Hungry at the Banquet:

Food Insecurity in Louisiana 2018

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on behalf of the
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From the Director

In the Catholic worldview, any discussion of hunger begins with the concept of human rights described a half-century ago by Pope John XXIII in his encyclical *Peace on Earth* (1963). There Pope John grounded human rights in the principle that “every human being is a person, that is, his nature is endowed with intelligence and free will” and “because he is a person he has rights and obligations flowing directly and simultaneously from his very nature.” These rights, the pope continued, are universal and inviolable.

Pope John then began his enumeration of human rights and, in articulating the right to life, bodily integrity, and the means for proper development of life, the pope began with the right to food. The right to food tops the list of specific rights because hunger is such a fundamental assault on human life itself—and so widespread. It is listed first in the beatitudes of Jesus when he declares in the *Gospel of Matthew*, “I was hungry and you fed me.”

In this report which we release today, Kathleen Fitzgerald, Ph.D., of the University of North Carolina reminds us that, in a state like Louisiana which celebrates rich and varied food traditions that are famous worldwide, there are many people without enough to eat. The condition is known as “food insecurity,” and Louisiana has the second highest rate of food insecurity in the United States. Dr. Fitzgerald helps us to understand the scope of food insecurity, its causes and its cures, the realities of food deserts, and the nature of food justice. She presents strategies for addressing food insecurity as part of the demands upon all of us—citizens and policymakers—to end the scourge of hunger in the midst of plenty in Louisiana.

Special thanks to Dr. Fitzgerald for this timely research and special report and to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation which has made this report possible in its continuing mission to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and families in New Orleans and the State of Louisiana. Gratitude also to Kelsey McLaughlin of JSRI for report design and photographs.

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Despite being a foodie destination, Louisiana suffers from a food gap, which is the failure of the market economy to serve the basic human needs of those who are the most impoverished.

Louisiana has the second highest rate of food insecurity in the nation and it is rising faster than in the rest of the country.

Forty-six of the sixty-four parishes in Louisiana have food insecurity rates of 15 percent or higher, and some as high as 34.4 percent.

I in 4 Louisiana families rely on SNAP to meet their monthly food needs, two-thirds of whom are children.

Poverty rates were consistent and consistently high in Louisiana between 2013 and 2017, despite the fact that WIC usage declined significantly during this time period, and SNAP usage declined until 2016, when there was a 42 percent increase, possibly due to its link to state Medicaid expansion implemented in 2016.

Louisiana is replete with food deserts, which are defined by the USDA as places with a dearth of healthy and affordable food options, such as full-service grocery stores and/or farmers markets within a convenient travel distance (one mile for urban areas and ten miles in rural areas).

Food activism came to New Orleans in the post-Katrina era, in the form of urban farms and farmers markets, yet the white, middle-class food movement failed to connect with the low-income communities of color facing the highest rates of food insecurity.

Research links food deserts to poor health and Louisiana is one of the least healthy states, with one of the highest rates of adult obesity, diabetes, and hypertension.

Food insecurity in Louisiana like the rest of the nation is being addressed, albeit incompletely, by three federal programs: SNAP, WIC, and the National School Lunch Program.

Regionally, food banks, including mobile food pantries, are helping meet the needs of Louisiana’s food-insecure population.

States need to make food policy a higher priority, including offering incentives for grocery stores to open in underserved communities. Louisiana passed the Healthy Food Retail Act in 2010, but did not provide funding for this until 2016.

It is impossible to address food justice separately from economic and racial justice.
The State of Louisiana and specifically the City of New Orleans are widely known as foodie destinations – with distinctive regional cuisines that draw tourists from around the world. In addition to its world-renowned indigenous Cajun, Creole, and other cuisines, the state is the second-largest seafood supplier for the U.S. market, producing more than 850 million pounds of seafood each year. Yet, the state is also a region of significant food disparities, resulting in a glaring contradiction for hundreds of thousands of residents of the state who struggle with hunger. In Louisiana, 783,400 people, 258,630 of whom are children, struggle with hunger, according to Feeding America (“Hunger in America...” 2018). Louisiana suffers from what is known as a food gap, the failure of the market economy to serve the basic human needs of those who are the most impoverished, resulting in significant numbers of residents facing food insecurity.

