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The good food jobs nexus: A strategy for promoting health, employment, and economic development

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Abstract

In the aftermath of the Great Recession, cities have looked to the rapidly growing food sector as a promising source of new employment, and yet most of the sector's growth has come from low-wage, dead-end food jobs. A strategy to simultaneously increase food employment, improve conditions for food workers, and enhance access to healthy and affordable food to improve public health requires pursuing a "good food jobs" approach that supports policies and programs that advance all three goals. To inform such a strategy, this article analyzes policies and programs to create good food jobs in New York City and discusses how these efforts must navigate conflicts among job growth, job quality, and food access and quality. It recommends strategies cities can use to advance a good food jobs strategy, analyzes obstacles, and suggests research that will produce evidence to help cities develop and evaluate policy approaches that contribute to stronger economies and better health.

Keywords

labor, New York City, good food, community food security

Introduction

Food production and distribution, the food economy, and the relationships among poverty, hunger, and health have long been urban concerns, especially during periods of economic crisis (Vitiello & Brinkley, 2014). While the intersection

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of food, the economy, and health is not new, it has become much more politically relevant since the 2000s, as advocates and researchers began to document inequalities in urban food systems, including the dearth of healthy food retail in low-income neighborhoods (Walker, Keane, & Burke, 2010), increasing and racially disparate rates of food insecurity, obesity, and diet-related diseases (Ogden, Carroll, Kit, & Flegal, 2014), and the exploitation of workers throughout the food supply chain (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010; Sachs, Allen, Terman, Hayden, & Hatcher, 2014; Sbicca, 2015).

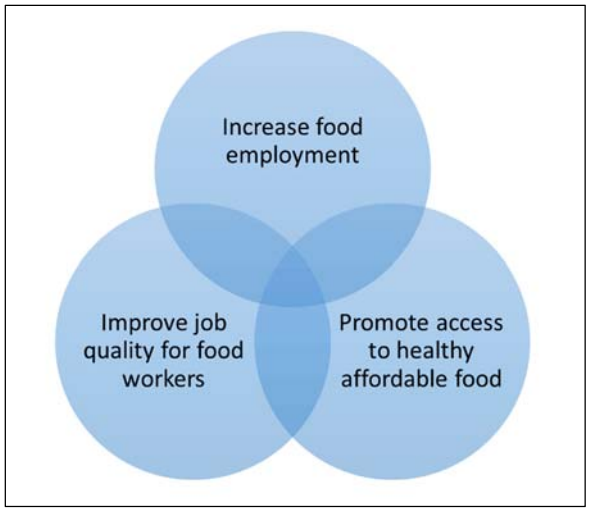
Over the last decade, policy-makers and social justice advocates have recognized that simply generating more food jobs is insufficient to lift people out of poverty. They have also learned that low-wage jobs that make unhealthy food more ubiquitous may reinforce existing patterns of economic, social, and health inequality among workers, their families, and their communities. To avoid this outcome, advocacy groups have worked with labor organizations to secure better working conditions throughout the food supply chain and for policies to promote more equitable, often community-based food businesses that are more likely to address community needs than are national chains (Myers & Sbicca, 2015; Sbicca, 2015). Labor organizers have used new tactics to enable segments of the labor force that had been overlooked by traditional unions, including fast-food workers, food deliverers, and immigrants working in food manufacturing, to gain job security, better wages, and opportunities for job enhancement (Milkman & Ott, 2014). These strategies have involved nationwide labor actions, like the Fight for $15 protests by tens of thousands of low-wage workers in 200 U.S. cities (Greenhouse & Kasperkevic, 2015).

As public health and planning practitioners argue for the need to act on the social determinants of poor health and inequality (Freudenberg, Franzosa, Chisholm, & Libman, 2015; Pastor & Morello-Frosch, 2014), some observers emphasize the potential for local economic development policy to create healthier, fairer communities (Williams & Marks, 2011). In cities such as New York (New York City Council, 2010) and Los Angeles (Los Angeles Food Policy Council, n.d.), city officials have recognized the need for policies that support food workers.

Many plans, however, uncritically emphasize the benefits of programs to support regional food production, urban agriculture, and food job creation, falling into a local trap (Born & Purcell, 2006) that overlooks the higher level forces that have created inequities in these systems (Cohen & Reynolds, 2014; Gray, 2013) and fails to address potential conflicts among job creation, job quality, and food healthfulness. Just as early notions of sustainable development often ignored the conflicts and inconsistencies among its constituent aims of economic, social, and environmental well-being (Campbell, 1996), discussions of food system development risk oversimplifying the complexity of fixing several moving parts of the food system.

