

Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council – 2026/27 Membership

The Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council provides advice and recommendations to the City Council and Mayor regarding innovative strategies to Improve the growing, processing, promotion, distribution, consumption, and composting of healthy, sustainable, locally grown foods in Minneapolis.

The board is made up of 25 members: 13 nominated by the City Council, one per ward, 2 nominated by the Mayor, 7 nominated by the Health Department, and 3 appointed by external organizations (Hennepin County, Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board, and Minneapolis Public Schools).

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Amanda Sames, Ward 2

Amanda has a deep commitment to community, sustainability and loves making delicious food and treats to share with loved ones. She started and operated a small, diversified fruit and vegetable farm in southeastern MN from 2010-2020 while also attending graduate school. In 2023 she completed her Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in Conservation Science with minors in anthropology and sustainable agriculture. Her research focused on developing undergraduate sustainable food systems programs and curricula that help students learn to make effective change within unjust systems. She spent a year teaching environmental leadership and food justice courses at Wake Forest University in North Carolina before moving back to Minnesota. Amanda currently manages the student organic farm at Carleton College, a part-time position that sometimes includes teaching courses about food systems, food justice and farming. At home in the Seward neighborhood of Minneapolis, she is active in neighborhood gardening and food access organizing. In May of 2026, Amanda and her partner also became the new owners of Regina's Candies, a 100-year-old candy shop in St. Paul that still makes many of their chocolates, caramels, toffees and brittles from scratch.

Angela Gustafson, Ward 13

Angela Gustafson is a Minneapolis founder and entrepreneur. Her experience building a thriving and profitable CPG food brand ultimately brought her to the Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council. Knowing all too well the vast and critical challenges stemming from our food system, being part of collaborative groups driving for better is a high priority. She and her husband keep active with their work, their four young adult children (including cooking a lot of food!), and run the lakes nearly 365 days a year - to music. They attempt to soak in life, as much as possible.



CurShonda Allen, Ward 11

CurShonda Allen has worked in Minneapolis Public Schools for over 7 years which include Capital Planning and Construction and Bethune Elementary School. She also helped establish and oversees a food shelf in South Minneapolis that has been operating for over six years. CurShonda is a dedicated and community-focused professional with extensive experience in education, administration, project coordination, customer service, and program support. With a B.A. in Organizational Leadership, she is passionate about gathering, organizing, and sharing information to empower individuals and communities. Her strengths include leadership, communication, problem-solving, relationship building, strategic planning, and event coordination. She has a proven record of supporting teams, managing programs and resources, and creating positive community impact through service, collaboration, and meaningful engagement. Outside of work, they enjoy traveling, cooking, and coffee.

Eric Paredes, Ward 13

Eric Paredes is a mission-driven leader with 18+ years of experience spanning strategic planning, operations, financial management, and entrepreneurship. Drawn by a passion for all things food (and beverage), he spent a career leading and launching brands for companies like Land O'Lakes, E. & J. Gallo Winery, and Kraft Foods, and later co-founded a brewery in downtown Minneapolis.

A year and a half ago, Eric made a deliberate pivot to focus his skills and energy on fighting hunger in the Twin Cities community he has called home for sixteen years. He has since volunteered across more than a half-dozen hunger relief organizations, been appointed as a member of the Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council, joined the founding board of The Radish Farm Stop, and completed a GreenCorps placement at Open Cupboard. He now serves as Operations Manager at Southern Anoka Community Assistance (SACA).

Eric is fluent in Spanish and holds a Biology degree from the University of Notre Dame and an MBA from Duke University's Fuqua School of Business.

Jamie Dolynchuk, Ward 6

Jamie is the President of Community Emergency Services (CES), a large food support non-profit located in the Phillips neighborhood. Jamie spent his career working with Cargill before joining CES and is excited to be part of the food council designed to support and improve the food system in Minneapolis.



Jenny Breen, Ward 8

Jenny Breen is a Chef, Educator and Public Health Nutritionist, and has been working at the intersection of human, community and environmental health in the Twin Cities and throughout the country for over 30 years. Jenny teaches 3 classes through the Bakken Center for Spirituality and Healing at the U of M - two are in partnership with an integrative MD and for future and current health professionals, and a third is for undergraduate health and wellbeing students and explore the role of food choices and our complex food system. Through her work in the public health and food justice community, Jenny delivers content and education for community members, educators, leaders and advocates, patients, employees and practitioners. She believes that there is no part of health, healthcare or justice where food isn't relevant. To find out more about Jenny's work, register for classes or contract with Jenny for content creation, training, or speaking, find her at www.transformingthetable.com



Kassy Nystrom, Ward 12 (Hennepin County appointee)

Through community outreach and deep engagement Kassy, alongside community members and colleagues, develops and implements initiatives that address the policies and systems that contribute to health and racial inequities. Projects include: a community food council, the research and publication of a Community Food Assessment, community gardens on public and private multi-unit housing grounds, fruit orchards on city land, connecting a Mobile Grocery Store to areas in need, and the development of the Hennepin County Food Security Plan. Kassy has worked closely with local residents, community-based organizations, health institutions, pantry organizers, city agencies, resident associations, faith-based organizations, businesses and regional farmers in order to build and foster a strong partner network to inform and create best practices. Kassy served on the Governance Board of the Brooklyn Food Coalition for 3 years, was a member of the Food Systems Network NYC, and was a partner of the Lunch 4 Learning Campaign led by Community Food Advocates. Kassy is a Senior Fellow of the Environmental Leadership Program, Eastern Region Network. Kassy holds an M.S. in Urban Planning from Hunter College and a B.S. in Urban Studies and Geography from the University of Minnesota. Her current work positions are Food Security Coordinator for Hennepin County Public Health and Adjunct Professor in the Urban Studies Department at the University of Minnesota.

