

MARIA M. MUÑOZ

New Orleans, LA

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EDUCATION

PhD, Tulane University Celia S. Weatherhead School of Public Health (WSPH) 2023 – Exp. 2027
Tulane University, New Orleans, LA
Department: Social and Behavioral Population Sciences

M.S. in Disaster Resilience Leadership, School of Social Work 2017
Tulane University, New Orleans, LA
Interdisciplinary courses: Environment & Infrastructure, Economy & Business, Human & Social, Operations & Policy, and Program Measurement & Evaluation

BLA in Landscape Architecture, Minors in Human Geography, Spanish, and French 2011 – 2016
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA
Capstone: Food as a Political Tool: Concealed Independence

RESEARCH AREAS

- Food Systems and Nutrition
- Built Environment
- Community-based Health
- Emergency-related food and nutrition
- Climate Adaptation Strategies
- Disaster-vulnerable Populations

SKILLS & QUALIFICATIONS

Native/Bilingual Fluency in **Spanish**, Limited Working Proficiency in **Portuguese & French**

RESEARCH & PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

2023 - **Research Assistant**, WSPH, New Orleans, LA

Present *Research Areas: Community-based Health, Food Systems and Nutrition, Built Environment, Emergency-related food and nutrition, Climate Adaptation Strategies*

- Over a two-year NIH-funded project, applied design thinking and systems approaches to co-develop incentive-based policy interventions that enhanced the local food environment by promoting nutrition security and economic sustainability in Black- and Latinx-owned restaurants. Facilitated multi-stakeholder workshops that built collaboration between restaurants, local food producers, and community members, ensuring strategies were grounded in lived experience.
- Designed and co-produced a 20-page graphic community report and policy-recommendation document, translating workshop findings into actionable strategies that integrated food systems, equity, and the built environment for diverse stakeholder audiences.
- Applied systems thinking and design visualization by leading qualitative analysis and developing a causal loop diagram to map dynamic factors influencing restaurant participation in healthy eating initiatives (manuscript in preparation).
- Contributed to the New Orleans Healthy Default Beverage Policy Evaluation, applying spatial and quantitative regression methods to examine the relationship between neighborhood characteristics and menu healthfulness (publication in review).
- Designed and co-facilitated the Design Dialogue: Exploring Green Infrastructure symposium, convening multidisciplinary stakeholders to examine intersections of green infrastructure, climate resilience, and community food systems.
- Conducted comparative content analysis of disaster preparedness plans across six hurricane-affected U.S. states and territories (Florida, Texas, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands), identifying strengths and gaps in addressing food security during climate-

- related disasters (published manuscript).
 - Collaborating on a scoping review of local food procurement policies and their influence on health and nutrition outcomes; responsible for data extraction, mixed-methods appraisal (MMAT), and manuscript development.
- 2017 – **Designer & Planner**, Living Habitats LLC, Chicago, IL
- 2022 *Research Areas: Built Environment, Community-based Health, Climate Adaptation Policies*
- Led research, design, and assembly of a 200+ page peer-reviewed design publication showcasing 30% development for the world’s largest wildlife crossing in Agoura Hills, CA.
 - Created graphics to visually communicate a multidisciplinary design approach, disturbance mitigation strategies, and ecological priorities for a wildlife crossing project.
 - Managed a multi-disciplinary team to create a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for a wildlife project, utilizing design thinking frameworks to guide research progress.
 - Led community-engaged design and construction planning for a 12-acre resilience park in Robbins, IL, integrating resident input into site design, stormwater infrastructure, and park amenities to advance equitable, non-displacing redevelopment.
 - Co-directed research and design of a chapter in [“Reinforcing Ecology”](#) report for the Obama Presidential Center, illustrating efforts to combat childhood obesity and promote pollinator species awareness.
 - Led participatory research using human-centered design to develop program interventions addressing health equity in a neighborhood park in Eggers Grove, IL.
- 2017 **Awardee**, Changemaker Catalyst Award, Taylor Center, Tulane University
Research Areas: Food Security & Nutrition, Community-based Health, Disaster-vulnerable populations
- Conducted ethnographic mapping, archival research, and participant observations to study the impact of post-colonial contexts on cultural identities and socio-economic-political systems in the Caribbean.
- 2015 - **National Olmsted Scholar, Landscape Architecture Foundation**
- 2016 ***Food as a Political Tool: Concealed Independence (undergraduate capstone)***
Research Areas: Emergency-related Food Security & Nutrition, Puerto Rico, Community-based Health, Climate Adaptation Policies, Food Environment
- Managed a \$15,000 research grant, allocating funds for project planning, site visits, milestone check-ins, and recruitment of a 3-member advisory team overseeing data collection and evaluation.
 - Examined the root causes of food dependency in Puerto Rico and assessed the United States' political and social influence on food sovereignty within the island.
 - Researched community influences on food habitats, agricultural practices, and grassroots organizations to promote long-term food sovereignty objectives.
 - Conducted interviews, ethnographic research, and utilized visual representations to synthesize complex data and visualize patterns in local food market conditions.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Tulane University, New Orleans, LA

Teaching Assistant (TA), SPHU 8400: Implementing Evidence Based Public Health
In-person course, 3 credits | Undergraduate, 25 students across departments