This paper analyzes the synergies and conflicts among the overlapping aims of economic development, workforce development, and public health as policy-makers seek to design, implement, and evaluate good food jobs strategies. Good food jobs are defined here as jobs that offer benefits, provide safe working conditions, and also produce or distribute affordable and healthy food. Good food jobs also pay a living wage or better, defined as wage levels that allow workers to afford adequate shelter, food, and the other necessities of life in their community. Figure 1 shows the intersections among activities designed to achieve these three distinct but overlapping goals: increasing the

Figure 1. The Good Food Jobs Nexus



number of jobs in the food sector, improving the quality of jobs in that sector, and promoting better access to healthy affordable food. The figure highlights the potential for interventions that can contribute to one, two, or all three goals. More food jobs create new, often entry-level opportunities for unemployed or underemployed individuals, thus shrinking inequalities in employment. Improving the quality of jobs by providing higher wages, safer working conditions, better benefits, and opportunities for advancement to lower-paid food workers closes the gap between low-wage and better-paid workers. Finally, enhancing the quality and affordability of healthy food in low-income and Black and Latino communities can reduce the higher burden of food insecurity and diet-related diseases that these communities experience. Identifying opportunities that simultaneously advance two or three goals can accelerate progress toward a more equitable food system.

In practice, however, these goals may conflict; for example, the fast-food industry has generated millions of new jobs, but they pay low wages and produce mostly unhealthy food. In Figure 1, only the space where the three circles overlap constitutes where true good food jobs can grow. New policy initiatives that expand this space can help policy-makers develop strategies that maximize all three goals.

Our analysis seeks to illustrate the synergies and conflicts among the three elements of a good food jobs strategy: increasing food employment, improving employment quality, and promoting better access to healthy affordable food. We do this by analyzing diverse policies and programs in New York City over the past decade that have, to varying degrees, attempted to address one or more of these elements. The examples we present show the involvement of different sectors and constituencies, with different goals and objectives. Their successes and challenges suggest opportunities to advance good food jobs policies and practices at the municipal level, and roles for various constituents, including government, business, workers, advocates, and food system researchers.

Background

By making inequities in employment, food security, and food access more salient, the Great Recession of 2007–2009 set the stage on which campaigns for good food jobs are now playing out. The collapse of the U.S. housing market and ensuing financial crisis reduced household wealth, dampened consumer demand, and increased under- and unemployment. Poverty and food insecurity increased significantly.

The economic recovery has been led by the growth of low-wage jobs. Although 22 percent of job losses in the U.S. during the recession were low-wage jobs, these types of jobs grew 44 percent as the economy recovered. By 2014, lower-wage industries (including food) employed 1.85 million *more* workers than they had at the start of the recession (National Employment Law Project [NELP], 2014). This low-wage recovery has contributed to levels of income inequality in the U.S. not seen since the Great Depression (Blank, Danziger, & Schoeni, 2008; Essletzbichler, 2015; Piketty & Saez, 2003).

Food has been integral to the nation's economic recovery. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits were increased during the recession to provide both a safety net and an economic stimulus (Nord & Prell, 2011). From 2008 to 2014, jobs in food services and drinking places grew by 10.5 million (9 percent) and food and beverage store jobs grew by nearly 3 million (4 percent) (NELP, 2014). By one estimate, the overall food sector (from production to retail) has been growing at approximately twice the rate of the national economy (Pansing, Wasserman, Fisk, Muldoon, Kiraly, & Benjamin, 2013a).

At the municipal level, governments have viewed the rapidly expanding food sector as a key to reducing unemployment and rebuilding their economies while also addressing demands from food advocates to support regional food producers, increase access to healthy food, and make the food system more resilient and just. Cities created policies and programs to expand their food manufacturing, distribution, and retail sectors (Hagan & Rubin, 2013; Pansing et al., 2013b; Pothukuchi, 2005). These initiatives, which ranged from public investments in food hubs and public markets to job training programs, urban farms,

preferential procurement of regionally grown food, institutional food infrastructure, and supermarket subsidies, have been framed as economic development, public health, sustainability, and resilience plans, emphasizing the potential for intersectoral approaches to food planning.

These food policies have also been developed during a period in which movements like Occupy Wall Street as well as progressive elected officials have focused attention on inequality and social justice. This activism drew attention to issues like wages and working conditions, prompting a critical analysis of food-focused economic development strategies and their potential to exacerbate disparities based on race, ethnicity, gender, and national origin.

Labor activists have paid particular attention to income inequality among food workers, as the bulk of the food jobs created over the past decade have been low-wage, insecure, hourly jobs in food services and food retail (paying an average of US$9.48 and US$10.51 per hour, respectively) (NELP, 2014). Food jobs are among the nation's *least* unionized, with only 4.2 percent of those in food preparation and serving-related occupations and 1.4 percent of those in food services and drinking places belonging to a union, compared to 11.1 percent of the private-sector U.S. workforce (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Furthermore, many of these jobs are in the fast-food industry (Lowrey, 2014) in which low-wage workers produce poor quality food that disproportionately contributes to diet-related diseases among low-income people and communities of color.

Methods

This article is based on descriptions of food-job development programs and policies in New York City selected to highlight key accomplishments and obstacles in creating good food jobs. We focus on New York City because it has numerous examples of food-job programs and policies that explicitly focus on equity and food as both health and economic development strategies, such as FoodWorks (New York City Council, 2010), One New York The Plan for a Strong and Just NYC (City of New York, Office of the Mayor, 2015a), and the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (2015). Since our goal is to illustrate how a city's food, workforce, and economic development policies can set the stage for developing a good food jobs strategy, consideration of a single case is appropriate for assessing that potential (Yin, 2013).