From the perspective of Catholic Social Thought and according to Pope John XXIII, human beings have “the right to life, to bodily integrity, and to the means which are suitable for the proper development of life” (Kammer 2013). Thus, the right to food is a basic human right because “hunger is such a fundamental assault on human life itself - and so widespread” (Kammer 2013).

This report outlines food insecurity in Louisiana, the percentage of residents relying on federal food assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women and Infant Children (WIC), and the presence of and effects of food deserts. This report further explores existing efforts to address food insecurity in Louisiana and what remains to be done to address this need. When confronted with this data, it is evident that not all Louisiana residents benefit from Louisiana’s rich food culture.
Food insecurity refers to the number of people who regularly run out of food, go at least a day without eating, or who do not know where their next meal will come from. Nationally, one in six American families experience food insecurity (Phan et al. 2018). In some households, there is evidence that parents are going hungry so that their children can have enough to eat (Bazerghi, et al. 2016). As the USDA map of state-level food insecurity between 2015-2017 shows (see right), food insecurity is concentrated in the southern United States with most southern state rates of food insecurity above the U.S. average, including Louisiana. Louisiana has the second highest rate of food insecurity in the nation (one-fourth of Louisiana families struggle to put food on the table), with two metropolitan areas, New Orleans-Metairie and Baton Rouge, landing in the top ten Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) struggling with food insecurity.

Food insecurity is on the rise here in Louisiana, too, increasing by 5.6 percentage points since 2007, despite the rest of the country only seeing an increase of .7 percentage points (Coleman-Jensen, et al. 2018).

Feeding America has mapped food insecurity by parish (county) in Louisiana in 2016 (see left). The highest rates of food insecurity are in the northeast part of the state, with more than one in three residents of East Carroll Parish experiencing food insecurity (34.4 percent), 28.4 percent in Madison Parish, and 25.9 percent in Tensas Parish. Eleven parishes have rates of food insecurity between 20 and 24 percent, including Orleans Parish at 22.8 percent. Thirty-two parishes have rates of food insecurity between 15-19 percent, including East Baton Rouge Parish which has a food insecurity rate of 17.8 percent. Ultimately, forty-six out of the sixty-four parishes in the state have food insecurity rates higher than 15 percent.
Additionally, 1 in 4 Louisiana families rely on SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp Program, to meet their food needs every month. According to the Louisiana Budget Project, two-thirds of SNAP recipients are children, elderly, or people with disabilities.

As the graph above indicates, Louisiana residents, whether, rural, urban, or small town dwellers, are more likely to use SNAP than nationally comparable groups, with the highest rates of SNAP usage in Louisiana in rural areas and small towns, according to the Louisiana Budget Project (“Budget Cuts Threaten...” 2018).

Children in households receiving SNAP are also eligible for WIC and for free meals through the National School Lunch Program. In Louisiana, the SNAP threshold is 130 percent of the poverty line (which means individuals earning $15,782 or less per year are eligible for SNAP).

Despite the fact that poverty rates remained consistent and consistently high in Louisiana compared to U.S. poverty rates between 2013 and 2017, as the table opposite shows, WIC usage in Louisiana declined by almost 15 percent during this time period. Household participation in SNAP declined by almost 25 percent between 2016 and 2017, after a significant bump (42 percent) between 2015 and 2016. This striking increase in household SNAP participation may have been related to Louisiana’s Medicaid expansion. On Jan. 12, 2016, Governor John Bel Edwards signed his first executive order to begin the process of expanding Medicaid.

Louisiana was the first state in the nation to use SNAP enrollment to automate initial Medicaid enrollment and renewal, a process designed to fast-track Medicaid enrollment for recipients and to save the state money by not having to establish a new bureaucracy for determining Medicaid eligibility (Norris 2018). It is possible that the statewide attention to this expansion through advertising campaigns encouraged more people who viewed themselves as eligible for Medicaid to enroll in SNAP.
Scholars point to the prevalence of food deserts, which are defined by the USDA as places with a dearth of healthy and affordable food options, such as full-service grocery stores and/or farmers markets within a convenient travel distance (one mile for urban areas and ten miles in rural areas), and that instead only provide residents a plethora of unhealthy food outlets, such as fast food and quickie marts, offering mostly processed foods, laden with sugars and fats. Nationwide, the prevalence of food deserts increases in low-income zip codes and in racial minority communities. As the national food desert map shows (above), food deserts are disproportionately found in the American south, including Louisiana, mirroring the racial and economic demographics of the region and mirroring the patterns of food insecurity nationwide.

