Doing Food Policy Councils Right:

A Guide to Development and Action

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Introduction

Food is always in the news: from the latest facts and figures on obesity, diabetes, and other health problems related to diet, to the call for more locally grown produce in schools. From the power of agribusiness and the threats of factory farming to the water, soil, and public health, to the desire to preserve small farms, for both their economic and environmental benefits. And then there are older, persistent themes, about school kids and the elderly and the poor who simply can't afford enough to eat—or at least not the kind of food that will keep them healthy.

Along with these reports comes a flurry of new buzzwords and jargon: *locavore*, *slow food*, *Frankenfood*, *sustainability*, *food hub, food systems*, *food security*, and *food sovereignty*. Your reading this manual means you already have a strong interest in food and are probably familiar with most of these concepts. But there's one more phrase that's particularly important for you: food policy. Reading this means you want to help shape food policy at some level, or may already be involved in the process.

Broadly defined, food policy is a set of collective decisions made by governments at all levels, businesses, and organizations that affect how food gets from the farm to your table. A food policy can be as broad as a federal regulation on food labeling or as local and specific as a zoning law that lets city dwellers raise honeybees.

The First Food Policy Council

It all started with Professor Robert Wilson and a handful of his students at the University of Tennessee Graduate School of Planning. In 1977, Wilson and his team studied how well the city of Knoxville provided affordable, nutritious food to all its residents. The answer: not well at all. The city was losing farmland, diet-related disease was on the rise, and hunger was spreading among lower-income residents. City residents working on food insecurity saw the report's connections to its efforts and convened a team of community leaders to convince the city government to create the **Knoxville Food Policy Council** (FPC) in 1982.[1] Although it lacked regulatory power, the council's work led to such achievements as free or low-cost breakfasts for low-income students and the expansion of public transit to accommodate improved access to grocery stores. Renamed the Knoxville-Knox County FPC in 2002, to reflect an increased geographic scope, the council is still going strong, stressing the importance of locally grown food for the region's economy.

Starting more than 30 years ago, some academic experts and food activists began to see that the food system was touching more and more parts of our lives. Environmental issues, public health, issues of social and economic justice, and other concerns were all tied up with this mammoth system, one with huge economic importance. The production of agricultural goods added $331 billion to the U.S. economy in 2009, and hundreds of billions more came from processing, distributing and marketing those products.

The other side of the economic coin is the cost to treat the health issues that arise when people don't eat well. In 2012, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced that by 2030 obesity rates in the United States are expected to jump to 42 percent, from today's 34 percent. With the rise in obesity comes a staggering price to treat obesity-related illnesses: an estimated $550 billion each year.

Food experts and activists realized that a vast food system generated many policies, and for the most part, the average citizen didn't have much of a role in shaping them. One way to address this lack of participation was by creating food policy councils, to bring together all stakeholders in a community food system and give them a say in constructing a system that reflected their values.

Today's food policy councils come in different sizes and sometimes address different issues. But at heart they reflect the idea of food democracy—a term coined by Professor Tim Lang during the 1990s.[2] To him, food democracy means "the long process of striving for improvements in food for all not the few." Achieving that goal means bringing the bulk of society to work together to ensure there's enough affordable, easily accessible, and nutritious food for everyone. That concept is sometimes called food security, and Lang also linked it to economic and social justice for the people who raise, process, distribute, and sell our food.[2]

It might seem like a daunting task, challenging the interests that support the food system status quo. And promoting concepts such as food democracy and social justice might feel like a hard sell in your community. But at its core, the work of a food policy council addresses something basic, something we can all relate to—our need for food that nourishes us.

Your local council doesn't have to take on the most controversial food issues—and probably shouldn't. But it can work to make sure farmers' markets thrive in your community, or that your state addresses the notion of farmland preservation. This manual outlines some of the tools you can use to create and sustain your own effective food policy council and to take steps toward that goal of food security for all.

Food Systems, Food Security

In the literature about food policy, you'll often come across the term *food systems*. It's a good term to know and understand, though it's sometimes better to frame food-policy concepts in terms the general public can easily grasp. For example, instead of talking about the details of food security, you can use something like this phrasing from the World Bank to get at the core of the concept: "Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life."[3]
A food system, no matter its size, encompasses five sectors:

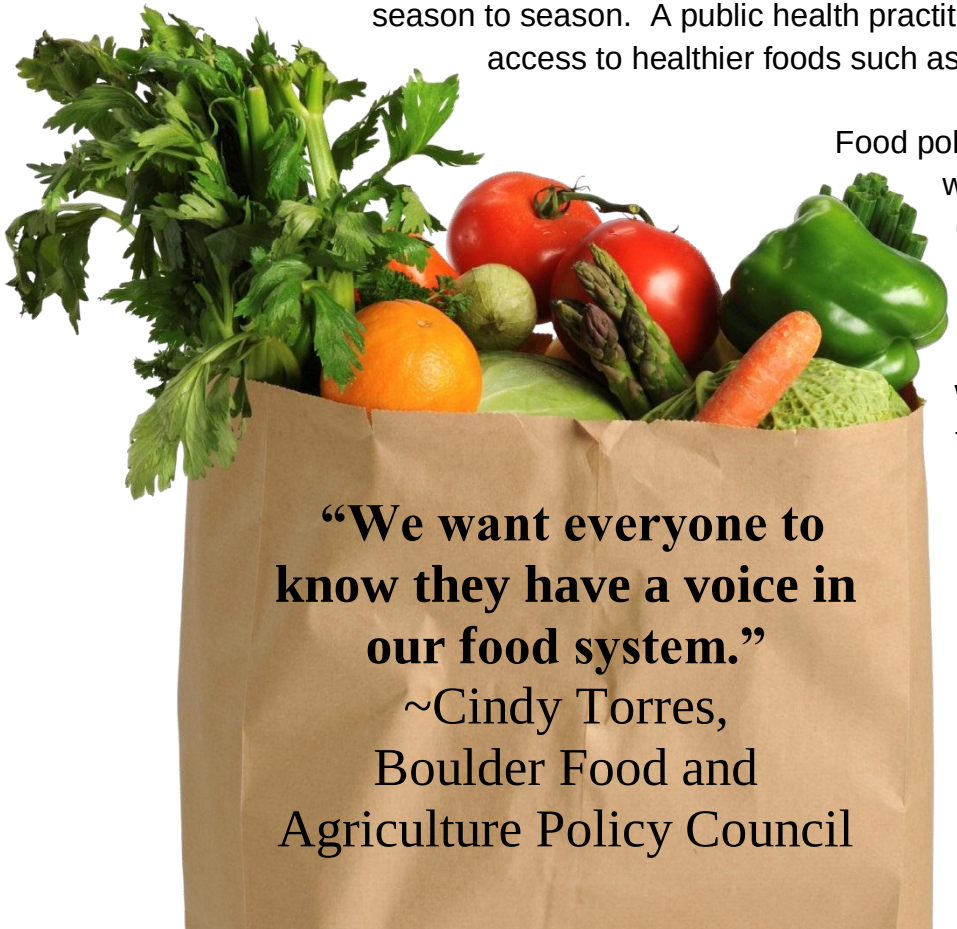
- how and where food is grown
- the processing of food
- the distribution of food
- food consumption
- what happens to the waste created by the other four processes.[4]

You can look at food systems on a global level or zero in on a household food system. Food policy councils, however, are usually focused on community food systems (town, county, region), with some issues reaching up to the state and—to a lesser degree—federal levels.

Chapter One: Some Why's and What's of Food Policy Councils

You are interested in starting a food policy council in your community. When approaching others, you will need to understand and capitalize on their interests. Why should they engage in an FPC?

The answers to that, of course, are varied. Some individuals come to see the need for a food policy council in their community for a specific, personal reason. Parents may have an interest in teaching their children where food comes from—or want food to be as fresh and nutritious as possible. Farmers may be wondering if they will make ends meet from season to season. A public health practitioner may want to promote policies and programs that improve access to healthier foods such as fruits and vegetables.



"We want everyone to know they have a voice in our food system."
~Cindy Torres,
Boulder Food and
Agriculture Policy Council

Food policy councils reflect the diverse interests and needs of the people who meet under their umbrellas. They also reflect a food system comprised of many components. Because of the scope of the system and the variety of stakeholders, FPCs can sometimes face a daunting task: finding consensus on sticky issues. But that's their goal, and another answer to "Why an FPC?" Working together, council members and the public can pinpoint the most pressing food needs for their community and propose—or take—effective action.

By drawing on the knowledge and experience of people from all segments of the local food system, an FPC becomes a source of information for the policy makers in government. A council can also help government agencies see how their actions affect the food system. For example, people working at a local department of education might not see that decisions they make about where to buy food for schools is directly related to local land-use/farming issues.

No state or city has a "Department of Food," but a food policy council can take on the essence of that role. It can look for those areas among government agencies where food issues intersect. FPCs can also be a bridge between the public and private sectors on food issues. And they can be a primary source of food education for the citizens at large, addressing such topics as:

- nutrition
- food-related health issues
- sustainable farming
- equitable access to healthy food
- economic development related to food.

Another good answer for why food policy councils are important: FPCs foster communication and civic action at the grassroots. They're a chance for people to shape, from the bottom up, the nature of a system that can seem distant and bewildering, even as it affects so much of their lives. Achieving food democracy and social justice is a key part of any food policy council's mission.

Building Consensus in Boulder

The early days of the Boulder County, Colorado, Food and Agriculture Policy Council saw at least one contentious meeting. The members were forging a strategic plan to boost the production and distribution of local food, and one member felt somewhat estranged from the statement taking shape. Council chair Cindy Torres tried to calm the situation by reminding everyone that reaching consensus on such complex issues was not easy—but still desirable. "We want everyone to know they have a voice in our food system," Torres later said. "At first we only had a collection of special interests. But now we have a vision that everyone can share and work for."

What's in a Name?

Throughout this manual, you'll see that different communities give their food policy councils different names. Some reflect the combining of different geographic regions, as in the Knoxville-Knox County council mentioned earlier. Some groups add agriculture, nutrition, or fitness to their policy scope. Others aren't called policy councils at all; they're advisory councils or task forces or alliances. But whatever their name, these groups carry out the essential work of a food policy council: to use the political process to shape the local food system.

What FPCs Do

We sometimes talk about the three P's of community food system work.[5] The first is projects—a government agency, commercial entity, or non-profit undertakes a specific project to address a specific need. Starting a farmers' market is just one example. The second P is partners—food security rests, in large part, on bringing together people from different organizations and economic sectors to collaborate on food system issues.

The last P is policy—and that's where food policy councils come in. Their primary goals include:

- connecting economic development, food security efforts, preservation and enhancement of agriculture, and environmental concerns;
- supporting the development and expansion of locally produced foods;
- reviewing proposed legislations and regulations that affect the food system;
- making recommendations to government bodies;
- gathering, synthesizing, and sharing information on community food systems.[5]

Just as no two community food systems are alike, not all FPCs define *policy* the same way. Some see it as the body of laws, ordinances, regulations, and statements on food that derive from various government agencies. Some see it as what government actually does—or doesn't do—regarding the food system. Still others see food policy as the broader interaction of many organizations in the community to get food from the farm to the table.