In 2014, the New York City Food Policy Center released a study of good food job initiatives in New York City that comprised a literature review, descriptive profiles of New York City food employment initiatives, interviews with a sample of food workers, and New York State (NYS) Department of Labor (DOL) workforce data (Freudenberg, Silver, & the Good Food Jobs Research Team, 2013). Here we update and supplement this analysis with discussions of the 2013 report held at four public meetings, two for New York City policy-makers and advocates, and two for individuals and organizations in other cities, including Baltimore, Detroit, Philadelphia, and cities in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Department of Labor data were also updated and media reports, government and advocacy group reports, and 2014 and 2015 journal articles on good food jobs developments in New York City were reviewed. We focus on initiatives created by the New York City mayor and city council members who took office in 2014. We used these data sources to identify the main trends influencing good food jobs initiatives, opportunities for creating good food jobs in New York City, and the barriers to such initiatives.

Results

Food Sector Employment in New York City

In New York City, the previously described national economic trends have influenced recent changes in the food sector. Since the end of the recession (2010–2013), New York City's workforce has grown 6.2 percent overall, but low-wage jobs (defined as jobs with median wages below US$13.84 per hour) have grown 11.4 percent. Jobs that pay above US$21 per hour have grown just 4.4 percent (Wright, 2013). In 2015, nearly a quarter of the city's total labor force, about one million workers, earned less than US$20,000 per year. As a result, the percentage of

New Yorkers living below 150 percent of the official U.S. poverty threshold rose from 26.6 percent in 2008 to 30.6 percent in 2013 (City of New York, Office of the Mayor, 2015b).

The food sector is one of the largest and fastest-growing job sectors in New York City. Between 2004 and 2014 (the latest year for which complete data are available), employment in the food sector grew by 53 percent (Table 1) and the number of food employers grew by 44 percent (Table 2). Fast-food employment in New York City (not shown on tables) increased by 87 percent between 2000 and 2014, reaching almost double its level of 15 years ago (NELP, 2015).

Restaurants and food retail establishments, two large sectors of the food industry with the lowest 2014 average real wages (Table 3), grew more rapidly than smaller sectors with higher wages, such as food manufacturing and wholesale groceries. As a result, overall, inflation-adjusted wages in the food sector declined by 7 percent in this period, with increases realized only in the tiny food production sector.

Table 1. Changes in Employment in New York City's Food Sector, 2004–2014*

Sector	2004	2014	% Change 2004–2014
Restaurants	159,610	262,670	65
Food Retail	42,594	61,068	43
Grocery Wholesale	19,291	20,753	8
Food Manufacturing	13,882	16,367	18
Food Production	85	87	2
Total	235,462	360,945	53

* Most recent year for which annual data are available.
Source: New York State Department of Labor (2015). Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (NYSDOL QCEW) 2004-2014 Average Annual Employment.

Table 2. Changes in Numbers of Establishments in New York City's Food Sector, 2004–2014

Sector	2004	2014	% Change 2004–2014
Restaurants	11,958	18,397	54
Food Retail	4,722	6,395	35
Grocery Wholesale	1,585	1,764	11
Food Manufacturing	871	1,064	22
Food Production *	21	29	38
TOTAL	19,157	27,649	44

* Employment data are incomplete due to nondisclosure suppression.
Source: New York State Department of Labor (2015). Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (NYSDOL QCEW) 2004-2014 Average Annual Employment.

Table 3. Changes in Average Real Annual Wages* in New York City's Food Sector, 2004–2014

Sector	2004	2014	% Change 2004–2014
Restaurants	$26,650	$26,064	–2
Food Retail	$25,246	$23,053	–9
Grocery Wholesale	$53,704	$52,386	-2
Food Manufacturing	$40,463	$32,883	–19
Food Production†	$19,125	$29,490	54
Total	$29,424	$27,378	–7

* Inflation adjusted using the Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers, NYC Metropolitan Area, and 2014 Base Year. †Wage data are incomplete due to nondisclosure suppression. All analyses conducted by NYC Labor Market Information Service, CUNY Graduate Center.
Source: New York State Department of Labor (2015). Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (NYSDOL QCEW) 2004-2014 Average Annual Employment.

Growing Good Food Jobs in New York City

Our review of the food job landscape in New York City identified several policies and programs designed to achieve one or more of the three goals shown

in Figure 1. Examples of each are shown in Table 4 with a description of their primary goals and other potential effects on the food system. To illustrate the range and complexity of good food jobs activities that are now being implemented in New York City, we describe in more detail a few specific policies or programs that are being implemented within each goal. It should be noted that many programs combine several of the strategies shown in Table 4 and that existing programs vary in their ability to contribute to all three good food jobs goals.