Louisiana is disproportionately impoverished (19.7 percent poverty rates in 2017, compared to 12.3 percent nationwide) and is disproportionately black (32.6 percent of the state is African American, compared to 13.4 percent nationwide in 2017). Louisiana’s poverty and racial demographics make it ripe for the prevalence of food deserts and, as the USDA’s food desert map shows (next page), much of the state qualifies as such.

The next two pages show statewide and New Orleans food desert maps, where LI refers to low-income and LA refers to low-access. Specifically, green indicates the traditional definition of a food desert: low-income census tracts where a significant number or share of residents is more than one mile (urban) or 10 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket. Scholars have questioned the distance standards used in defining food deserts (Lebel, et al. 2016; Wright, et al. 2016). As Wright, et al., ask, “is one mile assumed to be a reasonable walking distance? For seniors, children, the obese, the disabled, or pretty much anyone lugging a full bag of groceries, a one mile walk would be a challenge,” (2016:172). Also problematic with the rural distance is the assumption that rural people will have cars, yet it is not

safe to assume low-income or elderly rural residents have access to reliable transportation (Lebel, et al. 2016). For rural and urban residents, studies find that not owning a car is the biggest barrier to food access, rather than distance to the nearest supermarket (Wright, et al. 2018). Recognizing the somewhat arbitrary nature of the one mile (urban) and 10 miles (rural) designation used in the definition of a food desert, the USDA broadens the picture in these maps. For instance, orange indicates low-income census tracts where a significant number or share of residents is more than a half-mile (urban) or 10 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket. Red indicates low-income census tracts where a significant number of or share of residents is more than one mile (urban) and 20 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket. Finally, yellow indicates low-income census tracts where more than 100 housing units do not have a vehicle and are more than one mile from the nearest supermarket or a significant number or share of residents are more than 20 miles from the nearest supermarket. According to the U.S. census, approximately 8.5 percent of Louisiana households did not have a vehicle in 2017.
Turning the lens on Louisiana’s largest city, New Orleans, we see the presence of food deserts throughout the city (see USDA maps below). Some of the same variables as were found in the state are at play, only more so, specifically, high poverty rates (26.2 percent of New Orleans residents were impoverished in 2017), a disproportionately racial minority population (59.8 percent black as of 2017), and lack of vehicles (20.2 percent of households lacked a car in 2016). Since Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans and the Gulf South in 2005, and levee breaches flooded 80 percent of the city, more attention has been paid to worsening food disparities in the iconic city. Tulane University researchers found that disparities in access to supermarkets existed prior to Katrina; however, by 2007, “supermarket access declined for all census tract neighborhoods, but was especially limited for African-American tracts, which were 71 percent less likely than other tracts to have access to a … supermarket. Access improved slightly in 2009, but was not any better than pre-Katrina disparity levels,” (Rose et al. 2011). By 2011, food disparities remained as New Orleans was included in the top ten urban food deserts. Nationwide, three-fourths of food deserts are urban while the remaining 25 percent are rural (Wright, et al. 2016).
Food Justice

The food movement, which emerged out of the environmental movement in the 1970s and gained traction in the 1990s, particularly with the publication of best-selling books like Michael Pollan’s *The Botany of Desire* (2001), *The Omnivore’s Dilemma* (2006), and *In Defense of Food* (2008), “links the production and consumption of food to personal, planetary, and economic health” (Alkon 2012:11). The post-Katrina spotlight on the region and the dramatic increase in available vacant lots due to the flooding after the levee failures resulted in New Orleans becoming a site of food activism. While community gardens in the city date back to the 1980s, farmers markets and urban agriculture proliferated in the post-Katrina era. Additionally, a locavore movement began to take hold, with an emphasis on knowing where one’s food comes from and specifically trying to include as many locally sourced foods, often defined as food sourced within a 100-mile radius, in one’s diet as possible (Fitzgerald 2016). As Kato, et al., state, “Following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, civic participation in New Orleans blossomed, including a rise in urban gardening activities throughout the city” (2013:1833). According to the USDA, the number of farmers markets in the U.S. have grown from 1,776 in 1994 to 7,864 in 2012. New Orleans was a little late to the game, but today there are almost two dozen farmers markets, from the French Market to Crescent City Farmers Markets, operating throughout the city on rotating days.

