

Racism and Food Access Culture Discussion Series

Speaker Biographies

Part 1: *One Bad Apple: How the Lack of Knowledge About Black and Indigenous Food Histories Informs our Nutrition Work*

Speaker

Dr. Psyche Williams-Forson



Dr. Psyche Williams-Forson is Professor and Chair of the Department of American Studies at the University of Maryland College Park. She is an affiliate faculty member of the Theatre, Dance, and Performing Studies, the Departments of African American Studies, Anthropology, The Harriet Tubman Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and the Consortium on Race, Gender, and Ethnicity. Dr. Williams-Forson is the author of *Eating While Black: Food Shaming and Race in America* (UNC Press 2022); *Taking Food Public: Redefining Food in a Changing World*, a co-edited collection w/Carole Counihan, (Routledge 2013); and, the award-winning *Building Houses out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power* (UNC Press 2006). She is known nationally and internationally for

her pioneering work in building the scholarly subfield of Black food studies and has published articles numerous on this aspect of the material lives of African Americans in the United States from the late 19th century to the present. This includes topics like Black women, food, and power; food and literature; food and sustainability; race, food, and design thinking; eating and workplace cultures; as well as the historical legacies of race and gender (mis)representation, with (and without) food, and more. She has also been interviewed on several podcasts, NPR, Radio New Zealand, the Associated Press, the Washington Post, Huff Post, the New York Times, among others. She has also been featured in documentaries such as: Netflix's *Ugly Delicious*; and, *The Invisible Vegan*.

Access Dr. Psyche Williams-Forson's Biography [Here](#)

Part 2: Eating with Our Neighbors: How to Identify Injustices and Create Change in Food and Nutrition Programs

Moderator

Dr. Angela Odoms-Young



Angela Odoms-Young, PhD (she/her/hers) is an Associate Professor and Director of the Food and Nutrition Education in Communities Program (FNEC) and New York State Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). In 2021 she joined the Cornell faculty after spending 13 years at University of Illinois at Chicago in the Department of Kinesiology and Nutrition.

Dr. Odoms-Young's research explores the social and structural determinants of dietary behaviors and related health outcomes in low-income populations and black, Indigenous and people of color. Her work also centers on developing culturally responsive programs and policies that promote health equity, food justice, and community resilience.

She has served on numerous advisory committees and boards, including the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) Food and Nutrition Board and committees to develop the nutrition standards for the National School Lunch Program/School Breakfast Program and to revise the food packages provided in the Supplemental Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). She has also been the recipient of awards including the Mary C. Egan and Excellence in Dietary Guidance Award from the American Public Health Association Food and Nutrition Section and the Excalibur Award for Teaching Excellence in the College of Applied Health Sciences, University of Illinois at Chicago.

Access Dr. Angela Odoms-Young's Biography [Here](#)

Panelists

Jennifer Falck



Jen Falck is an Oneida Nation tribal member. Jen's areas of expertise include; food safety, Tribal food sovereignty, food policy, developing legislation, and small scale farming. She has a BS in Natural Resource Management and a Master's in Public Administration. Her family operates a small farmstead on the Oneida Nation Reservation. Jen is a member of Ohelaku, a family based cooperative that grows traditional Oneida white corn. Jen works for the Menominee Tribe's Department of Agriculture & Food Systems, where she works on several food sovereignty efforts including the Wisconsin Tribal Elder Food Box Program and the USDA's Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations 638 pilot project. Both these projects provide culturally appropriate and nutritious foods to tribal members while supporting indigenous and local food producers.

Dr. Saria Lofton



Dr. Saria Lofton is a health disparities nurse researcher at the University of Illinois at Chicago in the College of Nursing. She is deeply committed to research focused on health promotion in the Black community, locally and internationally. Dr. Lofton uses a community based participatory research approach to identify and leverage community assets while building local capacities. Her work has recently focused on understanding local food environments as essential in addressing chronic disease risk inequities for Black American youth and adults. Dr. Lofton has received internal funding to investigate urban agriculture in Black communities through the lens of community gardeners and farmers throughout Chicago. She has also received external funding through the NIH National Institute of Nursing Research to examine community-level factors that influence HIV risk behaviors in Malawi youth. In her current research project, funded by the Center of Health Equity

Chicago, Dr. Lofton builds upon the work she conducted with urban growers in urban agriculture. Dr. Lofton will be conducting formative research on building capacity for community-based food systems while utilizing a food sovereignty framework to improve access to healthy foods for residents of chronically underserved predominately Black communities. Dr. Lofton's long term research interests involve developing a multi-level, multi-component food system intervention that will address food insecurity inequities in the Black population and increase the dietary intake of fruits and vegetables of Black American residents living in predominately Black communities.

Access Dr. Saria Lofton's Biography [Here](#)

Sandra Botello



Sandra Botello is currently working as a business administrator and caregiver for MKM Caregivers. She is a recent Public Policy Graduate ('21) from the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC). In 2017, Sandra graduated from the University of St. Mary of the Lake, , del "Instituto de Liderazgo Pastoral: Ministerio Laico" as a Leader in Lay Ministry. Sandra is part of the St. Josephine Bakhita Social Justice Committee, the Evangelization Team, Women's Club, Knights of Peter Claver Ladies Auxiliary, and Lector. She is a Certified Domestic Violence Advocate and Interpreter (Spanish/English) helping men, women and families find emergency resources. Sandra has almost 30 years' experience as a recipient user, case worker and volunteer of various U.S. food pantries, soup kitchens, and SNAP benefit (food stamps)

services. For fun, Sandra is an aspiring mariachi vocalist and musician. In saving the best for last, she is a proud single mother of 4 excellent young adults and grandmother to 2 wonderful grandchildren.