Table 4. Selected Strategies for Growing Good Food Jobs in New York City

Strategy	Primary goal	Other goals
Improve job quality for food (and other) workers		
Paid sick leave	Allows workers to stay home without penalty to care for themselves or family members	Improves food safety by encouraging infected food workers to stay home when they are sick
Living wage for city contract workers	Increases pay for designated categories of municipal workers	Provides more stable, skilled food workforce
Higher minimum wage for fast-food workers	Increases pay for fast-food workers, one of largest components of low wage sectors	Reduces societal wage inequality
Workforce development sectoral coordination	Ensures that workforce development in the food sector creates a sustainable infrastructure	May provide skills needed to prepare healthier food
New York City ID Card	Allows undocumented food workers to use city services	Enhances inclusion of immigrants
Upgrade food skills of home care workers	Provides rationale for increased pay for some home care workers	Makes better care for people with or at risk of diet-related diseases
Increase food employment		
Support entrepreneurial food production and business incubators	Creates job opportunities for various under-employed groups	May enable some workers to enter food workforce and gain skills to produce healthier food
Create new food training programs in schools and colleges	Offers credentials and career paths for food workers	May provide skills in preparation of healthier food
Modernize and upgrade wholesale food markets such as at Hunts Point Market	Creates new and/or more skilled jobs in these markets	Makes fresh (and local) food more accessible to local retailers and institutions
Assist small businesses to survive and grow	Increases job stability for small businesses	May allow some small business to target healthier food niches
Promote access to healthy and affordable food		
Expand enrollment in NYC's institutional food programs	Makes healthy free or low-cost food available to vulnerable populations	Creates new unionized jobs in schools, hospitals, and other institutions
Implement universal free lunch in middle schools	Makes free food available to school children without stigma	Creates more jobs in school food program
Create more food processing and distribution centers	Makes fresh, regionally grown food more available to retailers and institutions	Creates new jobs in food production and sustains regional agricultural economy
Implement Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) supermarket incentive program	Makes healthy food more accessible in low-income communities	May create more or better jobs in supermarkets

Strategies To Improve the Quality of Food Jobs

Higher wages for fast-food workers. In response to the growth of low-wage jobs, policy-makers, civil society groups, and social movements have taken action to improve the pay, benefits, and working conditions of low-wage workers, especially those in the large fast-food sector. In New York City, Fast Food Forward, a coalition supported by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and other groups, has organized fast-food workers to fight for a minimum wage of US$15 an hour since 2012. They have sponsored rallies and demonstrations, lobbied legislators, and attracted ongoing media coverage (Luce, 2015) in New York City and dozens of other cities around the country.

New York City Mayor de Blasio has called for raising the city's overall minimum wage to US$15 an hour by 2019, and Governor Cuomo appointed a commission to consider raising the minimum wage for the state's 180,000 fast-food workers to US15 per hour (McGeehan, 2015). Mayor de Blasio submitted testimony to the New York State Wage Board urging the board to raise the minimum wage for fast-food workers to the recommended US$15 per hour (City of New York, 2015); the board made the decision to make this change in May 2015 (Fast Food Wage Board, 2015).

Proponents of the higher minimum wage argued that it would decrease worker turnover, thus providing a more experienced fast-food workforce and reducing food safety risks. Opponents argued that higher wages would lead to job losses, yet the evidence suggests that there would be no real impact on employment in the restaurant sector (Lynn & Boone, 2015). However, the raise does not address the poor food quality produced by fast-food restaurants.

Paid sick leave. After many years of advocacy, the New York City Council approved a paid sick leave law in 2013 (and expanded it in early 2014) that extended the right to paid sick leave to 3.4 million private-sector workers in New York City, including approximately 1.2 million New Yorkers who had no access to paid sick time prior to the law's passage (A Better Balance, 2014). A Better Balance convened the coalition of civil rights, labor and women's groups that supported paid sick leave in New York City. Unlike Fast Food Forward, which focused its attention on a single sector, A Better Balance fought for legislation that benefited all sectors, including the many low-wage earners in the food sector (Swarns, 2014). Guaranteeing paid sick leave not only ensures that workers are able to take time off when they are sick without losing wages, but also enables sick workers to stay out of the workplace and avoid infecting others (Salazar, 2012). This is especially important for food workers, who can spread contagious illnesses if they report to work when sick to avoid lost wages or reprisals from management (Norton et al., 2015). Thus, this strategy improves working conditions for all low-wage New Yorkers and also improves food quality by reducing food-safety risks.

Strategies to Increase the Number of Food Jobs

Hot Bread Kitchen Incubator is a retail market, catering service, and business incubator. It supports start-up food entrepreneurs in launching scalable food businesses, with a focus on creating pathways to business ownership for low-income women and minorities (Hot Bread Kitchen, 2015a). In 2001 Hot Bread Kitchen became an anchor tenant at La Marqueta, a former public food market in East Harlem run by the city's Economic Development Corporation, which is seeking to revitalize this historical site through retail food outlets, culinary job training, art, music, and community activities (La Marqueta Retoña, 2015).

Hot Bread Kitchen is funded by the New York City Council, New York City Economic Development Corporation, the city's business development agency, and private sources. Two-thirds of its operating budget comes from the sale of breads that appeal to the city's diverse ethnic groups and rental of commercial kitchen space. Through its employer-driven workforce development and business incubation programs, Hot Bread Kitchen helps develop professional skills in the culinary arts, transcend common barriers to fair wage employment, and achieve financial independence and success in the city's food manufacturing industry (Hot Bread Kitchen, 2015b). Since 2008, more than 80 women from 20 countries have trained at the bakery, although data on their current employment status are not available. Hot Bread Kitchen demonstrates the potential of small-

scale enterprises to obtain public and private funding to create incubators that can nurture new businesses, bring immigrants and other underemployed populations into the workforce, and develop trainees' capacity to succeed in the labor market. While the organization is health-conscious and seeks to bring artisanal food to low-income communities, increasing access to healthy food is not an explicit goal.

