Resilient Food System Salon Dinner Summary

OCTOBER 21ST, 2025

The Resilient Food System (RFS) Salon Dinner **strengthened relationships** among stakeholders in academia, government, and the private sector through increased dialogue on transforming the DC food system to support human and planetary health.

Leaders from 12 organizations who advance food system strategy across DC were invited to the **American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center.** The discussion, facilitated by Professor Celeste Davis, focused on shared perspectives, identified bridges of synergy and collaboration, and arrived at central themes underlying needed future work and investment in the DC food system.

Key challenges that participants identified are currently facing the food system, including small farms and aging farmers, limited grocery stores, and rising food costs and insecurity, were discussed. Participants agreed that there is undeniable momentum and support for healthy, local food and entrepreneurship that can expand through stronger alignment and intentional partnerships across the supply chain.





CAPITAL IMPACT PARTNERS

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Cultivating an equitable food system in DC.

SHARED PERSPECTIVES

- **Promising**
  - Expanding sustainable agriculture and local food that is affordable
  - Building on local partnerships between agriculture and community organizations
  - Scaling what's already working
- **Challenging**
  - Stability of SNAP and WIC access and coverage
  - The changing needs of farmers and limited profitability of farming
  - Addressing root issues that impact hunger and health

BRIDGES OF COLLABORATION

- Align and communicate on data-led research goals for food system resilience
- Increase institutional procurement of local foods by learning from local models
- Orient public and private funding around constellations of effort already in place

THEMES OF FUTURE INVESTMENT

- Collaboration in program implementation by anchor organizations
- Leveraging purchasing power of institutions to build demand for local, healthy food
- Leadership on local issues through policy, data, and convening

In closing, guests reflected on **what you want** to move forward, **what you need** to make it possible, and **what you already have** that could support someone else's work.



Collaboration

- Connections to resources and motivated partnerships
- Systems building for long-term gains

Leveraging power to create demand

- Sustainable funds and resources for food businesses
- Investment in values aligned programs and projects

Leadership

- Political will to move projects forward
- Consistent research, data, and evaluation to generate solutions





Next Steps:

The evening's conversations and connections activated shared commitment and collaboration toward lasting and measurable impact for all communities toward a more resilient food system. Key learnings will translate into the following actions:

1. Sustained collaboration through regular touchpoints and learning exchanges
2. Mapping current institutional procurement practices and identifying immediate opportunities to increase local food purchasing
3. Exercise collective leadership, share resources, and coordinate around funding opportunities