

Modeling the Future of Food in Your Neighborhood Study (foodNEST 2.0)

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foodNEST 2.0 is a multi-year research project with the goal of promoting more equitable food systems in the city of Cleveland through the development of tools and resources designed to promote community engagement in local decision making and food systems change. A participatory systems modeling approach is used to map out complexities and dynamics of the local food system to identify levers for change. Then, simulation methods are used to test which changes make the biggest impact on three main indicators: **economic opportunity**, **food security**, and **nutrition equity**. These insights will be integrated into a decision support tool that will be tested by leaders from neighborhoods in Cleveland such as Buckeye-Shaker, Central, Hough, and St. Clair Superior.

The foodNEST 2.0 process is designed to engage multiple perspectives throughout the study to ensure the project captures real world factors influencing equitable food systems. This occurs through engagement in data collection, participation in the Core Modeling Team, organization of public convenings and listening sessions, and recruitment of community fellows. Key partners include community residents, organizational stakeholders, business partners, and government leaders.

foodNEST 2.0 Objectives

1. Engage diverse stakeholders in the development of system dynamic models focused on implementation of community-wide food system interventions.
2. Standardize existing data and collect and link new data to allow for empirical analysis over short and medium time horizons, and simulation analysis of long-term end points.
3. Use qualitative and visual mapping methods to build causal loop models mapping interdependencies, uncertainties, and consequences of multiple food system transformations including the role of other systemic forces (i.e., transportation).
4. Empirically test, validate, and refine system dynamics models that will generate simulated output for evaluating the collective impact of community-wide food systems strategies on nutrition and food security and neighborhood economic development.
5. Develop and pilot test methods to translate the computational tool for use by community stakeholders in three neighborhoods in Cleveland to guide future food systems initiatives.
6. Disseminate findings with diverse audiences locally, regionally, and nationally.



foodNEST 2.0 Values & Assumptions

- We acknowledge every system is perfectly designed to achieve the results it achieves.
- We see systems change as being both possible and requiring collective understanding of complexity, connections, and dynamics.
- We believe the food system requires engagement from a range of stakeholders. All have a place at the table.
- We assume trust is a catalyst to systems change and collaboration and transparency are necessary to build trust.
- We are focused on equity as both a process (how we do our work) and outcome (what do we hope to achieve).
- Our work should allow for illumination of existing injustices of the food system and provide guidance for redressing these dynamics.
- Our work is iterative and adaptive and always open for deliberation. It is a living process.

Core Modeling Team

What is the Core Modeling Team (CMT)?

The Core Modeling Team is a group of diverse stakeholders who engage in the development of system dynamic models focused on the implementation of community-wide food systems change. CMT members commit about 60 hours of time per year to support the foodNEST 2.0 study. The CMT provides guidance to the research team on model development, refinement, and dissemination. CMT members have expertise in community-based food systems, community and economic development, food security, food policy, health equity, and neighborhood action. The CMT includes representatives from various organizations and community leaders. CMT members are an asset to the study, offering expertise to the modeling process, which aims to identify synergies within the local food system that can be leveraged to advance economic opportunity, food security, and nutrition equity. Our goal is to translate the resulting decision support tools to real world applications in different contexts, locally and beyond Cleveland.

Principles of Partnership Guiding the Core Modeling Team

- Our Partnership formed to serve a specific purpose of the foodNEST 2.0 study. It may take on new goals over time.
- The relationship between partners in our Partnership is characterized by mutual trust, respect, genuineness, and commitment.
- Our Partnership builds upon identified strengths and assets, but also works to address needs and increase capacity of all partners.
- Our Partnership balances power among partners and enables resources among partners to be shared.
- Partners make clear and open communication an ongoing priority in our Partnership by striving to understand each other's needs and self-interests, and developing a common language.
- Principles and processes for our Partnership are established with the input and agreement of all partners, especially for decision-making and conflict resolution.
- There is feedback among all stakeholders in our Partnership, with the goal of continuously improving the Partnership and its outcomes.
- Partners share the benefits of our Partnership's accomplishments.
- Our Partnership can dissolve, and when it does, we will plan for a process of closure.
- Our Partnership considers the nature of our environment as we design, evaluate, and plan to sustain our work.
- Our Partnership values multiple kinds of knowledge and life experiences.
- Our Partnership seeks to develop shared understandings about our mission, values, goals, measurable outcomes and processes for accountability.

Core Modeling Team Members

Lena Boswell, Nguzo Saba Gardens & University Hospitals
Marilyn Burns, Community Leader and Advisor Partner
Kirstin Craciun, MPP, MSW, The Center for Health Affairs
Austreeia Everson, Burten, Bell, Carr Development, Inc.
Piper Fernway, Bon Appetit Management Company
Courtney Green, All About Your Health
Michelle B. Jackson, Northeast Ohio Voter Advocates
Kristen Mikelbank, MA, Greater Cleveland Food Bank
Jodi Mitchell, Perfectly Imperfect Produce
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LaQueta Worley-Bell, Neighborhood Ambassador & Community Outreach Coordinator
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