



Candidate Questionnaire for Ohio

Fall 2020

This election season, we invite you to rally for food issues. Food production and access are non-partisan. All candidates need to understand the challenges Ohioans face every day in accessing healthy food as well as those faced by those growing that food.

While farmers and farmers' markets have risen to the challenges posed by a national pandemic and disruptions in the global food supply chain and adapted their operations to feed Ohio families, those adaptations are not sustainable without state and federal leadership. Investment is needed to increase the resilience and stability of the food system.

In July 2020, [OEFFA](#), the [Ohio Farmers Market Network](#), [Produce Perks Midwest](#), and the [Ohio Food Policy Network](#) released a report, [Opportunity in a Time of Crisis: Recommendations for Building a More Resilient Ohio Food System](#). Please take a moment to read the full report and join us in calling for action today.

Building on the recommendations in the report, we encourage you to use this candidate questionnaire to hold your candidates accountable and ask them to communicate their vision for your community. Questions can be asked during public candidate forums, through social media, and by calling or emailing the candidates' campaign teams.

W.E. R.I.S.E

Communicating with candidates running for public office can feel intimidating. There are so many forms of communication, it's difficult to know what works best. The answer is almost always whichever form of communication feels most comfortable to you.

Whatever form(s) of communication you choose, be sure to let them know who you are and that you are planning to vote. Then, tell them about what food issues are most important to you. Still wondering how to connect with your representatives? Remember the acronym, W.E. R.I.S.E. - Write, Events, Research, In-person (or virtually!), Social Media, Echo Effect.

We have compiled 7 questions specifically in the areas of **Climate Change, Food Access, and Local Food System Strategies** to ask our candidates. Consider posing a few (or all!) of the following questions to your candidates. After you do, let us know! We would love to hear about your experience. You can tag any of our organizations on social media or reach out to us directly by email.

Need help finding your candidates?

Finding your candidates' schedules can be difficult! Check out your candidates' websites and Facebook pages for their latest news or call their office if necessary. Other helpful resources are: [County Boards of Elections](#); [County Democratic Party Events page](#); and [County Republican Party Events page](#).

Have a question about voting in Ohio? [Visit the Ohio Secretary of State website today!](#)

Thank you for participating in the democratic process with us!



CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is impacting Ohio food producers and the resilience of our food system. Our state is experiencing a greater number of extreme weather events and longer periods of drought that threaten the viability of agricultural businesses and our ability to feed ourselves.

Question 1: Do you support state investments for soil health to help farmers adapt to a changing climate?

Question 2: What policies or programs do you support that will (1) mitigate the ongoing effects of climate change on our food system, (2) materially support those most impacted by this climate crisis, and (3) transition Ohio's agricultural sector toward a zero emissions model?

FOOD ACCESS

Diet-related chronic disease is a crisis that affects people across demographics, but disproportionately affects certain groups such as Black Americans, Latinx, and Native Americans. Many of our neighbors - kids and adults - suffer from poor nutrition.

Question 1: What policies will you change or stand behind to improve these conditions?

Question 2: One shortcoming to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are the limitations on how and where SNAP dollars can be spent. How will you support building out the infrastructure needed to allow farmers, farmers markets and small retailers to accept online SNAP orders? Do you propose additional changes to SNAP or other support programs, such as nutrition incentives?

LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM STRATEGIES

98% of Ohioans believe it is important for state and local governments to develop local food systems throughout the state.

Question 1: Given this statistic, what will you do to encourage this development?

Question 2: Should we prioritize policies to increase land access to beginning farmers and protect our future food security? What policies or programs do you support regarding land access?

Question 3: Food processing infrastructure can bolster the resilience of the Ohio food system, create jobs and builds wealth in local communities. Yet the lack of meat processing and vegetable packaging facilities in our state has been identified by local food advocates for over a decade. How would you support the investment in Ohio's food processing facilities?

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The Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA), the Ohio Farmers Market Network (OFMN), Produce Perks Midwest, and the Ohio Food Policy Network (OFPN) are nonpartisan organizations and do not endorse or oppose any candidate. For more information about any of the organizations, please contact:

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This guide was adapted from Local Matters' 2020 election guide for Central Ohio.