Unfortunately, alternative food markets and the predominantly white community of food movement practitioners inadvertently marginalize poor and minority communities (Alkon 2012; McKinney and Kato 2017; Passidomo 2014). Two recent changes to the alternative food market scene in New Orleans, the closing of two urban farms, Hollygrove Market & Farm and Our School at Blair Grocery, both located in designated food deserts and predominantly black communities, may be outcomes of the disconnect between alternative food markets and their low-income, racial minority neighbors. Like most urban gardening projects of the post-Katrina era, both were established by whites and/or outsiders (Kato, et al. 2013). As Passidomo says, “food projects initiated and maintained by white exogenous groups on behalf of communities of color risk exacerbating the very systems of privilege and inequality they seek to ameliorate” (2014:385).

In response to the limitations of the food movement, a food justice perspective has emerged which emphasizes equal access to food, ending structural inequalities to food access, specifically those related to race and racism, and an emphasis on a wider distribution of environmental benefits (Alkon 2012). Despite a national food justice movement, most of the food activism in New Orleans remains white and middle-class and is failing the low-income, minority communities most in need in the city.
Research finds that the presence of food deserts correlates with obesity, premature death, and chronic health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension, ultimately “posing serious health and wellness challenges to residents” (Gallagher 2006). Perhaps counterintuitively, the rate of obesity is highest among food-insecure households (Adams, Grummer-Strawn, and Chavez 2003; Townsend 2006). Research shows that communities with the highest rates of food insecurity have a higher prevalence for diseases such as diabetes, obesity, and persons with some form of disability (Gundersen, et al. 2018). In fact, so much research supporting a link between food insecurity and health outcomes has emerged that the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans acknowledged this connection for the first time (Holben and Marshall 2017).

Louisiana is one of the least healthy states in the nation, with one of the highest rates of adult obesity in the nation at 36.2 percent (Warren, et al. 2016). Rates for African Americans are even higher at 42.5 percent (Lipinski 2016). Statewide, 12.7 percent of adults have diabetes, which is the fifth highest rate in the country. Louisiana has the fourth highest rate of hypertension in the country with 39.3 percent of adults afflicted by it (Lipinski 2016). Following the statewide pattern, New Orleans is one of the unhealthiest cities in the U.S. (Olopade 2009).

Some of this is due to the prevalence of food deserts in the city. Specific research focusing on the link between health and food access in New Orleans found “supermarket access inversely associated with obesity. The converse was found for fast food restaurants and convenience stores: greater access was associated with a greater likelihood of being obese” (Bodor, et al. 2010:778).

While researchers agree that dietary health is linked to the presence of food deserts, one also has to take cultural traditions into consideration. Southern food culture, where fried foods are abundant, and African American dietary traditions, known as the “soul food diet,” which emerged out of their limited food access during slavery, including frying food in lard and making food “more palatable by adding lots of salt, sugar and fat,” certainly play a role in the poor health among Louisiana residents (Wright, et al. 2016:179). Some studies find that African Americans resent suggestions for changing their diet, as it amounts to asking them to give up their culture (Wright, et al. 2016).
How Well Does Poverty Explain Food Insecurity?

Despite the fact that poverty rates have declined nationally from 14.8 percent in 2014 to 12.3 percent in 2017, they remained steady in Louisiana and are third highest in the nation. Over that same time frame, the Louisiana rate actually increased from 19.8 percent to 20.8 percent. Deep poverty, defined as living on less than half the federal poverty line, is consistently high in Louisiana, with one in ten households living on less than $15,000 per year in 2015 (Albares 2016).

The number of people falling below the federal poverty threshold has been the indicator most typically used for identifying the need for food at the local level. However, the most recent data from the USDA reveals that “58% of individuals at risk of hunger earn more than the federal poverty level, and 61% of poor households are food insecure,” (Coleman-Jensen, et al. 2017). We cannot measure food insecurity on poverty rates alone and better community level data is needed.