FPCs are also involved in education efforts and the implementation of policies and programs related to the food system, particularly to help achieve food security. These programs can be a one-time activity, such as creating a school breakfast program, or, as the Lane County, Oregon, FPC did, partnering on a multi-year research program that teaches elementary-school students about the link between food and nutrition.

In some cases, the work of an FPC can lead to the creation of a new, permanent, stand-alone agency that addresses an ongoing issue. In Connecticut, the state food policy council's work on farmland preservation led to the creation of the Working Lands Alliance, a non-profit that seeks to prevent development of the state's dwindling agricultural lands.

Examples of Policy Work

In 2012, researchers from the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University released the results of a survey they conducted on food policy councils across the United States.[6] Here are some examples of the most common forms of policy work the councils do:

Access to food: providing affordable, nutritious food to school children and low-income populations; ending food deserts.

Agriculture: promoting land preservation, urban farming, discouraging use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Procurement: seeking policies that direct local institutions (schools, hospitals, government agencies, etc.) to buy locally grown food.

With more than three decades of food policy council work across the country, we have plenty of examples that prove just how effective councils can be. Here are just a few:

New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council	Expanded farm to school funding; expanded funding for NMSU Extension support for tribal nations; stopped the sale of sugary soft drinks in schools and replaced them with fruit juices and water
Cleveland/Cuyahoga County FPC	Secured zoning changes to protect community gardens, urban farms, and the raising of chickens and bees
Missoula, Montanan FPC	Worked with county land use board to direct development away from prime farm and ranchland; mapped prime agricultural soils
Boulder County, Colorado FPC	Developed sustainable agriculture use plan for 25,000 publicly owned acres of farmland; rejected proposal to plant GE sugar beet seeds on public land
Hartford, Connecticut FPC	Worked with city WIC agency to improve service delivery; restored WIC caseload to 10,000 from 6,000 persons
Kansas City, Missouri FPC	Prepared several policy briefs; modernized KC's agriculture zoning code; co-hosted food summit; conducted a food issues survey with candidates for local office
New Orleans Food Policy Advisory Committee	Helped formulate the Fresh Food Retailer Initiative, which leverages public and private funds to provide low-interest and forgivable loans for food retailers who commit to sell fresh fruits and vegetables in underserved neighborhoods.
Muscogee (Creek) Nation Food and Fitness Policy Council	In 2012, began working on new procurement policies that will help tribal groups buy more locally grown fruits and vegetables.

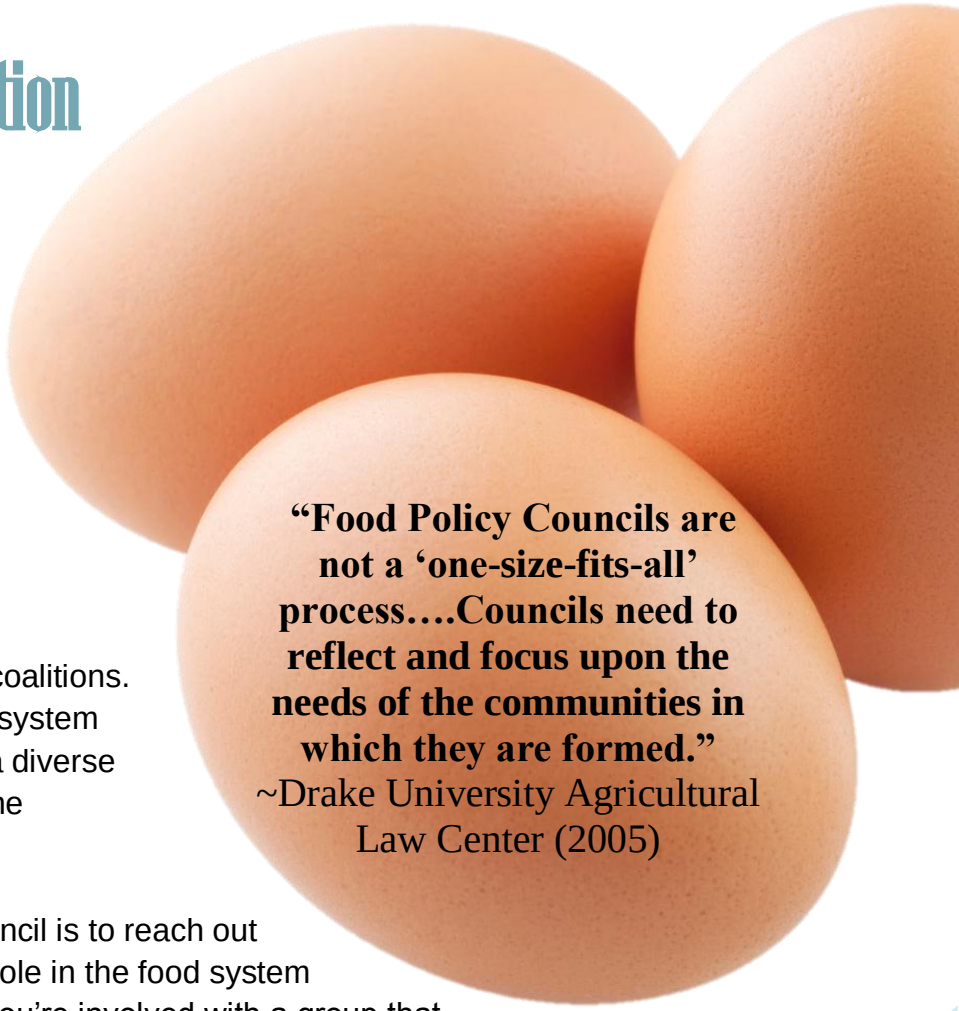
A Snapshot of Food Policy Councils

In 2012, the Community Food Security Coalition released a report called *Community Food Projects: Indicators of Success Fiscal Year 2011*.[7] The report noted the important role food policy councils can play in the success of those projects. For 2011, the report offered this look at FPCs:

Number created	23
Average number of organizations represented on a council	15
Average number of policies approved	2
Average number of citizens affected by these policies	365,476
Average number of volunteers involved with a council	249

Chapter Two: The Basics of Food Policy Action

Not every council will address the same issues; local and regional needs will shape which stakeholders should take part and what your policy and program priorities will be. As the Drake University Agricultural Law Center said in its 2005 look at FPCs, "Food Policy Councils are not a 'one-size-fits-all' process….Councils need to reflect and focus upon the needs of the communities in which they are formed."[8]



"Food Policy Councils are not a 'one-size-fits-all' process….Councils need to reflect and focus upon the needs of the communities in which they are formed."
~Drake University Agricultural Law Center (2005)

Coalitions, Partnerships and Networking

In part, the success of a food policy council rests on the building of coalitions. The various people and entities that are part of the community food system need to be brought on board. The breadth of membership creates a diverse knowledge pool for the council to draw on and gives more parts of the community a vested interest in the council's success.

The first step in building a coalition that will lead to a food policy council is to reach out to some of the stakeholders—people you already know who play a role in the food system and have an interest in the locally important food issues. Perhaps you're involved with a group that already addresses food security issues. Some of your members could form a core group for starting an FPC, but you'll need to seek out others from the beginning. Defining what your goals should be can influence who you contact for your

coalition. Seeking a regional council, for example, will mean contacting a larger pool of people and government officials than trying to start one for just a single community.

When seeking members, it's good to include people with a variety of viewpoints or different priorities in the food system, but who still envision the same broader changes. Also, the stakeholders you ultimately include on the council might be influenced by the goals you set, or vice versa.

Making contact with potential stakeholders and convincing them to take part can take both time and effort. Be prepared to do that legwork—and to do it all over again, if people who commit to the concept later drop out.

Once you have recruited your initial stakeholders, you need to get them all together. This meeting gives you a chance to explain the benefits of a food policy council and let others share their vision of what an ideal community food system would look like. Some consensus should emerge about the scope of the proposed council's work and what form it will take.

The Variety of Food Policy Councils

Recruiting potential members and convening a meeting can be one way to start a food policy council, particularly at the grassroots level. But FPCs come into being by other means as well. In some cases, an executive—a mayor or governor—issues an order creating the body. Baltimore City's Food Policy Advisory Council came out of the mayor's office. In other cases, local or state legislation creates the FPC. That was the case in

Potential Members of Your Food Policy Coalition/Council

- anti-hunger advocates
- emergency food providers
- health-care professionals
- religious organizations
- neighborhood/community organizations
- community development institutions
- community gardeners
- farmers
- operators of farmers' markets/stands
- sustainable agriculture interests
- environmentalists
- food retailers of all sizes
- business leaders
- labor organizations
- food-processing industry representatives
- local and regional government officials
- general public

Creating New Councils

In 2010, two states on opposite sides of the continent started food policy councils, and their creations reflect the diversity of how councils can come to be. In **Alaska**, the state FPC is an independent organization. It began with a call for interested parties to attend a series of meeting to address the idea of a council. Among the 80 or so people who turned out were employees from state and federal agencies, representatives of tribal nations, farmers, and others directly connected to the state food system. By 2012 more than 100 organizations and individuals were active participants in the new council.

Massachusetts's FPC was created through legislation proposed in spring 2010 and signed into law later that year. Government members are chosen from the state house and senate, representing both major parties, and from the executive branch. The governor names seven members from groups within the food production and marketing chain. The first seven appointed included two public-health experts. Members of other stakeholder groups are chosen to serve on an advisory committee.

Connecticut, where in 1997 the legislature passed a law that created the first statewide food policy council in the nation. Non-profit groups also play a part in creating and maintaining food policy councils. In California, the non-profit association Valley Vision received funds to start a coalition of public, private, and non-profit groups that run the Sacramento Food System Collaborative.

Although state and local governments often shape the formation of an FPC, the majority of FPCs across the country are independent, particularly at the regional and local level. In Missoula County, Montana, the decision to have an independent council was a deliberate one. Bonnie Buckingham of the Community Food & Agriculture Coalition said, "Early in our work we decided we did not want an appointed board within city or county government, so we could advocate and promote specific policies that we develop." Most independent groups do have government representation on the council, reflecting the need for government cooperation to translate food policies into action.

Public Sector Versus Independent

A 2012 census of FPCs by the Community Food Security Coalition showed this breakdown of governance: [9]

Independent	Government	Unknown
111	40	4

What's the best kind of FPC, an independent non-profit or one with ties to the public sector? Each has its pluses and minuses. Over the years, the Community Food Security Coalition has outlined those strengths and weaknesses. Here are a few:

Non-Profit FPC

Strengths	Weaknesses
More control by food advocates	Less public accountability
Fewer bureaucratic restraints	Lack of official standing with elected officials
Diverse sources of funding	Lack of staffing

Public Sector FPC

Strengths	Weaknesses
Public accountability/legitimacy	Bureaucratic inefficiency
Public involvement	Political infighting
Access to government staff	Less attention to community desires
Coordination of food system across different departments	Changing levels of support

Who Serves on a Food Policy Council?

