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Recommendations for Food Systems Work Based Upon Research and Data Related to Latinx
Residents of Spartanburg County

April 8, 2020

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The following recommendations are informed by data gathered in Spartanburg County, analyzed, and published in several reports. Reports are open access; titles and links follow the recommendations in the references section of this document. The recommendations here were remitted to the Spartanburg Food System Coalition on April 16, 2020.

1. Promote understanding of the health benefits of culinary traditions of members of immigrant communities to the broader community in Spartanburg. Highlight and celebrate the nutritional, cultural, and historical dimensions of popular healthful dishes and foods for diverse groups.
2. Mexican, Central American, Caribbean, Colombian, and Ecuadorian cuisines, as well as cuisines from Southeast Asian countries, share many healthful primary ingredients in common, including a wide variety of tropical fruits and vegetables, as well as lean proteins like seafood. Significant numbers of immigrants in Spartanburg County come from these regions of the world. Many primary ingredients valued in these culinary traditions cannot be locally sourced because they are tropical crops and do not grow in temperate zones like Upstate South Carolina. In addition to promoting locally grown foods, signal the importance and value of non-locally sourced, nutritious foods, including those carried by small, ethnic groceries and stands at the flea market. Explore with small vendors incentive systems for the purchase of healthy items by consumers at their stores.
3. Identify the fresh fruit and vegetable products immigrant communities prefer which can be grown in our region, promote their experimental cultivation (for example, in school or urban gardens); their sale at places where immigrants shop; and their incorporation into Food Share efforts and food pantries frequented by immigrants. Some crops that can be cultivated in our area include varieties in these categories: chiles/peppers; squashes; root vegetables like radishes and daikon; eggplants and tomatoes; herbs like basil, mint, oregano; onions and garlicks.
4. Many immigrant parents and grandparents value the transmission of culinary traditions across generations. There is often a tension in families and communities between the desire of elders for intergenerational knowledge transmission and the desire of children to “Americanize” and blend in once they begin school. Emphasize intergenerational connection and celebrate the variety of traditions in our community in ways that are visible to children, adults, and older adults of all backgrounds.

5. Latinx immigrants have signaled in two different studies that they value quality over price alone. Make sure that healthy products promoted are of high quality in terms of taste and freshness, and emphasize taste and freshness in messaging around the promotion of these products.

6. Adult and older adult generations who have grown up in rural areas, connected to rural areas, or with urban gardening traditions have a great deal of knowledge that can be of benefit to efforts for healthy eating and living locally. Explore with immigrant communities (faith, business, school, etc.) ways to bring immigrant residents into dialogue and collaborative leadership with those in food system related work, from growers to extension services to nonprofits.

References

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Keaveny, Sarah Grace, "Wellness and Food Preferences among Children of Latino Immigrant Families in the Arcadia Community of Spartanburg County" (2014). *Student Scholarship*. 5. <https://digitalcommons.wofford.edu/studentpubs/5>

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