

# Fifty Years of Food Activism in New York City: Lessons for City and State Food Politics and Policy



## About the Guest Speakers and Moderator



**Johanna Fernández** teaches 20th-Century U.S. History and the history of social movements in the Department of History at Baruch College of the City University of New York. Dr. Fernández is author of a

history of the Young Lords titled, *The Young Lords A Radical History* (University of North Carolina Press, 2019). In her capacity as an historian Professor Fernández filed a lawsuit against the NYPD in 2014, for its failure to release to her surveillance records of the Young Lords. In June 2016, her suit led to the recovery of the "lost" Handschu files, the largest repository of police surveillance records of New York activists, dating back to 1905. In 2015, the exhibition project she co-curated, *¡Presente! The Young Lords in New York* was cited by the New York Times as one of the Top 10, Best In Art of that year. Fernández has received numerous awards, including the Fulbright Scholars grant to the Middle East and the National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship of the Scholars-in-Residence program at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture of the New York Public Library. Professor Fernández is the editor of *Writing on the Wall: Selected Prison Writings of Mumia Abu-Jamal* (City Lights, 2015). With Mumia Abu-Jamal she co-edited a special issue of the journal *Socialism and Democracy*, titled *The Roots of Mass Incarceration in the US: Locking Up Black Dissidents and Punishing the Poor* (Routledge, 2014). She is the writer and producer of the film, *Justice on Trial: the Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal* (Big Noise Films, 2010).



**Liz Accles** brings a 30-year career in pursuit of social and economic justice to her role as the Executive Director of CFA, with advocacy leadership at the city, state, and national levels. Liz was educated in

NYC public schools and is a graduate of Brooklyn College. She lives with her wife and two dogs in Maplewood, NJ.



**Iyeshima Harris-Ouedraogo's** journey into food justice began over a decade ago, drawing strength from her farming community as she navigated cultural assimilation from Jamaica. Her work spans

teaching food justice, advocating for free school lunches, and empowering youth through leadership roles in adult spaces. As the Policy Manager for Equity Advocates, she leads on policy goals, campaign strategies, and educational workshops, emphasizing youth organizing. Her prior roles include impactful positions at East New York Farms! and co-founding the Youth Empowerment Pipeline, all reflecting her commitment to nurturing future leaders in food justice. Additionally, Iyeshima's involvement with various boards and task forces, including BK ROT and the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, showcases her dedication to environmental education and food sovereignty, underscored by her recognition as one of the EE 30 Under 30 leaders. With a foundation in Political Science & Sociology and ongoing studies in Public Administration, she aims to merge her passion for food justice with policy expertise to highlight the significance of food in everyday lives.



**Ligia M. Gualpa**, the daughter of a former day laborer and garment worker, is the Executive Director and Co-Founder of Workers Justice Project (WJP), a community-based building, workers' rights

organization that is winning better working conditions for low-wage immigrant workers. At WJP, Ms. Gualpa has spearheaded efforts to ensure safe and dignified jobs for NYC's 2,000-day laborers, construction workers, and domestic workers. Through her leadership, WJP played a key role in the creation of two Brooklyn-based worker centers, a new union, Laborers' Local 10 and alternative economic models to transform the culture of exploitation by enforcing higher wages and safety standards for construction and domestic workers who live and work in New York City. Ms. Gualpa's work has been covered on Univision and in publications like The Nation, New York Daily News, and The New York Times.

# Fifty Years of Food Activism in New York City: Lessons for City and State Food Politics and Policy



## Moderator



**Nicholas Freudenberg** is a Founding Director and Senior Faculty Fellow with the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute, and Distinguished Professor of Public Health at the CUNY Graduate School of Public Health & Health Policy. His research and scholarship focus on diet-related chronic diseases, urban health, the evaluation of complex urban interventions, and the role of the food industry in health and disease. For 30 years he has assisted NYC organizations to plan, implement, and evaluate policies, programs, and advocacy campaigns to improve community health and reduce health inequities, and he was the co-founder, with Janet Poppendieck, of the NYC Food Policy Center at Hunter College.

