger accountability for food waste reduction, surplus donation, and institutional participation across the food system.

Set Standards

Set food waste reduction and diversion standards with clear requirements for major institutions across the city.

Strengthen Donation Systems

Strengthen surplus donation systems, including from schools – where uneaten school meals are currently discarded as policy. This is an immediate, actionable change.

Connect to Production

Connect waste reduction to composting and food production systems, creating a circular economy that feeds back into urban agriculture and community food access.

Learn from California

Draw on California's SB 1383 as a tested model that has produced measurable results in food waste diversion and surplus donation at scale.

"SB 1383 in California has led to 700 million meals since its introduction. We have all these hungry folks and we're just throwing food out. At the school district, I asked: what do you do with meals you don't serve? 'We throw them away.' Why? Because that's what we're told to do."

— Task Force Member

Recommendation 11: Citywide Nutrition Education Strategy

Develop a comprehensive, city-led nutrition education strategy that connects learning to real food access across schools, healthcare settings, retail environments, and community-based organizations – and rebuilds the capacity lost when federal SNAP-Ed funding was cut.

Restore and Expand Capacity

SNAP-Ed cuts have left many schools and community sites without direct nutrition education programming. Integrate nutrition education across schools, healthcare settings, libraries, farmers markets, retailers, and community-based organizations.

Pair Education with Access

Education about healthy eating only works when healthy food is actually accessible and affordable. Nutrition education should connect directly to school meals, retail access, community food distribution, and neighborhood-based healthy food infrastructure.

Culturally Relevant Delivery

Ensure culturally relevant, trauma-informed delivery across age groups and community settings. Incorporate youth engagement and feedback as a design principle, not an afterthought.

Address Upstream Barriers

Treat the system-level gaps – income, access, affordability – as upstream of behavior change. Education alone is not the intervention.

"SNAP-Ed is a low-cost, high-impact prevention tool. This crisis should catalyze and redesign – not restore what didn't work, but create something better that works for more people."

- Organizational Representative

Recommendation 12: Build a Food as Medicine Ecosystem

Advance a coordinated Food as Medicine strategy that includes medically tailored meals, produce prescriptions, trusted community partnerships, and attention to physical, mental, and social health – scaled to population-level impact, not only acute care.

Coordinate Across Systems

Coordinate Food as Medicine interventions across hospitals, health systems, community health centers, and community food providers. Align efforts with Community Health Needs Assessments and implementation plans.

Healing-Centered Approach

Include delivery systems for medically vulnerable and mobility-limited residents. Incorporate healing-centered cooking and nutrition that address mental and social wellbeing. Prioritize trusted community-based providers for people experiencing homelessness and others affected by trauma or stigma.

Move Upstream

Food as Medicine should not be limited to people who are already seriously ill. Population-level prevention – reducing diabetes, chronic disease, and diet-related illness – requires access, education, and affordability working together.

Build the Economic Case

Use healthcare cost savings data to build the case for sustained investment. Research on Medicaid populations in Massachusetts has documented significant cost reductions through food-based prevention. Coordinate lifestyle medicine programming – particularly in immigrant communities – with broader Food as Medicine strategies.

“We value healing-centered cooking and nutrition that address mental and social wellbeing. Everybody should have access to food. It is an inalienable right – everyone should be able to eat. And that will change things.”

Cross-Cutting Requirements

These implementation requirements apply across all twelve recommendations and must be embedded in governance structures, funding agreements, and accountability frameworks from the start. They are not addenda – they are conditions for success.

A: Lived Experience Must Be Structural

Residents with lived experience of food insecurity must hold paid, decision-making roles in governance, implementation, accountability, and evaluation. Advisory status is not enough. Compensation is not optional.

B: Community Trust Must Shape Design

Trusted neighborhood institutions, mutual aid groups, immigrant-serving organizations, and community-based providers are essential implementation partners – not subcontractors. Solutions must be co-designed with communities, not imposed upon them.

C: Map to Lead, Budget & Policy Path

Each recommendation must be paired with: a lead agency or accountable body; supporting partners; a policy lever or legislative path; a budget implication or funding ask; short-term and long-term milestones; and public metrics.

D: Philanthropy as Structural Partner

The philanthropic community has appetite, resources, and institutional relationships – but without a coordinating structure and a clear ask, investment remains reactive and disconnected. The coordinating office must establish an ongoing philanthropy liaison function.

"We don't want to compete with you – we want to be alongside you."

- Community Advocate

Conclusion: What Is at Stake

Philadelphia stands at a decisive inflection point. The conditions shaping this moment — rising need, shrinking federal support, and a fragmented system — make clear that incremental change is no longer sufficient. What this Task Force has put forward is not a set of isolated recommendations, but a cohesive blueprint for building the civic infrastructure required to ensure every resident can reliably access healthy, affordable, and culturally relevant food.

