



Food Business Workgroup Member Information

La Plata Food Equity Coalition:

The La Plata Food Equity Coalition (LPFEC) is enhancing health equity for and with local BIPOC, senior, and rural residents through healthy food access and shared community leadership. We are composed of individual community members, organizations, agencies and institutions who are committed to collaborative leadership and collective impact. Our work is focused on systems change, with an emphasis on shifting mental models, policies and practices.

The Coalition hosts specific Workgroups to advance these goals, including our Food Business Workgroup, the Voces de Comunidad (Community Voice), Cuidado Infantil (Childcare), Language Justice and Resource & Support Workgroup (AKA board of directors).

LPFEC Food Business Workgroup supports economic opportunity and financial security in La Plata County by building and sustaining a Food Business Ecosystem that is welcoming and inclusive of minority-owned businesses, including BIPOC and rural entrepreneurs..

Since 2022 we have been supporting food business entrepreneurs by identifying systemic barriers, resource gaps and developing unique support systems to start and grow food businesses, with an emphasis on supporting rural and minority owned businesses.

Examples of Food Business Workgroup Initiatives:

- Conducted a [Food Business Assessment](#) with 60 food entrepreneurs across the county
- Developed La Plata County's first [Food Business Resource Directory](#), an online [Commissary Kitchen Database](#) and [Food business funding resource packet](#).
- Education events for both food entrepreneurs and entrepreneur support organizations
- [West Slope Startup Week](#) Inclusivity partner and language access coordination to better reach immigrant businesses
- [City Inclusive Entrepreneurship](#) program partnership with the City of Durango, 2 years running
- Manna Shared Kitchen program development and pilot partner to incubate new minority owned businesses
- Bilingual Business Navigator Pilot supporting outreach and warm hand offs, with emphasis on Spanish speaking food entrepreneurs

While we support many amazing programs, our workgroup is not considered a “program”. We are focused on systemic change, which includes improving effectiveness and equitable practices within existing programs in our entrepreneurial ecosystem.

If you are interested in joining the workgroup or getting involved, we invite you to complete the following steps:

- Sign up for our Food Business Ecosystem ListServ [HERE](#) (sign up at the bottom)
- Attend Quarterly Food Business Ecosystem Events communicated through the Listserv above.
- Complete a self-directed FBW orientation by reviewing:
 - About Us & Timeline on website here (in progress)
 - Reviewing our [webpage](#) including articles, resources, latest updates and reports.
 - Review information about FBW Commitment below:

Once above self orientation steps are taken, and you are interested in joining the Food Business Workgroup, please contact Erin Jolley at FoodAccess@goodfoodcollective.org.

Workgroup Member Info & Commitment:

What:	We are proud to call ourselves a <i>Workgroup</i> because we are actively working hard to make La Plata an equitable, welcoming place to start a food business. Each member actively participates in decision-making, fostering partnerships, broadening perspectives, and generating tangible results. So, be prepared to roll up your sleeves!
Who:	<p>We are a group of multi-sector entrepreneurial support organizations (ESO's), agencies and small business owners who collaborate or "slice and dice" projects so that each member actively contributes to the strategies outlined for each year.</p> <p>The Food Business Workgroup is open and welcoming of new members including food business owners, regulatory agencies and entrepreneur support organizations who work in La Plata County.</p> <p>We intend to build a Workgroup that represents diverse perspectives, ecosystem roles and skill sets.</p>
Time Commitment:	<p>Members commit approx. 5-6 hours/month. \$25/hour stipend for meeting attendance is available for time spent on Workgroup activities. Stipends are intended for those who are active contributors to the workgroup and who otherwise experience barriers to participation.</p> <p>Commitment includes: -Attending 2 x 1 hour Food Business Workgroup Meetings per month -Additional 2-3 hrs/mo of follow up tasks to support Workgroup initiatives -Monthly 1-hour Food Equity Coalition meetings, last Friday of the month</p> <p>Food Access Workgroup Meeting Details: Workgroup meetings are first and third Thursdays 8:30 - 9:30 am. Meetings rotate between virtual and in- person. Simultaneous interpretation available when requested.</p> <p>For folks who would like to stay "in the loop" on Food Business activities but don't have the capacity to join 2 meetings a month, we warmly invite you to join our Listserv or quarterly ecosystem convenings. This is a great option for those who cannot commit regularly but want to stay involved, attend events, etc.</p>
Workgroup Values:	<p><u>Shared Leadership</u> - All initiatives are community - led. That means strategies are determined by community needs. Within the workgroup, all major decisions are made collectively and workload is divided across workgroup members. Sharing your voice and amplifying the voices of others to improve systems and build power is fundamental.</p> <p><u>Open Communication</u> among the workgroup that is timely, inclusive, honest, respectful and engaged</p> <p><u>Empathy</u> that allows us to understand where others come from and start with "where we are".</p>
Member Benefits	<p>What are the benefits of joining the Food Business Workgroup, you might ask?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Members are actively learning and contributing to local DEI initiatives, part of larger Food Equity Coalition and social impact model ● Member logo share on our website, relevant events and outreach materials

