


Erica Hall, M.S. CED, MBA, ARM
Board Chair (she/her/hers)
Florida Food Policy Council
Sierra Club, Florida Chapter

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against a blue gradient background.

WHY IS INDIGENOUS LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT IMPORTANT?

Territory acknowledgement is a way that people insert an awareness of Indigenous presence and land rights in everyday life.

It is important to understand the longstanding history that has brought you to reside on the land, and to seek to understand your place within that history. Do you know what indigenous lands you live and work on?

Check your location at: <https://native-land.ca/resources/territory-acknowledgement/>

Our mission:

The Florida Food Policy Council (FLFPC) works to address gaps and affect policy within the food system through integrity and collaboration for the benefit of all Floridians and the environment.

The gaps being addressed include but are not limited to the disconnect between farmers, producers and consumers, disparities in food access, policy barriers to food democracy, and racial inequalities of BIPOC farmers' access to land and resources while also building capacity allowing us to connect, learn, and collaborate while increasing human and social capital and racial equity within the Florida food system.

Our mission:

Sierra Club Florida Chapter and the Suncoast Group's mission is to enjoy, explore and protect the natural places in Florida, to teach others to understand and respect the fragile environment in which we live, and to practice and promote the responsible use of Florida's ecosystems and resources.



Areas of Expertise

- **Community Economic Development Practitioner**
- **Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) facilitator and trainer**
- **Capacity Building, Technical Support and Technical Assistance Consultation**
- **Sustainability, Resiliency and Environmental Justice Advocate/Organizer**



Carla Bristol (Left) and Erica Hall (Right),
St. Pete Youth Farm

FLFPC CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Erica Hall

**VICE-CHAIR OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
SIERRA SUNCOAST GROUP**

Working on the connection between Climate Change, Food Waste,
Environmental Justice, and Diversity Equity and Inclusion

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER
SERVICES' (FDACS) FOOD SECURITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEMBER (FSAC)**

Collaborative, cross-sector thought leaders across the state of Florida
working together to create a statewide plan for addressing food security

**LEADERSHIP CIRCLE FOR THE NORTH AMERICAN FOOD
SYSTEMS NETWORK (NAFSN) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEMBER**

Partnering to highlight social, racial and health disparities and inequities



ERICA.H@FLFPC.ORG

TAMPA BAY COLLARD GREEN FESTIVAL

MAY 15, 2021



- Appointed by Nikki Fried to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' (FDACS) Food Security Advisory Committee (FSAC), a core group of collaborative, cross-sector thought leaders across the state of Florida working together to create a statewide plan for addressing food security.
- Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee, Sierra Suncoast Group working on the connection between Climate Change, Food Waste, Environmental Justice, and Diversity Equity and Inclusion. <https://www.sierraclub.org/florida/suncoast/contact-us>.
- Sierra Club Florida Chapter, Executive Committee, JEDI Committee Co-Chair
- Executive Committee, Leadership Circle for The North American Food Systems Network (NAFSN) founded in 2015 to offer leadership and technical skills training, networking, and other professional development opportunities for the growing group of individuals supporting the development of equitable and sustainable local, regional and national food systems. <https://www.foodsystemsnetwork.org/>
- A member of the Food Politics Action Team League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area <https://lwvspa.org/>

Wallace Center

- **Community Food Systems Mentorship Program – Mentored with Malik Yakini**
- **Organizational Change for Racial Justice (OCRJ), ... Fundamentals of Facilitation for Racial Justice Work (FFRJW)**
- **2021 Civics and Environmental Education (CEE) Change Fellowship Program, North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE's)**
- **Community Food Systems Fellowship, a project of Vital Village Networks at Boston Medical Center**
- **Inter-Institutional Network for Food, Agriculture, and Sustainability The Agricultural Sustainability Institute at UC Davis is the hosting Institution for INFAS.**