The Hunts Point Food Distribution Center creates food jobs on a different scale. The center, the largest wholesale food market in the world, includes the Hunts Point Terminal Produce Market, the Hunts Point Cooperative Meat Market, the New Fulton Fish Market, and parcels leased to several national food companies. Currently, 60 percent of the city's produce and 50 percent of its meat and fish pass through the market, making it the most important source of fresh food in the region (Hawkins, 2015). Food is delivered fresh daily via plane, boat, and tractor-trailer from 49 states and 55 countries. The center employs more than 8,000 people.

In 2015, several new initiatives at the Hunts Point Center demonstrated the city's interest in using the food market as a focal point for economic and job development. The city's Economic Development Corporation (EDC), which owns the distribution center, leased a major food distributor an additional 100,000 square feet (9,290 m^2), which will allow the fresh produce and specialty food distributor to expand its Hunts Point facility and create 350 new well-paid jobs in addition to 400 jobs the company has already created since moving to the Food Distribution Center in 2007 (NYCEDC, 2015a).

In addition, the mayor announced that the city will invest US$150 million in the distribution center over 12 years, and proposed to create "dedicated space" to better link New York City markets to upstate food production, thus benefiting the regional agricultural economy (Barkan, 2015). An environmental activist noted that a permanent wholesale farmers market in Hunts Point could help New York City's most vulnerable communities to get better access to fresh, healthy sustainable food (Izeman, 2015). The new commitment supplemented US$25 million in capital upgrades that the city provided to the distribution center for resiliency upgrades to the facility in the wake of Superstorm Sandy, which flooded some parts of the market in 2012. Finally, City University of New York recently established an interdisciplinary food studies program at Hostos Community College, located near the Hunts Point Market (Hu, 2015). One goal of the program is to train a diverse skilled food workforce that can make the Hunts Point distribution center a focal point for better food jobs and better availability of healthy food in low-income neighborhoods.

While operating on different scales, both Hot Bread Kitchen and the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center demonstrate the potential for innovative partnerships to create good food jobs and the substantial role that city government can play in supporting such initiatives.

Strategies to Promote Access to Healthy, Affordable Food

Expansion of institutional food programs offers an opportunity to provide free or low-cost healthy food to the city's most vulnerable residents, thereby reducing food insecurity and diet-related diseases in these populations. Each year, the New York City government provides more than 260 million meals or snacks to city residents through institutional food programs sponsored by 11 city agencies (City of New York, Mayor's Office of Contract Services, 2012; New York City Food Policy Center, 2014). The largest providers are the city's public schools, hospitals, and jails. For many recipients, including more than 650,000 school children, institutional food provides a significant proportion of their daily calories. Since 2008, the New York City Food Standards have mandated that city agencies serve food that meets nutritional requirements, leading to significant improvements in food quality (New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 2015).

If the city were to enroll more eligible users in these institutional food programs and continue to improve the quality of the food they serve, municipal government could support the creation of thousands of new good food jobs. Since much of the support for institutional food programs comes from the federal government (i.e., various U.S.

Department of Agriculture [USDA] programs), expanding and improving institutional food offers municipal and county governments an external revenue stream for supporting health and economic development. In addition, the city's largest institutional food programs employ municipal workers who are members of labor unions, are paid decent wages, receive benefits, and have the protection of city labor standards.

The city's new universal free school lunch in middle schools program provides a specific illustration of how this strategy can contribute to achieving the three goals shown in Figure 1. In 2014, the New York City Department of Education made school lunches free to all students attending middle schools, in an effort to reduce the stigma of the previously required means test. Since implementation of the program, student participation in the program increased by nearly 10 percent in the first six months of the year compared to the same period in the previous year, according to data collected by two school food advocacy groups (Community Food Advocates, 2015). As a result, an additional 10,000 to 15,000 middle school students eat lunch each day. If universal school lunch were to be expanded citywide to elementary and high schools, the advocacy group projected that an additional 120,000 students will eat school lunch each day, a 20 percent increase. According to current staffing patterns in school food, this increase would generate about 1,000 additional unionized school food jobs (Freudenberg et al., 2013) while also improving the health of students. With new city and national mandates to improve the quality and healthfulness of school food, this expansion could make an important contribution to increasing entry-level employment opportunities and reducing food insecurity and obesity among the city's school children.

Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) seeks to expand the number of supermarkets in low-income communities. Established in response to a 2008 study, FRESH promotes the creation and retention of local grocery stores in underserved communities through city and state zoning and tax and financial incentives to store operators and real estate developers (NYCEDC, 2015b). By the end of 2014, FRESH had approved the support of 14 supermarket projects (NYCEDC, 2015b). While some labor groups have called on the city to require FRESH projects to meet labor and wage standards, to date such mandates do not exist, limiting the impact on good jobs (NELP, 2009).