- Press mentions and community exposure
- Opportunity to try local food retail products at most in-person events
- Professional networking, partnership development and grant opportunities.

2024 FBW Members List

(folks who attended bi-monthly meetings in the last year, or at least once a month since joining - this list will sort of act as brief “introductions” for anyone new to the group)

Name	Org	Role within Entrepreneur Ecosystem or Workgroup
Erin Jolley	La Plata Food Equity Coalition, Food Business Workgroup Manager	Facilitates stakeholder convenings & Food Business Workgroup initiatives
Rachel Landis	La Plata Food Equity Coalition Good Food Collective	
Kate Husted	La Plata Food Equity Coalition	
Nicole Clark	CSU Extension	
Tommy Crosby	City of Durango	
Brittany Cupp	Southwest Colorado Accelerator Program for Entrepreneurs (SCAPE)	
Yani Rodriguez	First Southwest Community Fund	
Megan Feuerbacher	Manna	
Mary Shepherd	Small Business Development Center	
Priscila Newbold	Food Business Entrepreneur & Business Navigator	
Kevin Hernandez	Rocky Mountain Microfinance Institute	
Taylor Whitworth (replacing Aaron MacDowell)	La Plata County Public Health	
Doug McCarthy (replacing Lauren)	Local First	
Zac Robinson	LPFEC member	

How to Get Involved? There are 2 main ways to get involved with the Food Business Workgroup:

#1 Food Business Workgroup Member is a commitment to actively implement annual work plans, including:

- Consistently attend 2 meetings/mo throughout the year
- Has at least one defined role in the strategic work plan and is actively driving it forward (see below for 2024 strategic plan)
- There may be additional committee meetings scheduled for specific activities (for example if you are helping with an event, you may attend a few extra planning meetings)
- Core decision-maker/voter on workgroup matters
- Actively incorporating systems changes into their own roles, organizations and across the community
- Commits 5-6 hours per month

#2 Food Business Ecosystem partners are those who are engaged with our work on an occasional basis including ESO's, community partners and entrepreneurs across the county. These folk participate by:

- Attending quarterly ecosystem events, educational sessions, and occasional Food Business Workgroup meetings
- Partners on temporary or seasonal projects with varying availability
- Informs on workgroup matters, but is non voting
- No specific time commitment necessary

What are our Bi-Monthly Workgroup Meetings like?

- Meetings Includes a core workgroup of members who are actively assigned to strategic activities in workplan, making decisions, project development and discussing support for businesses across the county.
- Attendance Commitment is 2 x 1-hour meetings a month on zoom, occasionally in person. (obviously there are occasional conflicts in attendance, but is overall consistent)
- 2nd meeting of each month is for the "core" workgroup so we can ensure an appropriate agenda, decision making, discussion on specific businesses, etc.
- 1st meeting of each month is for core members plus any non members who are interested, ecosystem partners, subject matter experts, and new friends who are more than welcome to join. I will have an "orientation" meeting and/or email sent to them in advance so they are already familiar with who we are before joining the meeting.
- For the months with an Ecosystem Convening scheduled, we would only meet once as a workgroup, so still limiting 2 meetings/month.