Leadership Approach

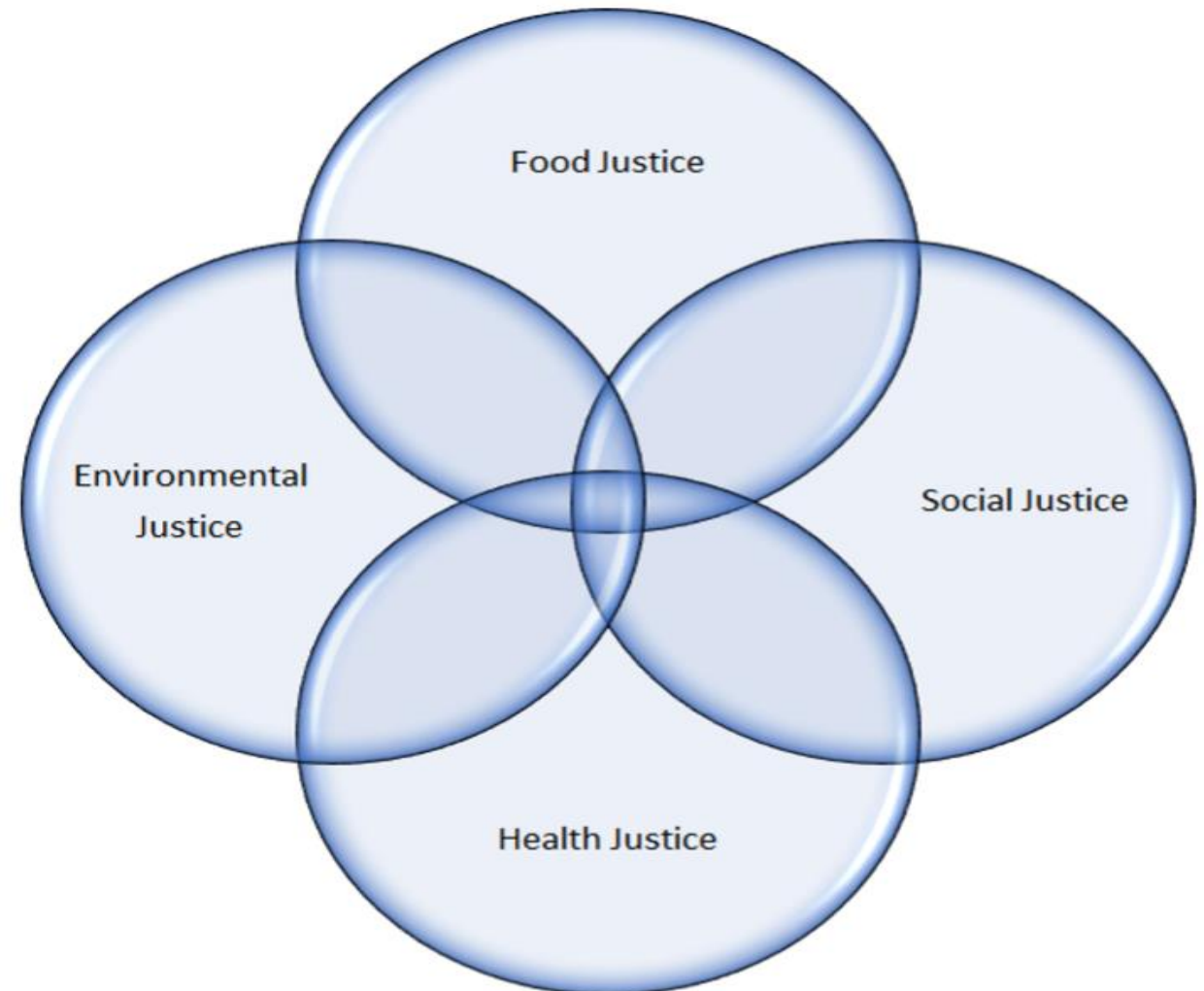
INTERSECTIONALITY IS KEY

An analytical framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege.