To ensure that FRESH stores increase access to healthy foods, supported projects are required to dedicate at least 50 percent of their space to products intended for home preparation, consumption, and utilization; at least 30 percent to perishable goods that may include dairy, fresh produce, fresh meats, poultry, fish, and frozen foods; and at least 500 square feet (46 m^2) to fresh produce (NYCEDC, 2015b). Some critics have charged that FRESH contributes to gentrification by subsidizing more upscale grocers to enter communities where the city hopes to attract new middle-class residents, thus contributing upward pressure on food costs (Angotti, 2010). A Bronx health advocacy group recently recommended extending FRESH to the city's bodegas, which are more prevalent in low-income neighborhoods than supermarkets, to create incentives for these outlets to sell healthier food (LaMantia, 2015).

Expanding outreach and reducing enrollment barriers in SNAP have the potential to provide many low-income New Yorkers with more resources for purchasing healthy food, thus increasing business and job creation possibilities in the city's almost 6,400 grocery stores.

According to the de Blasio administration, about 1.76 million New York City residents received SNAP benefits in 2014, purchasing more than US$3 billion in food. Because US$1 of SNAP spending generates approximately US$1.80 in economic activity (Chrisinger, 2015), SNAP spending contributed US$5.4 billion to the local economy, much of it to small businesses around the city (City of New York, Mayor Bill de Blasio, 2014). The official SNAP participation rate is 77 percent in New York City, suggesting that about 550,000 eligible residents are not receiving the benefit (Benefits Plus Learning Center, 2015). If half of those eligible were enrolled, they would receive another US$468 million in benefits and generate about US$840 million in economic activity, most of it in the city's poorest

neighborhoods. USDA has estimated that every US$1 billion increase in SNAP benefits creates 9,000 to 18,000 full-time–equivalent jobs, suggesting that enrolling half of New York City's SNAP eligible residents could create between 4,200 and 8,400 new jobs (USDA Economic Research Service [USDA-ERS], 2015).

A variety of evidence shows that SNAP participation reduces food insecurity, increases intake of calcium, folates, and iron and may protect recipients against obesity (Karnik et al., 2011; Leung, Blumenthal et al., 2013; Ludwig, Blumenthal, & Willett, 2012). Recently health researchers have called for changes in SNAP to increase its impact on the nutritional quality available to recipients (Leung, Hoffnagle et al., 2013). A few of these approaches have been tried on a modest scale in New York City, most notably in the Health Bucks programs, which offers SNAP recipients and others a US$2 voucher which can be used to obtain fresh fruits and vegetables at New York City's farmers markets. SNAP users who spend US$5 using an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card at a farmers' market automatically receive the US$2 Health Bucks credit (Olsho et al., 2015).

In the last year, the New York City Human Resources Administration has launched new SNAP outreach and enrollment campaigns, simplified SNAP certification procedures for various populations, and created a new website to facilitate enrollment (City of New York, Office of the Mayor, 2015a). In addition, the mayor's executive budget includes funding in 2016 to restore 515 SNAP positions cut by the previous mayor's administration, and in 2017 will restore an additional 361 jobs to help residents enroll in SNAP.

Discussion

The descriptions of the eight programs and policies presented here make clear that multiple constituencies, including labor and community organizations, social movements, city agencies, workforce development programs, food businesses, universities, and philanthropy are actively engaged in good food jobs initiatives. Most of these support more than one of the goals shown in Figure 1 and some (e.g., expanding institutional food programs or increasing enrollment in SNAP) have the potential to advance all three.

At the same time, our review suggests common problems. First, no single organization or coalition has the mandate or mission to coordinate the many strands of good food jobs work, leading to gaps, duplication, and missed opportunities for synergy. While the Mayor's Office of Food Policy, created in 2007, supports good food jobs strategies and has played a positive role convening partners inside and outside city government, it lacks the mandate or resources to operate at the level needed to coordinate multiple small initiatives or bring them to scale.

Second, few funders or funding streams have made creating good food jobs a priority, making it difficult to develop or sustain programs that can operate at the scale needed to influence employment rates, health or food security. Several sources of funding support good food jobs programs and policies in New York, including the state-funded Healthy Food Healthy Communities Fund, the city-funded FRESH (which awards subsidies and tax breaks), the philanthropic Community Food Funders, the U.S. Department of Labor Workforce Investment Act, the New York City EDC, the New York State Empire Development Corporation, and private and venture capital groups such as the Goldman Sachs Urban Investment Group (Freudenberg et al., 2013). However, for the most part, these funders do not coordinate their efforts nor have they systematically given priority to funding that contributes to programs that seek to achieve all three good food jobs outcomes.

Finally, the key constituencies involved in good food jobs have difficulty thinking and acting outside their silos and across the sectors that can contribute to improving the quality and quantity of food jobs and make healthy affordable food more available. At the municipal level, agencies responsible for economic development, small business services, workforce development, city planning, and health seldom communicate and have a modest track record working together for common goals. Even within the food sector, organizations involved in food service, food retail, and food processing seldom develop job training programs across these subsectors, even though they share

certain knowledge bases. These divisions make it harder to bring together the many constituencies who could together advocate for more robust and expansive good food jobs policies.