What are Quarterly Ecosystem Convenings and Food Business Ecosystem events?

- Convenes countywide stakeholders (new + existing partners)
- We engage the local business ecosystem to bring together "silos" to network, learn and share
- Usually events are In-person, at different locations around the county, focusing on addressing specific business needs
- No commitment, just show up
- 2024: will have 2 in Durango + 2 outside of Durango

Food Business Workgroup: Work Plan for 2024

FBW Mission: To support economic opportunity and financial security in La Plata County by building and sustaining a Food Business Ecosystem that is welcoming and inclusive of rural and minority- owned businesses.

(*Marks Destination Advancement Grant funded activities)

Strategy #1:

Nurture a Food Business Ecosystem that is welcoming, navigable and accessible for minority-owned businesses through warm handoffs, resource sharing and effective networking among service organizations and entrepreneurs.

Activities 1.1

Promote Food Business Ecosystem networking, communication, education and resource sharing

- Maintaining a FB Directory that is shared through online AirTable and printed bilingual resources.
- Maintaining and sharing widely a Kitchen Database online that provides opportunities for businesses to connect with a commissary kitchen.
- Maintaining Listserv communications with the Food Business Ecosystem that shares updates and fosters communication among the food business ecosystem.
- Hosting regular Food Business Workgroup Meetings that facilitates projects, coordinates activities and provides education among Food Business Ecosystem
- Continue to solicit feedback from food businesses to inform and guide the FBW activities

Activity 1.2

Fine tuning FBW structure & onboarding materials to improve FBW structure, clarity & decision making

Activity 1.3

Business Tax Education*

- Addressing identified resources gap by executing at least one business tax education event/ systems change in 2024
 - FSWCF - Yani hosting tax prep webinar, LPFEC as title sponsors, FBW funding interpretation, guest speaker & materials for January 24 (including pre and post surveys)
 - May offer second tax education in person in March?

Strategy #2

Enhance Food Business Incubation for minority owned businesses within existing Food Business Ecosystem and expand **cultural competence** within La Plata Food business ecosystem

Activity 2.1

Manna Shared Kitchen program pilot

Maintaining and improving business incubation through kitchen access and mentorship. Supporting this activity includes participant referrals, program evaluation, entrepreneur graduation/support pathway to next phase of business after Manna.

Activity 2.2

Ecosystem Navigator Pilot*

Bilingual Navigator will work with Food Business Workgroup, business owners and other partners to foster an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem by connecting entrepreneurs to existing resources to support in their journey.

Navigator will also be working on systems change by recommending ecosystem improvements to resources, practice and policies that increase accessibility and systems navigation.

Activity 2.3

SBDC Bilingual Business Consultant

Promote and partner with SBDC consultant to provide services for Spanish-speaking entrepreneurs, meeting business owners where they are at, in a setting that is safe and approachable.

Activity 2.4:

Language Access Funds*

- West Slope StartUp Week Inclusivity Sponsor - August 19-23 (2 birds approach, building in existing funding/activities with WSSW)
- Other Ecosystem events, language services to cover interpretation, translation and capacity building when otherwise not offered

Strategy #3

Facilitate & Inform Policy conversations within city and county that support underserved food businesses. Share FB survey findings, highlight entrepreneur stories/experience, engaging officials to listen and learn. Connect officials with data, insight, expertise to bring back to inform system improvements

Activity 3.1

Inform City Sales Tax Restructure

- Engage rural and minority owned businesses in sales tax systems changes, feedback sessions, education and outreach

Strategy #4

Support Healthy Food Access by reducing barriers for small food businesses to procure and serve nourishing foods*

Activity 4.1

Procurement Education*

- Addressing identified resources gap by executing at least one procurement event or systems change in 2024
 - Working with GFC on **Local Procurement Education** Event in Spring 224