



## COMMUNITY ASSETS

# West Columbia - Cayce Food Policy Coalition



## MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure quality food access and equity to address food insecurity, while supporting local farmers and workers.

## VISION

We eliminate food deserts so that every neighborhood has access to healthy foods. Together, we will defeat food insecurity through addressing transportation barriers, creating successful partnerships, establishing equitable food resources and offerings, and policy and advocacy outreach.

## COMMUNITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Supporting **6 community gardens** located throughout Lexington County. The produce grown at the gardens was distributed to 296 individuals and families in need during FY 2023.



Started **roadside produce stands** at 6 locations addressing food insecurity and partnering with local farmers to support the production and availability of locally grown food. These stands provided produce for **5,879 individuals and families** during FY 2023.



The **Brookland Community Food Bank** distributed nutritious food and other essentials for **6,102 individuals and families** in need, while working with community partners to develop strategies to end hunger.

## SUCCESS STORY

Partnered with S.C. Local Food Assistance Program to **distribute fresh produce to families** in need in Lexington County at no cost. This produce is purchased from local farmers by aggregators like Senn Brothers Produce, Francis Drew Produce, and Bonita Global, LLC. Some of the produce includes cabbage, squash, collards, sweet potatoes, strawberries and more.



**1,200**

individuals receive  
fresh produce each  
month



**10,000**

individuals and  
families served during  
FY2023

### Brookland-Lakeview Empowerment Center

Addresses health disparities, food access, and equity issues in the surrounding community.

### Alianza Latina

A Hispanic/Latino networking and outreach organization serving in the Midlands.

### Lexington County Public Library

Supports the development of community gardens at their different branches located throughout the county.

### Julius Felder Coalition for Change

A nonprofit that serves as a liaison between the community and the educational, judicial, and legal systems as well as religious organizations.

### Cities of Cayce and West Columbia

Government entities in the suburban eastern sections of Lexington County, S.C. The City of Cayce serves its residents with a population of around 13,781 people. The City of West Columbia serves its residents with a population of around 17,416 people. The WeCo-Cayce Food Policy Coalition works to address food-related problems primarily in these two cities.

### City of Columbia Food Policy Committee

Since 2017, the City of Columbia Food Policy Committee has existed and serves the greater Columbia area but has been instrumental in advising other food policy coalitions like WeCo-Cayce FPC.



# West Columbia - Cayce Food Policy Coalition

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Community members participated in guided conversations, identifying common challenges. The Coalition then grouped them into four focus areas:



**Transportation**



**Marketing and Outreach**



**Healthy Food Access  
and Equity**

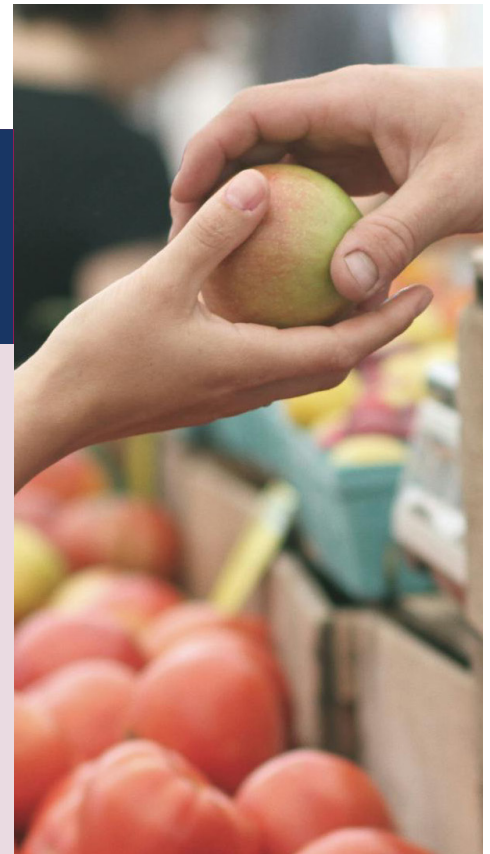


**Community Coordination  
and Collaboration**

For each focus area, the Coalition identified several Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change (PSE) strategies.

### The common challenges identified by community residents included:

- Senior mobility.
- Low vehicle access households.
- Limited transit services.
- Need for more food delivery programs.
- Lack of grocery stores (food desert).
- Cost/price disparities.
- Convenience stores not filling the gap.
- Quality, quantity, and price of food predicated on demographics.
- Generic products being overpriced and less available.
- Cost barriers for healthy food.
- GMO and origin of products (not local, not S.C.).
- Overabundance and availability of processed foods.
- Perception of population (e.g., not market worthy).
- Lack of resources and income limitations.
- Limited nutrition education.
- Poor health and health disparities in the community.
- Lack of community support and patronage for existing programs and initiatives.
- Limited patronage of local markets.
- Lack of information and nutrition education.
- Limited funding and resources for food programs.
- Need for better coordination around food programs.



## SUCCESS STORY

The West Columbia-Cayce Food Policy Coalition received national exposure at the **American Public Health Association (APHA) 2023 Annual Meeting and Expo** in Atlanta, Ga.

The presentation focused on the **“Importance of ethics in building community food policy strategies.”** Using the Institute of Medicine’s Community Health Improvement Process (CHIP) model, the presentation described how the FPC engages residents most impacted by food insecurity and inequities through community food gatherings to analyze critical issues over food and conversation while building relationships. Through community gatherings, the Coalition prioritizes issues, assesses resources, and develops Policy, Systems and Environmental Change strategies (PSEs).

An estimated

**60%**

of all abstracts submitted were accepted for the APHA presentation.