Examples of these aspects are gender, caste, sex, race, class, sexuality, religion, disability, physical appearance, and height.

Intersectionality centers social justice from various social locations

I build FLFPC collaborations between organizations that work for food justice to fulfill ideological gaps between food, environment, health and social justice.



INTERSECTIONALITY

- In light of the pandemic, racial and social injustice, groups working in this space have realized more than ever the intersectional connection in our work.
- Intersectionality is an analytical framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege. Examples of these aspects are gender, caste, sex, race, class, sexuality, religion, disability, physical appearance, and height.
- Intersectionality centers social justice from various social locations. Without the input or understanding of resistance from the people whose experiences of injustices we seek to alleviate, we risk reproducing structures that reinforce oppression through different means.
- The framework attempts to restructure the ways in which food is distributed, consumed, and produced, impacting the social, racial, cultural, political, economic, and environmental dimensions of food.

INTERSECTIONAL ENVIRONMENTALISM & RADICAL HOSPITALITY

- An inclusive form of environmentalism advocating for the protection of all people + the planet.
- Conversations within environmental spaces cannot minimize or ignore the injustices targeting vulnerable communities + natural ecosystems, but rather denote the ways social inequalities influence our perception of environmentalism, regardless of how subtle or obvious.
- The term “radical hospitality” can be defined as a practice of putting extraordinary effort and emphasis on making people feel welcome. This concept is often referred to as “radical welcome,” and focuses on breaking down barriers that prevent people from participating in an effort, campaign, or community.
- In Florida, very important as we see the need for intersectional environmentalism increasing and at crisis levels.

Results

- USF Creative Scholarship Grant - Summer Food Policy Course with USF Urban Food Sovereignty Group project
- Dr. Bullard Town Hall with USF iCAR **INITIATIVE ON COASTAL ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE (iCAR)** Community Resiliency Information System (CRIS), a Tool to Foster Resiliency - <http://cris-community-resiliency.org/>
- CRIS, interactive web-based application, “Make Smart Cities Smarter” allowing residents from diverse communities to communicate their needs directly to government decision-makers, is designed to identify unique resiliency needs by combining biophysical vulnerability with sea-level rise, flooding, and storm surge impact as well as socio-economic vulnerabilities at the neighborhood level, so solutions (including access to resources and information) can be customized by neighborhood to ensure equitable resiliency.
- CBPR Partnership - Food Insecurity module with iCAR

- Working to create a Community Food Action Plan – City of St. Petersburg and other counties in Pinellas and throughout Florida
- Food Forest in Campbell Park supported by SPC, City, Neighborhood Association
- Creation of the St. Pete Food Policy Council
- Partnerships with the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Committee
- Pinellas County Sustainability & Resiliency Advisory Committee
- Creating a JEDI Leadership Circle with the Florida Sierra Club

Food Sovereignty and Cultural Resiliency: Lessons from a Pandemic

- What are some lessons learned? Food, environmental, social and racial justice are inextricably linked as evidenced by the connections between:
 - Climate change, food waste, soil health, regenerative agriculture
 - Clean water, sea level rising, beach erosion, coastal flooding and urban agriculture.
- As evidenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent racial and social injustice events, many Food Policy Councils (FPCs), including ours, are reviewing, have changed or are changing their mission, values and goals while also re-examining their strategic plans looking through a Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) lens.
- In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, (FPCs) have emerged as a critical structure for organizing community-based responses to multiple food system issues.

OTHER LESSONS LEARNED

- According to Feeding Florida, 2,768,480 Floridians are struggling with hunger, 819,370 of them are children. That means approximately one in eight struggles with hunger.
- Food insecurity increased for Black, non-Hispanic households – from 19.1 % in 2019 to 21.7% in 2020, with an even higher jump among Black households in the South.
- Data has shown that BIPOC people are also more likely to depend on public transportation and live-in areas with a lack of access to grocery stores, which makes it challenging to stock up on supplies for staying at home. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the flaws and inequities of the food system have been drastically unveiled to the public. The CDC's COVID-19 data tracker shows that the death rates due to COVID-19 are the highest among Black and Indigenous people of Color (BIPOC), followed by Pacific Islanders and Latinx people. The need in Florida for our work is particularly urgent.

