

Eat Greater Des Moines, one of seventeen regional work groups throughout Iowa now has a Local Food System Coordinator. The new position is currently housed under the Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC). Eat Greater Des Moines is funded by the Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC), the United Way of Central Iowa, and Hormel Foods through a Healthy Communities grant. The coordinator position is complemented by a new Director position for the Eat Greater Des Moines Food System Council. Both of these positions grew out of the need to have paid positions focusing on local and regional food system work. Previously, food system-related work was accomplished on a piecemeal (mostly volunteer) basis by individuals working other positions. The focus of these new positions is to support the food system by highlighting existing work, building connections and collaboration within the system, and measuring results in getting more healthy food to Iowans. The geographic focus is primarily Polk and surrounding counties. Initial priorities include: 1. meeting and learning from individuals involved in the food system including challenges and 2. identifying opportunities for action that will improve gaps within the system. An overall food system plan will then be developed to outline goals of Eat Greater Des Moines within the food system building on the interconnectedness with organizations and individuals. Measurements documenting progress will also be included.

The individuals who work in the new positions are Linda Gobberdiel, MA RD LD as Coordinator, and Aubrey Martinez, MPA as Director. Linda has been involved in food system-related work for the past four years. She is a registered dietitian and has served most recently on the Iowa Food Systems Council Board of Directors. She co-convened the Eat Greater Des Moines Food System Working Group and the Healthy Polk 2020 Food Stakeholder group. Linda is an avid gardener and member of the Iowa Food Coop as well as the Wallace Center CSA. She enjoys cooking, traveling, and biking with her husband, and has two grown sons living in Chicago.

Aubrey is a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa (bachelor of arts in health promotion) and Drake University (masters in public administration). Prior to her work with DMARC, Aubrey worked at the United Way of Central Iowa, The Health and Wellness Institute, ITA Group and The Principal Financial Group. With a background in health promotion but a love for strategic connections and collaboration, her role as Director for the Eat Greater Des Moines Food System Council is a dream job! Within her position she is working to build successful connections within the local food system to bridge gaps within sectors, resulting in a sustainable and economically viable food system for all. When she is not meeting with individuals, groups or organizations involved in a segment of the food system, Aubrey teaches group fitness classes with the YMCA of Greater Des Moines and is a mentor through Mentor Iowa.