Kevin Ellis, Ward 12

Kevin Ellis is a Conservation Specialist with Hennepin County Environment and Energy. In that role he assists farmers and residents across the county with solutions to enhance soil health and protect water resources. In the past he has provided assistance to small and beginning farmers as a Sustainable Agriculture Specialist for the National Center for Appropriate Technology and as a member of the Food Policy Council of San Antonio. Kevin has earned graduate degrees in Community and Regional Planning and Sustainable Agriculture from Iowa State University.



Madison Taylor (Minneapolis Public Schools appointee)

Madison is the Farm to School Coordinator at Minneapolis Public Schools, Culinary and Wellness Services. She is dedicated to supporting small and mid-sized farmers navigate Farm to School market opportunities, and ensuring students have access to fresh, local food. Growing up on her family's farm in Southeastern Minnesota, Madison has always had a heart for food, agriculture, and farming. She also has many years of education and work experience in sustainable food systems, across the Twin Cities and Upper Midwest. Madison enjoys sharing the stories of where food comes from and building connections between farmers and local communities.

Natalie Haberman, Ward 9

Natalie Haberman (she/her) works for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as a Planner in the division of Fish and Wildlife where she specializes in public engagement, management planning, and licensing. She also works seasonally at the Mill City Farmer's market from May to October, where she supports their program offerings, including chef demonstrations and Power of Produce. She is passionate about working and volunteering to better local food systems, including expanding food access and skills. Natalie lives in south Minneapolis in the Longfellow neighborhood, where she enjoys gardening, biking, and outdoor adventures.



Rachel Holmes, Ward 8

Rachel Holmes (she/her) is a lifelong Minneapolis resident and Director of Advocacy and Community Engagement at The Food Group. With more than a decade of experience in anti-hunger work, she is passionate about advancing food justice in Minnesota and believes that food is a fundamental human right. Her work is rooted in a deep commitment to her community and in the belief that everyone deserves access to the food and resources they need to thrive.



Rachel Rubin, Ward 7

Rachel Rubin has been working in the food system for over 30 years. Starting in restaurant kitchens and working her way up to Executive Chef positions, then business owner for over 10 years providing seasonal, farm to table menus in any venue. She has worked as an Industry consultant, some of the projects have included bringing local farmers, makers, artisans and foragers and their product to market. In addition, she has supported development and growth in school districts, corporations, small restaurants, food groups, and other retail and wholesale food businesses. As an industry veteran, Rachel now has expanded her focus with the Niche Pantry Project. This connects and encourages everyday residents and business owners to regularly donate unopened, unexpired foods to little free pantries in MN and beyond. Believing that we all have a right to food security and to be treated with dignity and equity, while having a system that has the least food waste possible. Rachel is incredibly excited to be a part of the Mpls Homegrown Food Council to passionately support our local food systems and food accessibility in our community.



Rebecca Gross (Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board)

Becca has worked for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board since 2017, currently as the Community Garden Program Coordinator. Her job takes her all across the city, supporting gardeners growing food in the park system. She enjoys being on the food council to connect with other food system advocates and learn about all the cool work happening in the city around food. In her little bits of free time, Becca enjoys spending time outside with her spouse and two kids, camping, hanging at the beach, and tending to their vegetable garden.



Samantha Roller, Ward 9

Samantha is a food justice advocate and anti-hunger professional based in Minneapolis. After managing her family's farm in Indiana, she went on to serve as Senior Agency Relations Specialist at The Food Group and now manages Joyce Uptown Food Shelf. Drawing on both agricultural and nonprofit experience, she is committed to building a more equitable, sustainable, and community-centered food system in her adopted home. She lives with her wife and cats in South Minneapolis. She is a member of Shir Tikvah synagogue and serves on the Board of Trustees.



Skyler Hawkins, Ward 1

Skyler has been working in urban agriculture for ten years. They began farming on small CSA farms in rural communities, but being from Minneapolis, grew curious about what growing food at scale in a city might look like. Skyler has spent years managing urban farm spaces, and now serves as Farm Director at Urban Roots MN, a youth development non-profit in the Twin Cities. Alongside producing vegetables and fruit for community distribution, their work is centered around creating and stewarding community garden spaces, organizing a pay-what-you-can farmers market and finding ways for youth to connect with, and learn from, each other and elders in their community. Skyler hopes to contribute to creating more space for people living in Minneapolis to grow their own food, and explore pathways for growers to scale up for community distribution.



For reasonable accommodations or alternative formats please contact Homegrown Minneapolis at 612-673-3553 or via email at homegrown@minneapolismn.gov. People who are deaf or hard of hearing can use a relay service to call 311 at 612-673-3000. Para ayuda, llame al 311. Rau kev pab, hu 311. Hadii aad caawimaad u baahantahay, wac 311.