WHAT MAKES FOOD UNJUST?

- ▶ **People of color are the most severely impacted by hunger, poor food access, diet-related illness and other problems with the food system.**
- ▶ **Environmental and food justice intersect. For example, many factory farms and meatpacking plants pollute neighboring BIPOC communities' water and air, and are situated in communities of color.**
- ▶ **Food justice efforts work not only for access to healthy food but for an end to the structural inequities that lead to unequal health outcomes.**

MAJOR CHALLENGES TO RESOLVING FOOD INSECURITY

- ▶ **Food Insecurity - the state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.**
- **Communities of color remain on the frontlines of fighting two public health crises simultaneously: A global pandemic and systemic racism which threatens our livelihood and safety on a day-by-day basis.**
- **We are bearing witness to two pandemics, COVID-19 and racism. One requires a vaccine and the other, justice. Food insecurity is not simply a money problem. It is also a racism problem.**
- **Low-income families are affected by multiple overlapping issues like lack of affordable housing, social isolation, chronic or acute health problems, high medical costs, poor working conditions and low wages.**

FOOD DESERT

A food desert is defined by the USDA as "a low-income census tract where either a substantial number or share of residents has low access to a supermarket or large grocery store". The term is inadequate because:

- The term implies that a lack of affordable and fresh food is just a geographic problem.
- The word "desert" makes it seem like these communities are lacking when they are actually filled with life and resilience.
- The term makes the problem of food access and insecurity seem like a natural phenomenon and absolves responsibility.

FOOD DESERTS VS. FOOD APARTHEID

FOOD APARTHEID – Activists/advocates are using the term “food apartheid instead of food desert”, because “food apartheid” looks at the whole food system, along with race, geography, faith, and economics.

Food Apartheid looks at the whole food system and acknowledges that it is a system of inequity, especially on the grounds of race.

The distinction between food desert and food apartheid is important because language is political and language has power. It is critical to be intentional with the words and phrases that we use as these words and definitions have real impact on the way that people approach policies and solutions for change.

To hear more from Karen Washington (quoted above), check out this interview featuring her and Leah Penniman:
<https://www.resilience.org/stories/2019-09-10/you-belong-to-the-land-a-conversation-with-karen-washington-and-leah-penniman/>

WHAT IS FOOD SOVEREIGNTY?

Food sovereignty is a social movement that fosters community resiliency by localizing food production and consumption. The Food Sovereignty Movement (FSM) is a strategy for historically marginalized groups to reclaim their rights to food autonomy as they face displacement and economic injustice caused by globalization.

Food Sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems
~ La Via Campesina, 2007

Food sovereignty means to exercise autonomy in all territorial spaces: countries, regions, cities and rural communities. Food sovereignty is only possible if it takes place at the same time as political sovereignty of all peoples. ~ Declaration of the Forum for Food Sovereignty, Nyéléni 2007:5

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Local, State and Federal Policies need to support the Food Systems. Funding is Key. Collaborations and Partnerships are Keys to Success.

Create and Fund Innovative Public-Private Partnerships Sparking Economic Development and Improving Health.

Funding sources and Capital that doesn't have to be paid back. In addition to government grants and foundation funding, need venture capital and other funding sources, such as New Venture Advisors. <https://www.newventureadvisors.net/good-food-funding-guide/>

In 2010, the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) was announced by the Obama Administration to bring grocery stores and other healthy food retailers to underserved urban and rural communities across America. Expand the HFFI as a viable, effective and economically sustainable solution to the lack of fresh food access in underserved communities.

