

As we wrapped up the Food Justice Network Large Group Gathering on Wednesday, our team is invigorated by the introduction and addition of our new, passionate and highly skilled food justice movement leaders, Bria Williams and Alfred Shirley to the Cultivate Charlottesville team. We are eager to continue the long-term systems change efforts necessary for cultivating food equity in Charlottesville. Together we looked specifically at the integrating food equity language into the City Comprehensive Plan and learning more about the City's commitment to racial equity.

→ During our Food Justice Network group meeting we had the chance to get to know Ashley Marshall Reynolds, the new Charlottesville Deputy City Manager for Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Ashley shared her vision of engaging with community members to determine the most effective way to design the new city department aligned with the needs and experiences of Charlottesville residents. Food Justice Network looks forward to nurturing our relationship with Ashley and her work, while elevating [food equity initiative policy priorities](#) as a critical component of the City's efforts towards building racial equity in Charlottesville.

We also engaged with Alex Ikefuna, Deputy Director of Neighborhood Development Services, and Jenny Koch from the Cville Plans Together's Comprehensive Plan process. We reviewed our 31 policy wins and the 25 remaining recommendations ([Click here to review & Take Action](#)) to the Comprehensive Plan and had the opportunity to strategize in collaboration with Jenny and Alex around the best approaches for advocacy within the City's planning processes. As we move forward on this nitty gritty yet deeply essential policy work, we maintain a steadfast commitment to advocacy for food justice, ensuring community-driven food equity goals and measures will be included in the upcoming Zoning Rewrite and the City's Strategic Plan Update. With a solid foundation for this movement developed by Shantell and Jeanette's leadership starting back in 2016 leading to a new cohort of strong leaders in the present, Food Justice Network is ready to take on the future seasons of advocacy to come.