

**Food Forward Lorain (FFL)** is a partnership of community organizations working together on policies, systems and environmental changes to make healthy food available for everyone who lives in the City of Lorain.

**Purpose:** to build upon existing community momentum, sustain efforts and encourage new partnerships to increase access to healthy food, and improve community well-being.

**Why?** Access to quality, nutritious food is fundamental to a healthy life. The City of Lorain is the largest city in Lorain County with a high poverty level. Residents face multiple barriers to health because of social and economic factors, or the Social Determinants of Health.

### Fall 2019: Where we started

Second Harvest Child Hunger Summit resulted in participants calls for better food system coordination.

### January 2020

Second Harvest and Lorain County Public Health (LCPH) began planning to establish a Food Advisory Council.

### Spring 2020: Data collection

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Second Harvest and LCPH:

- Gathered data on food access in Lorain County and Lorain City
- Created a summary of food access organizations, convenience stores, kitchens, gardens, farms, and food deserts.

### 2020: Ongoing planning

Created Google MyMaps for Lorain County and City of Lorain. The maps showed disconnects in the food system.

### January 2021

Second Harvest and LCPH identified stakeholders specifically working in the City of Lorain and formed the Food Advisory Council. Partner engagement was completed to fine tune the maps and resource list.

### Spring 2021

1:1 stakeholder meetings occurred to:

- Present data collected the previous year
- Highlight visuals and maps showing duplication or lack of coordination on food access efforts
- Survey stakeholders to gauge interest in participating in FFL as a way to align efforts in the city

### June 2021: Stakeholder Convening #1

Based on data collected in stakeholder meetings, FFL created three focus areas:

- #1: Economic development, urban farm and retail expansion
- #2: Improving healthcare partnerships, diabetes prevention and nutrition/culinary literacy
- #3: Connecting people to food through technology and transportation networks

Focus areas spurred activities that inspired 13 projects such as applying for the USDA Urban Agriculture Planning Grant, joining the Unite Us Ohio Network, piloting ProjectDash, a senior food delivery program, and more.

### 2021: Workgroup Implementation

The focus areas continued to make progress through:

- 1:1 project sponsor meetings
- Community engagement
- Stakeholder surveys

### October 2021: Stakeholder Convening #2

- Updates on project progress, and opportunities for continued involvement were presented and discussed.
- FFL published Opportunities for Involvement which documented specific projects under each focus area where people and organizations can contribute.

### 2022: Ongoing planning

- The City of Lorain joined as a FFL co-lead. Project-based focus areas continue to function. Stakeholder Convening #3 planning takes place.



**What's next?**



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## What's next?

- Ongoing focus area activity led by project sponsors.
- Gauge new interest and capacity, determine how the projects are going and work groups progressing.
- Outline expectations and roles of co-leads, project sponsors and stakeholders.
- Establish a regular schedule for stakeholder convenings moving forward.
- Determine evaluation and data monitoring methods.
- Ongoing community engagement with residents participating in programs, affected by new policy and system improvements, or those needing ongoing support for an issue not addressed in the 13 project items.
- Stakeholder Convening #3
  - Objective: The three focus areas provide updates on the 13 projects, understand failures and successes, ensure members' roles and structure are clear for the future.

## How to get involved

- Review the Progress to Date document.
- Attend the quarterly meetings. Email Catherine at [cmavrich@loraincountyhealth.com](mailto:cmavrich@loraincountyhealth.com) for an invitation or with any questions.



**Lorain County  
Public Health**

For the Health of Us All