## About the forum:

For more than 50 years, activists in New York City have been fighting to end hunger, increase access to healthy affordable food, improve the pay and working conditions of food workers, reduce food-related pollution and climate change, end food apartheid, and improve school and other institutional food. As New York prepares for city elections in 2025 and state elections in 2026, this panel will discuss what have food activists have learned about how to influence the policies, politics and budgets that shape our food system.

## Additional Resources:

**Fernández, J.** (2019). *The Young Lords: A Radical History*. UNC Press Books.

**Fernández, J.** (2003). Between social service reform and revolutionary politics: The Young Lords, late sixties radicalism, and community organizing in New York City. In *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940–1980* (pp. 255-285). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.

**Fernández sued the NYPD** for its refusal to release surveillance records and won: *The New York Times*, (2016) “*Old New York Police Surveillance Is Found, Forcing Big Brother out of Hiding.*”; Press Release: [Brown University acquires](#) the papers of Mumia Abu-Jamal through **Johanna Fernández** -- NYT coverage [here](#)

Abu-Jamal, M., & **Fernández, J.** (2014). Locking Up Black Dissidents and Punishing the Poor: The Roots of Mass Incarceration in the US. *Socialism and Democracy*, 28(3), 1-14.

**Worker's Justice Project**, <https://www.workersjustice.org/>

**Los Deliveristas Unidos**,  
<https://www.workersjustice.org/en/ldu>

**The Worker's Justice Project** (2024) *Delivering Justice: A Worker Justice Centered Vision for Street Safety*. Read the report [here](#).

Maria Figueroa, **Ligia Gualpa**, Andrew Wolf, Glendy Tsitouras, and Hildalyn Colón Hernández (2021). *Essential but Unprotected: App-based Food Couriers in New York City*, Worker's Justice Project, Read the report [here](#).

**Community Food Advocates**, <https://www.foodadvocates.org/>

Watts, A., Araiza, A.L., Fernández, C.R., Rosenthal, L., Vargas-Rodriguez, I., Duroseau, N., **Accles, L.** and Rieder, J. (2021). The campaign for universal free lunch in New York City: lessons learned. *Pediatrics*, 148(4).

**Community Food Advocates**, [Healthy School Meals for All \(HSMFA\) campaign](#).

**NY Food Policy Alliance** (2020). *New York City 10-Year Food Policy Plan* [Recommendations](#).

**Equity Advocates**, *Increase the SNAP Minimum Benefit In the FY25 State Budget*: [Background](#), Council Member Gayle Brewer's [support letter](#), Sign the [petition](#).

**NY Food Policy Alliance** (2023). *NY Food Policy Alliance: FY25 NYC Budget Priorities*, [Budget Platform](#)

**Freudenberg N**, McDonough J, Tsui E. Can a food justice movement improve nutrition and health? A case study of the emerging food movement in New York City. *Journal of Urban Health*. 2011 Aug;88:623-36. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3157506/>

**Freudenberg N**, Atkinson S. Getting food policy on the Mayoral table: a comparison of two election cycles in New York and London. *Public Health*. 2015 Apr 1;129(4):295-302. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0033350615000670>

**Freudenberg N**, Silver M, Hirsch L, Cohen N. The good food jobs nexus: A strategy for promoting health, employment, and economic development. CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute, 2016. [https://academicworks.cuny.edu/sph\\_pubs/269/](https://academicworks.cuny.edu/sph_pubs/269/)

**Freudenberg N**, Cohen N, Poppendieck J, Willingham C. Ten years of food policy governance in New York City: lessons for the next decade. *Fordham Urb. LJ*. 2017;45:951. <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2739&context=ulj>

**Freudenberg N**, Nestle M. A call for a national agenda for a healthy, equitable, and sustainable food system. *American journal of public health*. 2020 Nov;110(11):1671-3. <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.20.20.305926>