Addressing Food Insecurity in Louisiana

The first line of defense for addressing hunger and food insecurity are three federal programs: the national food stamp program, now referred to as SNAP, WIC, and the National School Lunch Program. SNAP is considered to be the nation’s most important hunger fighting program (“The Supplemental…” 2018). While the federal government pays the full cost of SNAP benefits, it splits the administrative costs with states. During the 2018 Louisiana state budget crisis, legislators threatened a 24.2 percent cut to the Department of Children and Family Services, the state agency that administers SNAP. Had this come to pass, Louisiana would have been the first state to opt out of the federal food assistance program (“The Supplemental…” 2018). Threatening to cut federal food assistance is morally bankrupt, as so many Louisiana residents rely on this program to meet their basic food needs every month, but it is also problematic because SNAP benefits are an economic stimulus in that they get money into the economy quickly, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (“Budget cuts threaten…” 2018). While this scenario did not come to pass, other attacks on the SNAP program in Louisiana continue. For instance, Louisiana congressman Ralph Abraham supported a version of the federal farm bill that would have attached onerous work requirements for SNAP recipients that would ultimately make many ineligible for the program, according to the Louisiana Budget Project (“SNAP Work Requirements…” 2018). Finally, relying on federal programs like SNAP to address hunger is inadequate. Thousands of food-insecure Louisiana residents are not eligible for this program and, for those that are, “more than 90 percent of SNAP benefits are used up by the third week of the month” (Kammer 2013b). Nationwide, only about 58 percent of food insecure households participate in SNAP, WIC, or the National School Lunch Program (Coleman-Jensen, et al. 2018).
The next level of assistance is in the form of food banks. The term ‘food bank’ refers to one of two types of services: “a large redistributor of rescued food to smaller charities that provide cooked or uncooked food to food insecure populations, or a service that provides grocery items directly to clients” (Bazerghi, et al. 2016). Food banks were designed for short term assistance; however they are currently being relied on by people facing long-term deprivation. Two problems have emerged from this: first, many food banks are not able to meet the nutritional needs of this population because of the type of food they provide and because food bank staff are often not trained nutritionists. Second, as the number of food bank clients have increased, donations have not increased to meet this new demand (Bazerghi, et al. 2016).

In south Louisiana, the services of Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana include warehouses in New Orleans and Lafayette from which Second Harvest distributes more than 39 million pounds of food and groceries a year through 700 community partner agencies. The food bank, a member of the Feeding America network, has mobile pantries which are traveling food trucks that bring fresh produce and other perishable foods directly to people living in places where such resources are scarce. They also have an after-school Kids Cafe and Summer Feeding programs that offer hot meals and healthy snacks when school meals are not available (“What We Do...” 2018). The Summer Feeding Program delivers breakfast, lunch, and nutritious snacks to dozens of community sites where children gather across the 23-parish service area. The food bank serves twenty-three civil parishes in South Louisiana. Its Value Added Producer Program (VAP) allows the food bank to purchase local fruits and vegetables from local farmers, paying farmers a small amount to cover the expense of harvesting and processing the produce, thus assisting local economies. While no longer the largest, for a while after hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Second Harvest Food Bank was the largest in the world’s history, responding to the immense need in the region. (“What We Do...” 2018). Long term and wider impact strategies of the food bank include the oncology clinic pantry at University Medical Center and their SNAP education and outreach efforts.

New Orleans residents have the option of the Sankofa Mobile Market, which can be found in different communities throughout the region, including the 9th Ward, Hollygrove, and Broadmoor. Like many markets in the area, Sankofa accepts SNAP. Shreveport also offers a mobile market.
New strategies must be enacted to reach rural people struggling with food insecurity but who lack transportation or are elderly and unable to reach the county food pantry. Louisiana should address this by adding more mobile food pantries. Rural areas and food deserts in Baton Rouge remain in need of such a service. Additionally, as noted in this report, the highest rates of food insecurity are found in the rural, northeastern corner of the state, specifically East Carroll, Tensas, and Madison Parishes, where currently no mobile food pantries exist.

“One way to address food deserts is for states to provide incentives for grocery stores to locate in underserved rural and urban areas.”

One way to address food deserts is for states to provide incentives for grocery stores to locate in underserved rural and urban areas. This is essential because grocery stores operate on an extremely narrow profit margin. In urban areas, there is a necessary density of population for grocery stores to succeed, but their residents’ high poverty rates limit their spending ability. Rural areas lack the necessary population density to sustain a full-service grocery store. When relying completely on a calculation of profit, from the perspective of grocers, “the optimal combination of land, affluence and people is found in the suburbs and that is where supermarkets tend to be” (Wright et al. 2015:173). Government subsidies are essential incentives for food retailers to open in underserved, non-suburban areas of the state.

