



PRINCIPLES OF FOOD JUSTICE

On September 24–26, 2012, hundreds of food justice advocates gathered in Minneapolis for the Food + Justice = Democracy conference. One of the primary features of the conference was the use of a People’s Movement Assembly process to craft principles around food justice.

These principles were drafted in six concurrent sessions that were focused on different themes pertaining to food justice:

- Historical Trauma
- Local Foods, Community Development and Public Investment
- Hunger Relief, Health Disparities and the Industrial Food System
- Land
- Labor and Immigration
- Toxic-Free and Climate-Just Food System

Below are the principles and statements that emerged from those sessions. For the next several months we are inviting online input to continue to broaden and strengthen the principles.

Historical Trauma

1. At the household level we need to practice awareness of how our meal choices may help us practice the values of a just food system. May every family take note of and deepen the practice of food justice every day.
2. (Foundational) Acknowledge as fundamental in our consideration of food justice that we cannot deliver food justice without addressing historical trauma and the way it requires an intersectional analysis of our relationship with the land, with each other, with the economy, across cultures, and with our food and other consumption choices.
3. Food injustice creates and reinforces health disparities, land loss, historical trauma, cultural genocide, and structural racism, classism, and sexism.
4. The Interdependence Principle: Everything is interrelated. We must break down barriers that isolate us and reinforce a segregated worldview. We must put policy and practice in place that help us move to understanding and interdependence.
5. Struggle around meaning and understandings as part of our core work. An aspect of historical trauma is “divide and conquer,” and we cannot allow that pattern in our movement(s).

Local Food System, Community Development, and Public Investment

Good, healthy food and community wellbeing are basic human rights.

FOOD JUSTICE is the right of communities everywhere to produce, process, distribute, access, and eat good food regardless of race, class, gender, ethnicity, citizenship, ability, religion, or community. Includes:

- Freedom from exploitation

- Ensures the rights of workers to fair labor practices
- Values-based: respect, empathy, pluralism, valuing knowledge
- Racial Justice: dismantling of racism and white privilege
- Gender equity

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY is the right of people to define their own food, agriculture, livestock, and fisheries systems.

- Environmental stewardship (subsidiarity)
- Recognize indigenous rights to lands, territory, and resources that they possess by reasons of traditional ownership.
- Recognize people's rights to:
 - sustainable livelihoods
 - consume, barter, keep, donate, gift, process, distribute, grow, and sell food
 - local ownership of all aspects of the community food value chain

COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY is the condition in which all people at all times have access to fresh, healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food, outside emergency food situations.

Hunger Relief, Health Disparities, and the Industrial Food System

Because the emergency food system perpetuates food insecurity and health disparities; and because the emergency food system is sustained by the corporate food industry; and because these opportunities exist:

- institutional racism can be eliminated
- local and regional food systems can be reclaimed by engaged communities in a democratic process
- health care reform can focus on prevention and nutrition
- communities have demonstrated throughout time that they can care for one another and themselves;

We commit to these actions:

- mandating a living wage and supporting living wage campaigns
- dismantling structural racism
- building and providing education necessary for food sovereignty for all
- demand healthcare that promotes wellness
- demand a social covenant that meets all people's needs with dignity and participatory decision making
- organize across the food chain to mandate that corporations implement transparent practices of fair, clean, and just food

Land

In a fair, just, and sustainable food system:

1. All people recognize themselves as part of the Land, Air, Water, and Sky (LAWS), and uphold the rights of nature to exist, persist, maintain, and regenerate.¹
2. All people have access to places to produce or procure their own food, and the means (knowledge and physical resources) to do so.
3. Control of land is not used to exploit or oppress people, including migrant peoples; it is used to enhance the health, wealth, and dignity of all living beings.
4. Decisions about land use are made at the local level/by the people who are most affected, through transparent, equitable processes, to uphold principles 1, 2, and 3.

Labor and Immigration

Because the majority of food chain workers are immigrants and people of color; and because structural racism and inequality in the food system means these communities are disproportionately targeted and impacted; and because of corporate consolidation and the need to bring sustainable food (supply?) chains to scale:

We commit to building a food system that shifts the dominant narrative about sustainability in a manner that prioritizes workers' rights, and that respects to rights of food chain workers, including the right to organize a path to legalization for undocumented workers and a living wage for all workers, farmers, and fisherfolk.

Because we need

- fair food procurement
- Immigration reform
- collaborative messaging to UNDO racism both individually and corporately
- to have leadership be those directly affected
- to support/work towards the ownership over the means of production

We commit to creating strategic alliances, including non-food organizations and joint campaigns around food and farm justice issues.

We commit to strengthening fair food procurement campaigns and policies.

Toxic-Free and Climate-Just Food System

- A just food and water system works to reverse climate change by becoming agro-ecologically² independent of fossil fuels while adapting to climate change in ways that address its inequities.
- A just food and water system is predicated on Public Policy processes in which communities make free, prior, and informed decisions to protect and affirm the interdependent web of life.
- In a just food and water system, communities, farmers, and workers thrive in a healthy environment that is free of toxic chemicals.
- In a just food and water system, corporations are not persons; are banned from using their money for lobbying and political campaigns; and the revolving door is closed.

1. Language copied from the 2008 Constitution of Ecuador, Chapter 7, Article 31.

2. Agro-ecological = agriculture that is in harmony with nature, which upholds the principle of food sovereignty.