The coalition building suggested as a first step for starting an FPC shows the diversity of people who should serve. Who actually serves, however, is often influenced by the nature of the council's structure. With independent, non-profit groups, membership can be self-selecting. With public-sector councils, members are usually named by executive or legislative

Volunteer Members

Oakland, California, began forming its food policy council in 2007. It started receiving applications for membership in 2009, which were reviewed by a previously formed Development Committee. The council sought members from all five sectors of the food system and from "working communities" that included business, labor, community organizations, health organizations, and local government. The chosen members served for one, two or three years. Now all new members serve three years. In 2010, the Oakland FPC welcomed its first youth member. The council meets ten times a year.

appointment, though these councils are usually seen as non-partisan. In some cases, new members are nominated by serving council members and then voted upon by the council.

The most successful food policy councils can say this about their members: They represent all the sectors of the community food system – production, consumption, processing, distribution, and waste recycling. They have experts on specific aspects of the community's needs, such as improving nutrition in the food, and they have average citizens with a commitment to local food issues.

Effective council members usually share a few key traits:

- They work well with others and can cultivate connections with a broad range of people.
- They educate themselves about the key issues and work to share their knowledge with others. That education effort is particularly important with community and government leaders who have the influence to shape specific actions and outcomes.
- They question the form of the current food system and seek ways to improve it for the benefit of all—the essence of food justice.[10]

What FPCs Can—and Can't—Do

One key role for FPC's is gathering data about the community food system. This can be done in a formal way, though a food assessment (see chapter three), or more informally, by canvassing the participants actively involved in the system. Then, sharing the information gleaned with the community can mobilize action for change.

Whether part of the public sector or independent, a food policy council should have some connection to government departments and elected officials. An important function is to cultivate good working relationships with the people who make decisions about the food system.

Sometimes that requires bringing different departments together, or showing them how their jurisdiction includes food-system concerns. For example, in 2008 the Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council studied the budget of eight city departments and highlighted issues for each that touched on the local food system. The Department of Environment could do more to promote composting, while the Department of Children and Youth Services could do more to connect kids to urban agriculture programs. A food policy council strives to find synergy between departments and intersections between existing programs.

FPCs have a large role to play in networking, educating others, identifying needs and problems, and offering solutions to food system issues. FPCs do not make policy however; they advise policy makers and government agencies that have policy making power, such as zoning boards. They might also lack the clout to counter the influence of corporate interests that oppose their initiatives, though this tends to be more of an issue at the state level. That inability to take on high-powered political and economic forces leads some councils to sidestep potentially controversial topics, such as farm workers' rights or placing limits on factory farms. But they can work to make sure farmers' markets thrive in their community, or that their state addresses the need for farmland preservation.

Other challenges that councils face are internal. Some stakeholders may join to pursue a particular agenda and abandon the council if they feel their issue is being ignored. Food First, in its 2009 report on FPCs, found that some councils struggle with achieving a diverse membership.[11]

The people who start food policy councils begin their work with determination and a sense that they can impact the community food system in a positive way. Challenges such as those noted here might make the work hard, but the successes make that effort worthwhile.

Chapter Three: Developing an FPC

The seed of an idea for starting a food policy council has been planted in your community—perhaps by a community group or academic department already involved in food security, or perhaps by a group of concerned citizens. First meetings have been held, government sanction of some kind may have been granted, and the council membership is set.

Now what?

Before tackling the nuts and bolts of food-security issues, a new FPC should formulate and release a public statement of its values and goals. Creating a mission statement will be the first effort at consensus building. The broad strokes should be easy, since members already share an awareness of food security and the importance of achieving it throughout a community. Getting at the details of specific first goals and how to achieve them might require doing a community food assessment, which is discussed below.

An appropriate food policy mission will get at the heart of food security without necessarily using the term. The council exists to help all people have access to affordable, nutritious food, produced and sold as sustainably as possible. Here's how the Regional Food Policy Council of Puget Sound, Washington, stated its values and mission:

"Vision: The Regional Food Policy Council envisions a thriving, inclusive and just local and regional food system that enhances the health of: people, diverse communities, economies, and environments.

Mission: The Regional Food Policy Council develops just and integrated policy and action recommendations that promote health, sustain and strengthen the local and regional food system, and engage and partner with agriculture, business, communities and governments in the four-county region."

Food Charters

In some communities, citizens haven't formed food policy councils, but they come together to create food charters. Drafting this statement can unite diverse groups in a community around food issues, and in some cases that act is the first step toward creating an FPC. Food First recounts the experience of New Orleans. After the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, urban gardens began emerging in newly vacant lots—and so did a new interest in food justice for the city's residents. Two food organizations drafted a charter that called on city officials to rebuild the city with an eye toward creating a vibrant local food system. And in 2007, the city did launch its Food Policy Advisory Committee.

As of 2012, the New Orleans Food & Farm Network (NOFFN), part of the city's Food Policy Advisory Committee, was still looking for people to sign its food charter. And the group's website called for strategic planning around food issues. Accomplishing some or all of these goals could be a blueprint for a food policy council in the city. Here are a few:

- **Support our local and regional food producers** to sustainably grow, harvest and sell the kinds of food that promote health in our communities, families and economy.
- **Remove barriers to fresh food access.** Some of these barriers include lack of transportation, inadequate wages, and the unequal distribution of retail outlets.

Some Mission/Vision Statements

Lane County, Oregon, FPC:

"To foster community food security and local food system development in Lane County."

Evanston, Illinois, FPC:

"Evanston Food Council is an action-oriented grassroots group promoting food citizenship to design and implement food and farm economies that work for everyone -- meal by meal, generation by generation."