In 2021, the Biden Administration has revived the HFFI. The Healthy Food Financing Initiative aims to improve access to healthy foods in underserved areas, to create and preserve quality jobs, and to revitalize low-income communities.

<https://www.investinginfood.com/about-hffi/>

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS CON'T

- **Provide better access to grants and loans to projects seeking to improve access to healthy foods by financing grocery stores, farmers' markets, food hubs, co-ops and other food access businesses in urban or rural areas of need.**
- **Create and Fund Innovative Public-Private Partnerships Sparking Economic Development and Improving Health.**
- **Various funding sources including funds from:**
 - **Justice 40; American Relief Bill; EPA, HHS**
 - **USDA, Build Back Better**
- **Continue to build local and regional partnerships that address urban agriculture ordinances and policies to create opportunities.**
- **Foundations providing money for general operating costs, unrestricted funds.**

Final Thoughts

I am truly inspired by so much these days including:

- By all of you out there and the work that you are doing. Some of the most transformative work happens at the grassroots level, led by BIPOC members and leaders.
- Groups like the USF Urban Food Sovereignty Group, the CLEO Institute, the Black Church Food Security Network in Baltimore, The Florida Food Policy Council, Soil Generation in Philadelphia, and Dreaming Out Loud in Washington, D.C. are all groups addressing food insecurity *and* anti-Blackness through growing food and advocating for redistribution of resources such that community needs are met with care.
- They follow in the tradition of organizing and mutual aid that led Fannie Lou Hamer to start Freedom Farms Cooperative and the Black Panther Party to offer free breakfast to children and groceries to families. These efforts are often grassroots and hyperlocal, but they make a difference.

Current and Ongoing Projects

Working to better the food system!

COMPLETED

Florida Food Policy Scan

IN PROGRESS

Story Mapping Florida Food
Policy Councils

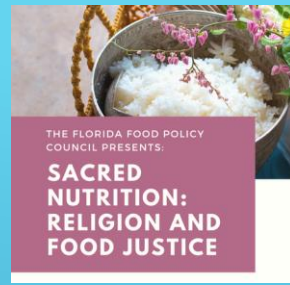
Florida Food Policy Toolkit

Florida Food Forum and
Florida Food Dialogues

ASPIRATIONAL

Story Mapping BIPOC
Farmers

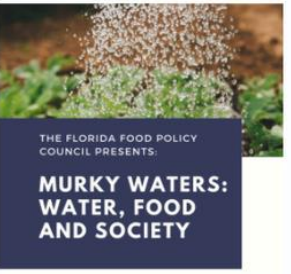
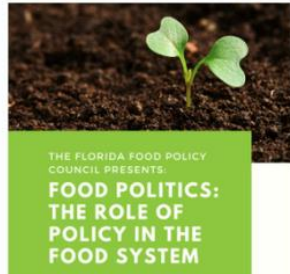
Our projects are driven by **Data, Policy, Partnerships and Collaborations**



Monthly Forums are 1 hour-long, interactive webinars that are **FREE** to the public

Special sessions of the forum are produced every few months to bring focus to pressing or trending topics

37 Forums since 2019!



01

Volunteer your time join groups like REGAIN, WC NAACP, Sierra Club and the Florida Food Policy Council.

02

Make your voices heard! Make a difference!

03

Become leaders in your community.

04

Educate and advocate for yourselves and others.

The world needs a food system that delivers healthy, safe and nutritious foods to everybody, everywhere; and ensures a decent income for farmers and food workers, tackles climate change, and protects nature.

QUESTIONS?

Florida Food Policy Council

<https://flfpc.wildapricot.org/>

info@flfpc.org

erica.h@flfpc.org

<https://naaee.org/about-us/people/erica-hall>

▶ **<https://www.vitalvillage.org/projects/community-food-systems-fellowship>**



Suncoast Sierra Club

ericah@suncoastsierra.org

<https://www.sierraclub.org/florida/leadership>

<https://www.sierraclub.org/florida/suncoast/contact-us>