Coordinating the activities of public agencies across the levels and branches of government has also been a challenge. In New York recurring governance tensions between city and state governments make coordinated action for public-sector good jobs initiatives difficult. A promising exception is a current effort by city and state government agencies, nonprofit groups, and food businesses to create food processing centers in New York City that would create new markets for upstate farmers and make healthier, locally grown food more available in the city's low-income neighborhoods (Brannen, 2013; Cooper et al., 2015).

One critical reason it has proven challenging to create a coordinated and comprehensive plan to grow good food jobs in New York City is that the three goals sometime conflict. For example, the food system often puts efforts to improve the quality of food (i.e., healthfulness and affordability) in competition with efforts to improve the quality of the jobs. The global industrial food system has made high-calorie, low-nutrient products ubiquitous and affordable. Higher-quality food is usually more expensive and less available, especially in low-income, Black and Latino communities. One way that the food industry has kept prices low is to pay its workers below minimum wage and to offer few benefits. In the current system, improving the healthfulness of food usually means higher food prices, as does increasing pay and benefits for workers, since the costs of food and labor are two main drivers of food prices. As a result, healthier food produced by better-paid workers is often more available to better-off consumers, a trend that exacerbates the class and racial/ethnic inequalities in food insecurity and diet-related diseases (Otero, Pechlaner, Liberman, & Gürcan, 2015).

Two examples illustrate this tension. The movement to increase pay and benefits for fast-food workers has for the most part not addressed the role of fast food in epidemics of diet-related diseases in low-income communities. Conversely, the urban agriculture movement in New York City and the nation has emphasized the health and environmental benefits of this strategy without taking on the enormous challenges of paying decent wages to those who grow food in cities (Angotti, 2015).

Another tension pits the quantity of jobs against their quality. On the one hand, food employment is growing rapidly as a result of broader social and economic trends (more meals away from home; time constraints for low-income households; marketing of fast food in low-income communities). Moreover, the threshold for entry into these sectors (prior education and work experience) is low compared to other sectors, making it an attractive option for the unemployed, young people, and recent immigrants, all groups with high unemployment rates. Food employers offer a wide range of opportunities for part- and full-time work, creating multiple paths into the sector. For these reasons, the fast-food industry has been a prime supplier of new jobs.

However, neither fast-food nor retail jobs are good jobs over the long run. The pay is low, workers are generally not unionized (with the exception of those at some supermarket chains), and career ladders are limited (Food Chain Workers Alliance, 2012; Liu, 2012). Caught between the perceived dichotomy of more jobs or better jobs, until recently most elected officials have opted for the former, diminishing support for good food jobs strategies.

In practice, the opportunities to create plentiful jobs with good pay and working conditions that produce healthy and affordable food are constrained by structural characteristics of our food system and economy. By acknowledging that progress will require balancing these three goals in practice and by developing analytic frameworks that can track progress in all three domains over time, policy-makers, advocates, and researchers can make meaningful changes in our local and national food systems.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on our review of the good food jobs landscape in New York City, we make several recommendations for policy, practice, and

research. We encourage policy analysts and advocates in other cities to assess the relevance and generalizability of our findings and the following recommendations.

1. Make the creation of good food jobs an explicit goal of food policy.

By making the creation of more and better good food jobs an explicit strategy of progressive policymakers, food movement activists and organizations, community organizations, labor unions, workforce development programs, and others, it will be possible to align the many constituencies who support this approach, find synergies among current activities, and set collaborative short- and longer-term priorities. Creating spaces where these actors can search for common ground, analyze their experience, forge strategies, and debate differences is an important first step. Learning from other jurisdictions (such as the Good Food Pledge in Los Angeles) and exchanging strategies globally can also be useful. For example, the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, recently signed by more than 100 mayors from cities around the world (including New York City), calls on cities to "promote decent employment for all, including fair economic relations, fair wages and improved labour conditions within the food and agriculture sector, with the full inclusion of women" (Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, 2015, item 16).

2. Create a municipal infrastructure for good foods jobs initiatives.

A more robust municipal infrastructure might include workforce development and training programs that emphasize all three good food jobs strategic goals. It can also include collaborative funding mechanisms that allow programs to use public and private funds to achieve common objectives and funders to consider the cumulative impact of their investments in this area. Strategic analysis of the food sector and its workforce can identify growing and shrinking job sectors, and training and leadership development programs can cultivate the grass-roots and mainstream political leadership that can make good food jobs a priority. Some of these activities are now underway in New York City, but more consistent policy attention would accelerate progress.

To date, most of the many good food jobs initiatives now underway in the city are small projects that have not yet grappled with scalability or sustainability. Creating enough good food jobs to contribute to meaningful improvements in health, food security, employment, and working conditions will require the capacity to implement and sustain changes on a scale that goes beyond demonstration projects.