With this in mind, other states have taken action. For instance, Alabama passed the Healthy Food Financing Act and North Carolina passed the Healthy Corner Store initiative, both designed to provide incentives for food retailers to open in underserved areas. Louisiana passed the Healthy Food Retail Act in 2010 with a similar objective, but did not fund this until 2016, under Governor John Bel Edwards. With $2 million dollars in funds, the program is now in the initial implementation stage.
While Louisiana residents appear to have many places to turn to address food insecurity, the growing crisis in the state demands that much more needs to be done. Louisiana must address this problem now as food insecurity is predicted to worsen globally due to increasingly unpredictable weather, resulting in stronger storms, floods, and droughts which will all negatively affect food production (Patel 2012). Louisiana’s decades of coastal erosion have resulted in extremely high vulnerability to storms and the loss of agricultural lands as well (Wheeler and von Braun 2013).

There are federal programs, discussed above, as well as ongoing, grassroots, piecemeal attempts at addressing food insecurity in Louisiana, such as mobile farmers markets and urban farms in New Orleans. With Louisiana ranking second to last in food security, the state must step in to address this crisis. Like most state governments, Louisiana all but ignores food in their policy and planning, with the notable exception of the Healthy Food Retail Act, which was finally funded six years after its passage (Alkon and Agyeman 2011; Pothukuchi and Kaufman 2000). Despite widespread acknowledgement of food deserts throughout the state, city planners and policy makers simply wait for developers to propose plans for grocery stores. Scholars argue that local governments should instead support existing food businesses by, for instance, offering grants or loans to help small retailers purchase refrigeration which would allow them to carry healthy, perishable foods (Raja, et al. 2008).

One cannot separate food insecurity from the larger issue of economic insecurity. Essentially, “racial and economic justice are prerequisites for food justice” (Sbicca 2018:3). Louisianaans, particularly racial minority residents of the state, suffer disproportionate food insecurity because they face higher poverty rates, as mentioned earlier. The poverty rate for black New Orleanians in 2016 was 32 percent, with almost half of black children living in poverty, while the poverty rate for white New Orleanians was only 9 percent (Plyer and Gardere 2018). Poverty results in the inability to afford healthy food, even when it is available. In order to address food insecurity, one must address economic inequality. Louisiana’s median household income was $10,000 below the national median household income in 2015 ($45,727 versus $55,775).
Raising the minimum wage would be the best strategy for addressing food insecurity in the state – the “Fight for $15” as a minimum wage is a commitment the state should support. Scholars emphasize that “there is not a lot of evidence suggesting that poor diets result from inadequate knowledge and a small amount of evidence that economics lies at the heart of the matter. For most, a lousy diet results from inadequate income far more than from deficient knowledge or distance to a full service grocery store” (Wright, et al. 2016:180).

Additionally, one of the biggest barriers poor people face is lack of transportation. Some studies argue that we should give people cars instead of cash (Wright, et al. 2016). This can be done by implementing programs that provide free or low-cost cars to low-income families that will not only allow them to have access to healthy food, but can provide a path to self-sufficiency. Such programs already exist, under names like Online Car Donation and Car Ministry, Wheels to Work, and others (Wright, et al. 2016).

In addition to economic justice initiatives, food initiatives need to be locally driven. Sociologist Joshua Sbicca argues that, “communities must create the conditions for food justice wherever they live, work, and play. This will include creating and enforcing laws that advance a food justice agenda” (2018: 190).

The frustration locals have with outsiders initiating post-Katrina community development projects is their lack of familiarity with living in the neighborhood and that they are simply less invested in the community, as the closing of Holly Grove Market and Farm and Our School at Blair Grocery exemplify (Kato, et al. 2013).

Finally, addressing food insecurity in Louisiana must be understood as a social justice issue of the highest priority, requiring attention from all levels of government, the business community, local activists, and the faith community. According to Catholic Social Thought, “For Christians and all people of good will, the reality of hunger today calls for feeding the individual hungry person, developing community solutions such as food banks and soup kitchens, and legislation and action by governments and economic institutions at all levels to make the kinds of systemic changes that end hunger and assure the right to food for all” (Kammer 2013).
References


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