New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council:

"The vision of the policy council is to identify key food and agriculture policy issues and opportunities and address these priorities when set forth by the council. The council works to build the capacity of agencies, organizations, individuals and communities to advocate for local, state and national food and agriculture policies that most benefit all New Mexicans."

Food Charter: The Birmingham Experience

In Birmingham, Alabama, members of Greater Birmingham Community Food Partners (GBCFP), along with concerned community leaders, organizations, and residents came together to draft a food charter. The issues underlying the document included honoring local food cultures and traditions; promoting public health through increased consumption of fruits and vegetables; and educating the community about the local food system and its ties to the environment and larger economy. With the charter as a starting point, the GBCFP then formed a food policy council in 2011. At its first meeting the next year, the council agreed to a preliminary mission statement that said it would be "a catalyst and advocate for food policy that reflects the priorities and values of the Jefferson County Food Charter." The work drafting the charter helped focus the mission of the new council.

- **Provide education** which supports a healthy local food system by promoting environmental, nutritional, cultural, culinary, and horticultural awareness.

Next Steps

Assessing and *planning* are two words that come up often in the early days of a food policy council. Most councils do some sort of community assessment of the local food system—what currently exists, what are obvious needs. From the data gathered in the assessment, the food policy council can tackle a strategic or action plan. In some cases, forming a strategic plan covering a specific time period could be part of the FPCs founding document. The executive order that created the Louisville, Kentucky, Metro Food Policy Advisory Council in October 2010 said the group could provide a five-year strategic plan for addressing food issues in Louisville.

Community Food Assessment

In some cases, community food assessments, like food charters, can be a catalyst for creating an FPC. Here, we'll assume that the council is already in place and its members are conducting an assessment as its first step. At their most basic, assessments delve into all facets of the community food systems, including social, economic, and cultural factors that influence food production, distribution, and consumption. The work can be done by a group from within the council, working with people in the community who have first-hand knowledge of a particular part of the food system: farmers, grocers, home gardeners,

government officials, typical consumers, and recipients of food aid. Universities are also another great resource for assessment tools and expertise.

Ideally, the information collected during an assessment will show all the ways the various food sectors are connected, or not, and how food issues relate to community goals and values. The assessment examines both assets and needs. Armed with that knowledge, an FPC can begin advocating for the policies and programs that create food justice, drawing in as many stakeholders as possible into the process.

The Missoula County Community Food and Agriculture Commission tackled a community food assessment as its first step. Its results shed light on such issues as:

- What policies and resources would need to be available to keep agricultural land protected and farming viable in the region?
- Is more locally produced food desirable to consumers?
- Can locally grown food be more easily provided to low-income residents?

In general, the assessment found a community-wide desire to close the gap between food's producers and consumers. The coalition then began crafting policies that would achieve that goal.

In a broad sense, a food assessment tries to gauge the access to affordable, nutritious food in a community. Some of the information might be available in existing government reports or at relevant government websites. For example, when the San Diego County, California, Food System Working Group conducted a food assessment, it turned in part to data already collected by such agencies as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), the United States Census Bureau, and the California Department of Public Health, along with county and local bodies. The assessment led to a recommendation that played a part in the creation of the San Diego Food System Alliance.

Food Retail Assessment in Washington

In 2010, members of the Access to Healthy Foods Coalition met in Seattle, Washington. The statewide coalition had conducted an assessment to learn, among other things, the barriers to obtaining healthy foods. Surveys and interviews revealed that the barriers fell into four major classes:

Financial: e.g., lack of individual funds, lack of knowledge about food assistance programs;

Physical: e.g., lack of stores, lack of transportation;

Nutritional: e.g., failure to provide proper education on nutrition in schools, lack of adequate nutritional information outside of schools;

Cultural: e.g., lack of knowledge about healthy eating, overabundance of advertising for unhealthy food products.

The assessment also stressed current initiatives underway in Washington State to remove the barriers, such as providing materials for parents on healthy eating, starting more community gardens, and promoting composting and recycling programs so organizations saved money that could be spent on food.

Other tools for gathering information include surveys and focus groups. The USDA has some guidelines for how to collect data using these methods and how to easily present the results in graphic form. [http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EFAN02013/] And you can access Community Commons, a website with geographic information systems (GIS) data tailored to groups that are part of the broad-based healthy, sustainable, and livable communities' movement. [http://www.communitycommons.org/] But equally important is visiting sites that are part of the food system and talking to the people who know the specifics of what goes on there. More detailed guidance for planning and carrying out community food assessments are available at http://foodsecurity.org/pub/whats_cooking.pdf.

If appropriate, an assessment should also examine the extent of urban agriculture and the opportunities for expansion. An assessment needs to look at food waste and what should be done with it. An important piece of assessments is the retail food scene in the community. Are there food deserts where consumers lack easy access to affordable, fresh fruits and vegetables? That's the case in some inner-city and rural neighborhoods, and eliminating food deserts is something food policy councils often address.

The Centers for Disease Control has a detailed look at how to carry out a retail food assessment, available online at http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/HFRassessment.pdf. Some general tips include using government databases to pinpoint the borders of specific neighborhoods and what retail grocers operate in

them; using Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping technology with the help of experts in GIS, who include universities and city/county planners; and broadening a survey to include on-site visits to non-traditional food retailer, such as mobile vendors.

Alternatives to a Community Food Assessment

While community food assessments serve a purpose, at times FPCs and other food-security groups have made them all-consuming—all-consuming of time and resources. Some groups spend several years trying to document every facet of the system, meaning policy and program initiatives are left behind. Better, perhaps, is targeting one area of the community food system for a "micro assessment," rather than spending too much time tackling the macro.