The path forward is both practical and ambitious. It calls for immediate stabilization where the system is failing residents today, while simultaneously building the long-term governance, coordination, and investment structures that have been missing for decades. It centers community voice not as consultation, but as shared power. It aligns public systems, philanthropy, and community-based organizations around common goals, clear accountability, and sustained investment.

This work will not be measured by the publication of this report, but by what follows: legislation advanced, budgets aligned, systems coordinated, and outcomes improved for residents across Philadelphia. Implementation will require discipline, partnership, and a willingness to shift how institutions operate — toward transparency, equity, and shared responsibility.

The opportunity is clear. Philadelphia has the assets, the leadership, and the community knowledge to build a food system that is not only responsive in moments of crisis, but adaptive, equitable, and built to last. This report is an invitation — and a mandate — to act with urgency and intention to make that future real.



Gratitude & Acknowledgements

This work would not have been possible without the leadership, partnership, and deep commitment of individuals and organizations across Philadelphia's food system.

We begin with sincere gratitude to Philadelphia City Council and Council President Kenyatta Johnson, whose foresight in convening the Food & Nutrition Security Task Force created the conditions for this work to take shape - elevating food insecurity as a coordinated, citywide priority grounded in equity, accountability, and long-term systems change.

We are especially grateful to Task Force Co-Chairs George Matysik (SHARE Food Program) and Mark Edwards (The Food Trust) for their steady leadership and partnership, and to Brett Nedelkoff (Office of the Council President) for her coordination and guidance in advancing this effort with clarity and purpose. We also acknowledge and appreciate the support of The Pew Charitable Trusts, whose investment helped make this effort possible.

We thank the members of the Food & Nutrition Security Task Force for their time, expertise, and perspective in shaping these recommendations: Ash Richards (Philadelphia Parks & Recreation); Alex Baloga (Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association); Brigid Gorham (Gopuff); Don Hinkle-Brown (Reinvestment Fund); Eli Moraru and Alex Imbot (The Community Grocer); Evan Ehlers (Sharing Excess); George Matysik (SHARE Food Program); Haile Johnston (The Common Market); Harry G. Hayman IV (Economy League of Greater Philadelphia); Jacob Zychick (American Heart Association); Jamal Wells (Mama Tee's Community Grocer); Ken Yang (Penn Asian Senior Services); Kristin Romens and Rishaun Hall (The Pew Charitable Trusts); Loree Jones-Brown (Philabundance); Maddy Booth (Vetri Community Partnership); Marianne Fray and Sara Jann (Maternity Care Coalition); Mark Edwards (The Food Trust); Mark Wainwright and Brian Williams (It Takes A Village To FEED One Child); Megha Kulshreshtha (Food Connection Group); Michael Banks (United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey); Mike Brubaker (Principled Strategies LLC); Najja R. Orr (Philadelphia Corporation for the Aging); Nicole Laverty (MANNNA); Dr. Senbagam Virudachalam (Children's Hospital of Philadelphia); Ty Holmberg and Chris Bolden-Newsome (Sankofa Community Farm). In addition, special thanks to Brandon Boyer, Brionna Wakefield, Claire Craig, and Colin Stayna-Wynter (Council staff) for all of their efforts and support.

We are equally grateful to the many partners, practitioners, and community leaders whose insights ensured this work reflects the lived realities of Philadelphia communities. Special thanks to Jennifer Aquilante (Philadelphia Department of Public Health), Laura Crandall (Office of Children & Families), Kate Colyer (Food Connect), Louise Hayes and Maripat Pileggi (Community Legal Services), and Erin Morton (Philadelphia Partnership for Nutrition & Health, United Way); as well as Shira Hodges and Kim Kirn (Philanthropy Network Greater Philadelphia), Bethany Flood (Foundation for Health Equity), and Ted Hewson, Ericka Gaines, and Yvonne Hughes for their leadership and engagement. We also appreciate the contributions of Dr. Nettie Johnson and Kou Dolo (ACANA), Greg Wright (Mayor's Office of Education), Principal Jessica McAtamney and the students of Lankenau High School, Rebecca Fabiano (Fab Youth Philly), Candice Player (Project HOME), Laura Weinbaum (Philadelphia Corporation for Aging), Charles Elison (Office of Immigrant Affairs), and Vanessa Ewing (Esperanza), whose perspectives across youth, immigrant communities, people experiencing homelessness, and community-based food access strengthened this work.

We also recognize the many organizations, grassroots leaders, and residents – especially those with lived experience of food insecurity – whose voices shaped this process through public meetings, listening sessions, and ongoing engagement. Their insight was not additive; it was foundational.

Finally, we acknowledge that this effort builds on the longstanding work of organizations and networks across the city addressing food access, nutrition, and community well-being—often without the coordination or resources they deserve. This report reflects that collective effort and a shared commitment to building the structures needed to support it moving forward.

With deep appreciation to all who contributed to this shared work.



**JUST
STRATEGIES**

HELPING PEOPLE LEAD CHANGE