



Racism in the U.S. Food System: Insights and Next Steps



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Background

Food insecurity can be defined as having limited and unreliable access to food. Compared to other higher-income countries, the United States has a higher rate of food insecurity. Inequities in health outcomes and food access have disproportionately impacted minority communities. Evidence indicates that populations with marginalized social identities, disproportionately bear a higher burden of nutrition related risks. Despite growing interest in understanding how racism and structural oppression within the food system impact health outcomes, research in this area is limited. The 2024 Racism in the Food System convening aimed to bring together experts working across the food system to collaborate and engage in dialogue on innovative research and community-based strategies to advance racial and food justice.

Aims

1. Evaluate participants' experiences of the 2024 Racism in the Food System Convening.
2. Identify knowledge and insights gained through participation in the convening.
3. Identify participants' needs and priorities following the convening.

Methods

Feedback Collection: The 2024 Racism in the Food System convening brought together diverse experts and practitioners across the food system. Prior to the convening participants were sent a survey including information such as demographics and questions aimed to capture the perspectives of participants and their expectations for the event. Following the convening, attendees were invited to complete a post-convening feedback form containing Likert-scale and open-ended questions. A total of 60 respondents completed the feedback form and demographic data was not collected.

Data Analysis: Likert-scale responses were analyzed using frequencies and percentages and presented visually. Open-ended responses were manually reviewed and organized into recurring themes. An AI assistant supported the organization and summarization of responses during the qualitative review process.

Results



Participant Voices

The wisdom section - council of elders was incredibly helpful. Many times you don't hear from the elders at a conference and to include them was very valuable. Ink Factory did a great job summarizing the conference. Looking forward to seeing the summary."

"... The whole energy was so different and I felt such a sense of solidarity. I also loved the multigeneration component; it was so special to hear from activist elders in the movement who have been doing this work for decades."

"I wish we had a list of attendees and their projects/work during and after the meeting. "

Needs and priorities

Respondents expressed interest in receiving a contact list of individuals who attended the convening and in having an online platform, such as Slack, to facilitate continued connection following the convening. Participants also emphasized the need for future convenings, whether in person or virtually. Finally, participants emphasized the importance of continuing the movement and working toward systemic and measurable change.

Discussion

- Participants, valued unique convening components such as the Wisdom Circle. Their feedback also identified opportunities to improve the convening structure, particularly through more formal networking time.
- **Next Steps:** Creating an attendee contact information list and an online space for interaction.
- **Limitations:** The post-survey did not include demographic questions so reaching out to participants for clarification is not possible. The post-survey had a smaller sample size of 60 respondents, while the pre-survey had 299 respondents.