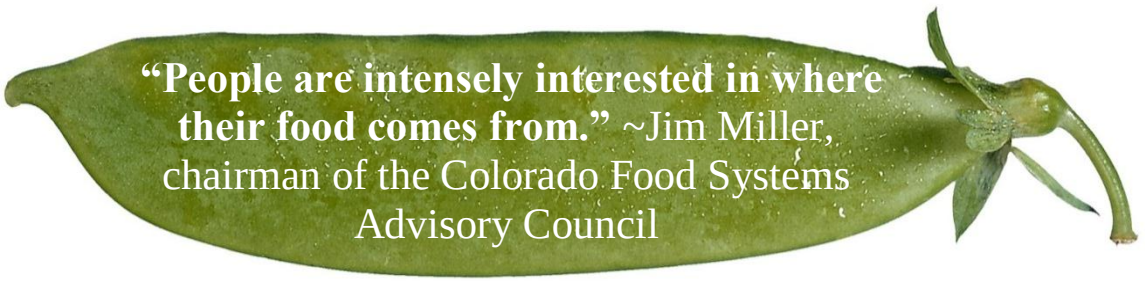
Here are some examples from the Hartford, Connecticut, Advisory Commission on Food Policy. Its assessment focused on two known food-security issues: the higher prices city residents paid for food, relative to what nearby suburbanites paid, and the lack of bus routes to bring city residents to the major grocery stores in the region.

Surveys of bus riders found that up to 25 percent were using the bus to go to a supermarket. An analysis of public transit routes showed that the routes failed to conveniently connect lower-income residents to suburban supermarkets. Documenting both of these situations led to policies that created positive change, making it easier for bus riders to do their grocery shopping.

Another good starting point for a more tailored assessment is looking at the role local, regional, and state governments play in the food system. Which departments are involved in administering Women, Infants and Children (WIC) programs, which ones would play a role in land-use policies? This kind of study is also sometimes called a food policy assessment, as it surveys the existing programs and policies at work within a community food system. With this information, an FPC can look for ways to create synergy between different departments and the various levels of government. The food policy assessment also helps point out where the status quo falls short in achieving food security for all, offering a blueprint for an FPC's possible first objectives

The Colorado Food Tour

Jim Miller, the chairman of the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council told the *Journal of the Colorado Health Foundation* that the tour affirmed for him that "people are intensely interested in where their food comes from." And he and the other council members repeatedly heard that people want to share with each other their experiences in improving the food system. That's a goal a food policy council can facilitate: within a community, by drawing on the expertise of a wide variety of stakeholders, and between communities, by working with other FPCs to share ideas and address regional and state issues.[12]



Another alternative to an assessment could be a food system "tour," such as the one the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council organized in 2011. Over a three-day period, a small group of council members were provided a tour of ten Colorado sites representing the components of their local food system, from community-supported agriculture (CSA) farms to more traditional farming operations and organizations dealing with farming issues. Policy council members learned first-hand about local food issues, and producers and activists got to communicate their concerns to people who support their efforts.

Strategic Planning

Whatever kind of assessment or information-gathering tool you use, your council next has to sort through the information and make a strategic plan. If you don't already have a vision/mission statement, constructing that now will guide the strategies you hope to pursue in the future.

The term *strategic planning* can mean many things, depending on the context and whom you ask. One basic definition is that it's a process that helps

members of a group clarify their thinking about the group's overall purpose, the results it hopes to achieve, and how to achieve them.

For food policy councils, strategic planning can play a number of roles, but ideally the planning session brings all stakeholders together to reach a common understanding of their purpose, and see the connection between food and policies that can shape the overall food system. For a new FPC, the planning session is as much about getting acquainted as working out a detailed plan. The bus tour the members of the Colorado Food System Advisory Council took was not just a fact-finding mission that shaped its agenda; it also served as a bonding experience for the new members. Whatever form a strategic-planning event takes, members should emerge with a list of guideposts or milestones that reflect the council's core values.

Strategic Planning Sessions

A meeting to work out a strategic plan can take several shapes. Some groups go on a retreat. Others hold meetings that last from a few hours to several days. Your finances will dictate, to some degree, whether you go for the Cadillac of planning sessions or settle for the more functional Kia.

Whatever your budget, bringing in an outside facilitator is key. These professionals are trained to make sure everyone gets involved and feel part of the process as well as to keep one or two strong voices from dominating. A facilitator can also keep everyone focused on the task at hand and summarize or distill key points as necessary.

One goal of the session should be to let everyone hear each individual stakeholder's perspective, to get a sense of the diversity of knowledge and experience represented. At the same time, those varied voices have to be ready to work toward consensus, or at least commonality. The strategic planning should set the tone for achieving that in future council work. The session should also be the first step in building trust among the council members.

The number of attendees at a session can also vary. A small council should include all members. Alaska, with a large volunteer state FPC, had 24 members attend its 2011 strategic planning session. That two-day meeting led to pinpointing goals, objectives, and strategies for a three-year period. For other groups, a shorter time frame might make more sense, especially since a new council might take longer than it anticipates to find its footing. If you do go with a longer time period, plan to check in annually to see how well reality has hewed to the plan.

At the Alaska session, the group chose to locate five broad areas of the food system and food security that would form the core of its plan: access; economic development; safety, security, and protection; sustainability; and public engagement. Of course, each FPC might come up with their own "sectors" to organize its goals and objectives. The Central Oregon Food Policy Council, in its 2011-2012 strategic plan, listed three Core Values that set the tone for its more specific objectives: healthy food access, public policy advocacy, and network and knowledge sharing.