3. Encourage and reward intersectoral thinking and action.

Governments, civil society groups, and businesses will improve their capacity to work across sectors if such behavior is encouraged and rewarded rather than discouraged. Innovative political leaders, social movement leaders, and academics can contribute to this goal by creating safe spaces where intersectoral approaches can be planned, debated, and evaluated. The creation of a Center on Health Equity at the New York City Department of Health, a unit that seeks to coordinate equity work within and across agencies and issues, illustrates this potential, as does the Mayor's Office of Food Policy. A recent analysis of the potential for growth in food manufacturing in New York City, a food sector that pays higher wages, highlighted the importance of forging stronger relationships between workforce providers and food manufacturers and the creation of policies and programs that help companies grow past the critical three-to-five-year stage so they can scale up and provide quality employment (Becker & Dourmashkin, 2015). Creating opportunities for these organizations to develop shared projects could advance the intersectoral partnerships that good food jobs strategies require.

4. Acknowledge racial dimensions.

If Black and Latino lives matter, then finding ways to make healthy food and good food jobs more available in Black and Latino communities, which experience the highest rates of food, health, and wealth inequalities, must become a priority. Today, many dimensions of our food system are racialized. Blacks and Latinos experience higher rates of food insecurity and diet- related diseases than Whites;

are concentrated in the lowest-wage sectors of the food industry; and are more likely to have less access to healthy food and to be targeted for promotion of unhealthy food (Coleman-Jensen, Gregory, & Singh, 2014; Kirkpatrick, Dodd, Reedy, & Krebs-Smith, 2012; Kwate, Yau, Loh, & Williams, 2009; Papanikolaou, Brooks, Redier, & Fulgoni, 2015; Powell, Wada, & Kumanyika, 2014; Shierholz, 2014; Zenk et al., 2014). These trends also adversely affect other low-income populations and communities of color.

Acknowledging the racialized hierarchies within the food system is a first step toward reducing them (Giancatarino & Noor, 2014). Strategies to promote good food jobs that do not take these dynamics into account risk exacerbating the racial divide by making better jobs and foods more available in wealthier and White communities. In the last two years, several New York City food justice groups have highlighted the racial dimensions of the city's food system. In addition, a few community development corporations, organizations with a history of improving health and job prospects within Black and Latino communities, have developed good food job projects, providing new voices that can bring attention to food and race.

5. Acknowledge key role of social movements.
Social movements have long been the motor force behind improvements in health and living conditions. Many of the most successful efforts to improve food jobs have been led by labor, food justice, human rights, environmental, farmer, and Black social movement organizations. While technical planning skills, familiarity with municipal bureaucracies, and experience in workforce development are also critical, without the passion, commitment, and staying power of social movements, good food jobs proponents will have difficulty overcoming the resistance from the powerful constituencies who benefit from a food system that rewards bad jobs that produce unhealthy food. Weaving together the good food jobs coalitions that can win meaningful and sustainable victories will require leadership from the social movements that support the vision of a healthier and more just food system.

6. Define research priorities.
Our review also identified the need for additional evidence to inform advocacy and policy on good food jobs. Some questions that need answers include:

1. What are the respective costs and benefits of investing in one good food job strategy versus others? For example, how many good food jobs will a US$1 million investment in food manufacturing versus improved institutional food create? And who experiences the costs and benefits of different strategies? Improving the quality of institutional food, for example, to some extent can use existing federal funding streams, while creating a local food infrastructure may require new municipal or state funding, a political task that competes with other goals.
2. In what circumstances can market forces contribute to creating good food jobs? Are there, for example, viable business models for healthy, affordable fast food, or for lower-cost healthy supermarkets? How can government encourage the development and expansion of such private-sector models?
3. What are viable strategies for bringing innovations to scale and sustaining them? In its first five years, New York City's FRESH program supported 14 supermarket projects that expanded access in a few low-income communities. However, the original FRESH study documented the need for 100 additional supermarkets or grocery stores, and yet many other food stores have closed since 2010. To have an impact on health, innovations need to be implemented on a scale that can reach a significant portion of the vulnerable population, a goal not yet achieved by most good food job initiatives.
4. Our review showed that municipal government can play a key role in activating good food jobs initiatives. But economic and political barriers can obstruct a stronger

public-sector role in food. What strategies can best overcome these obstacles? What framing of the good food jobs approach will mobilize the broadest and deepest support? What lessons can be learned from successes in other cities and other countries?

Taking on these tasks of developing, bringing to scale, and sustaining good food jobs offers city governments and their partners a concrete path to improving health, employment, and community development. Our review of the food sector landscape in New York City identified multiple strategies for creating more good food jobs: more public sector jobs through increased institutional food service; more manufacturing jobs by rebuilding the city's food processing infrastructure; better support for small businesses and entrepreneurs; higher minimum wage for food workers, support for labor unions in their efforts to secure higher wages, and more vigorous enforcement of labor laws; and more training for food sector workers to justify earning more money. Each of these strategies offers municipal governments the opportunity to reassert their role in creating a role for the public sector in food. In the past and in other countries, municipal governments have played an important role in creating public food markets, increasing access to healthy and affordable food, and reducing food insecurity and food- and diet-related diseases (Friends of the Earth, 2010; Pansing et al., 2013b); Rocha & Lessa, 2009; Sonnino, 2009). With the dominance of markets-know-best ideologies, this public sector in food has until recently attracted little policy interest. Now, however, renewed attenition to low-wage work, food insecurity, obesity, unequal access to healthy food, and food justice has created opportunities to highlight the capacity of municipal governments to use their food mandates to achieve public goals.

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