Fall 2025

TA, SBPS 8400: Public Health Grant Writing <i>Online course, 3 credits PhD, 20 students across departments</i>	Fall 2025
TA, SBPS 6610: Local Food Systems & Nutrition <i>In-person course, 3 credits Masters, 4 students</i>	Spr 2025
TA, SBPS 8820: Advance Program Planning & Grant Writing <i>Online course, 3 credits DrPH, 22 students</i>	Spr & Sum 2025
TA, SPHL 7950: Integrated Learning Experience <i>Online course, 3 credits Masters, 25 students</i>	Spr 2025

Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA

Adjunct Instructor, LA 2001: Landscape Studio Design I <i>Hybrid course, 6 credits Undergraduate, 27 students</i>	Spr 2022
Capstone Advisor, LA 5002: Landscape Design VIII: Capstone Project <i>Undergraduate, 2 students</i>	Spr 2022

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

2025	Guest Lecture, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA Course: EVST 3010 Food System Leadership, +/- 20 undergraduate students Title: Rethinking Puerto Rico's Food System: Challenges, Opportunities, and Policy Directions
2025	TA Lecture, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA Course: SBPS 6610 Local Food Systems and Nutrition, 5 grad students Title: <i>Food Insecurity and Inequity in Food Access</i>
2024	Guest Lecture, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN Course: LA 4760 Professional Practice of Landscape Architecture, +/- 10 undergraduate students Title: <i>Using the skills of Landscape Architecture across Disciplines</i>
2024	Guest Lecture, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA Course: SPHL 8080 Pedagogy, +/- 20 grad students Title: <i>The Power of an Infographic in Public Health, Things to Consider for Disseminating Research</i>
2024	Guest Lecture, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA Course: SBPS 6700 Social Innovation Tools, +/- 20 grad students Title: <i>Using Human Centered Design Techniques for Community Engagement</i>

PUBLICATIONS

- Fuster, M., Wang, Y., Stoecker, C., **Muñoz, MM.**, Rose, D., Knapp, M., Hofmann, L.. "Impact of the New Orleans healthy default beverage ordinance." (Manuscript in review, JAMA Network)
- Knapp, MK; **Muñoz, MM**; Wang, Y; Stoecker, C; Hofmann, L; Fuster, M, "Mapping Disparities in Children's Menu Offerings in Restaurant Consumer Nutrition Environments." (Manuscript in review, Journal of Urban Health)
- M Fuster, Y Wang, C Stoecker, **MM Muñoz**, D Rose, L Hofmann, M Knapp, "Effect of New Orleans' Healthy Default Beverage Ordinance on Children's Drink Orders, Sugar Intake, and Calories" American Public Health Association Annual Meeting (November 5, 2025, Washington, DC).
- **Muñoz MM**, Gartner DJ, Hassan S, Fuster M. Food Security Dimensions in US Disaster Plans: A Comparative Analysis of States and Territories. *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*. 2025;19:e107. doi:10.1017/dmp.2025.98

- Living Habitats LLC. (2020). Pollinators. In Living Habitats LLC (Ed.), *Obama Presidential Center: Reinforcing Landscape Ecology* (pp. 68-93). <https://www.obama.org/stories/park-before-after/>

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- **Muñoz, M.**, “Methods for Mapping Social Networks: Strengthening Resilient Food Systems in Puerto Rico,” Stone Center Summer Graduates Symposium, New Orleans, LA, October 12, 2024. (Oral Presentation)
- **Muñoz, M.**, Gartner, D., Hassan, S., and Fuster, M. “Climate-Induced Disasters, Policy, and the Right to Food: A comparative examination of disaster preparedness plans in selected US States and Territories,” Association for the Study of Food and Society and Agriculture Food and Human Values Society, Syracuse, NY, May 31-June 3, 2024. (Oral presentation)
- **Muñoz, M.**, Gartner, D., Hassan, S., and Fuster, M. “Climate-Induced Disasters, Food Security, and Policy Effectiveness in the United States and Territories: A comparative examination of disaster preparedness plans,” International Society of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity, Omaha, Nebraska, May 20-24, 2024. (Oral presentation, *Award Nominee*)
- **Muñoz, M.**, Gartner, D., Hassan, S., and Fuster, M. “Disaster Preparedness for Food Security: A Comparative Review of Plans in Hurricane-Impacted US Territories and States,” Tulane Research, Innovation, and Creativity Summit (TRICS), New Orleans, Louisiana, April 24, 2024. (*Poster Presentation Runner Up for the Bywater Institute Prize*)
- **Muñoz, M.**, “Food as a Political Tool: Concealed Independence,” ASLA Annual Conference, Chicago, IL, October 21-24, 2016.

MEDIA COVERAGE

- 2015 Katsma, K. (2015). PRODUCE ISLE. *Landscape Architecture*, 105(9), 192–192.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/44796798>
 Undergraduate capstone highlight and interview published in Landscape Architecture Magazine.

PROFESSIONAL TRAININGS

- 2024 Systems Science for Social Impact Summer Training Institute, Washington University in St. Louis, Brown School
- 2024 Modelers and Storytellers: Transdisciplinary Training to Advance Community Health Intervention Research, UCLA, Fielding School of Public Health