The strategic planning process is mostly about discussing a wide range of options and then setting priorities for what should be done first. The idea is to move from a few broad principles and values to the more concrete steps that can be taken to achieve them, realizing that shifting political and economic sands—or more pressing food security issues—can make the plan a fluid document.

Choosing a Facilitator

As with the overall planning process, your budget will shape who you choose as a facilitator. But there's no need to pay for a top-shelf person. If expense is an issue, consult with local universities or business schools. Many can provide a list of affordable resources or have staff willing to facilitate at reasonable rates. This article from Philanthropy Journal also has some tips on finding the facilitator that's right for your council:

http://www.philanthropyjournal.org/resources/managementleadership/choosing-strategic-planning-facilitator.

How Two FPCs Address Values and Goals

Here's a quick look at some of the items included in the strategic plans of the Alaskan FPC and the Central Oregon PFC:

ALASKA		
Strategy Develop, strengthen, and expand school-based programs and policies that educate and provide local foods to schools.	Goal All Alaskans have access to affordable, healthy (preferably local) food.	Objective Increase the number of schools participating in local, healthy, and traditional food procurement.
Develop AFPC's role as research aggregator and resource.	Alaskans are engaged in our food system.	Improve the body of research that will inform and support Alaska food policy efforts.
Advocate for fiscal and planning policies that protect the viability of the land and water for agricultural production, wild food, and seafood harvesting.	Alaska's food system is more sustainable.	Expand and protect food production.

CENTRAL OREGON		
Core Value Healthy Food Access	Objective Build a viable local and sustainable food system available to all community members.	Project Project Connect
Public Policy Advocacy	Analyze current land-use laws.	Provide white papers about land use barriers for food and farming activities in the cities and counties of Central Oregon.
Networking and Knowledge sharing	Connect stakeholders in the food system sector.	Buy Fresh Buy Local, Community Connections, and Farm to Fork, with related websites.

Policy First!

Some discussion might focus on the relative benefits of focusing on policy first, or tackling specific, hands-on programs right away. Policy, as Food First notes, addresses "structural changes…to the rules and institutions that shape our food systems."[13] Policy work is important because it touches on broader issues with, hopefully, long-lasting returns. And policy work should be your primary goal. A food policy council should be the player of last resort when it comes to getting a program off the ground. If there is a pressing need for a farmers' market and there's no one else to do it, a council might take the reins. But the goal should be turning over the operation of the market to an appropriate non-profit or government agency as soon as possible. A council member affiliated with a relevant organization can be the point person for making that transition or, even better, having his or her organization run the program to begin with.

Undertaking a program should also reinforce larger policy goals. Creating a farmers' market or having one put in EBT machines for low-income residents using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is part of a larger policy objective—improving access to affordable, nutritious food. Keep policy outcomes uppermost in your thinking as you make your strategic plan.

Policy work is important because it touches on broader issues with, hopefully, long-lasting returns. But government policies can also change quickly and with little public input, as new political players become involved, or can simply be ignored by bureaucracies that choose not to implement them. The Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy found that to be the case during the mid-2000s, when a new mayor severely neglected the council. Thankfully, the most recent mayor reversed that trend. The shifting political winds in community makes vigilance a key attribute for a successful food policy council.

From Plan to Action

Carrying out the various parts of a strategic plan requires a division of labor. Councils usually set up groups—call them task forces, subcommittees, working groups—that tackle the specific core values or vision/goals outlined in the plan. Ideally council members with specific areas of expertise will work on an appropriate committee. Or they contact people

outside the group who have the expertise. For example, a subcommittee dealing with land-use and zoning concerns could get insight from a city or county planner. As mentioned earlier, county planning offices can be a valuable resource (for more information, see sidebar). Their staffs have a broad vision and a concern with the long-term development of a community. Likewise, an effective food policy council is looking at local food issues in a far-reaching, systemic way.

One Council's Structure

The Detroit Food Policy Council created four distinct work groups to carry out the steps needed to reach its goals. The Healthy Food Access group looks for ways to make it easier for all residents to have access to fresh, healthy, affordable foods—the essence of food security.

The Agriculture Advocates Work Group tries to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, so to speak—the city's abundance of vacant lots, after years of economic hardship, provide land for growing food in the city. This work group focuses on promoting policies and programs that make that work easier.

Taking a more macro approach, the Community Food Justice Work Group tries to create new opportunities for city residents to take part in Detroit's food system, as producers and distributors as well as consumers. At the core of this is looking at how social, racial, and economic issues shape the food system, and how they help or hinder increased participation.

A Useful Ally

The planning that goes on in all levels of government to best use a community's resources and serve the needs of its citizens is extensive, which is why so many city and counties rely on their own staff planners to take a look at the broad picture. In recent years, according to the American Planning Association (APA), planners have come to see how their unique skills and breadth of knowledge can benefit FPCs—one reason why some councils seek planners as members or advisors. The Santa Fe Food Policy Council has had at least one planner on board for several years. The Portland Multnomah County, Oregon, council falls under the jurisdiction of Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. The APA noted that the Cleveland-Cuyahoga Food Policy Council is just one that has counted on validation from local planners to help meet its goals. The council's Morgan Taggart said, "Having the city planning director and public health director's vocal support at public meetings—especially ones where influential stakeholders were in attendance—was invaluable." The city planner shared the FPC's view that urban farming was sometimes the best use of city land, giving the opinion added weight.

Finally, the Schools and Institutions Group works with officials at schools and public institutions to offer more fresh, nutritious food, and encourage those institutions to grow their own food.

The Detroit FPC's structure is not necessarily right for all groups. Every food policy council has to operate within the framework of its community's needs. But the organization reflects specific areas of concern that the Detroit members determined were the most pressing for their city.

Reaching Out

An important way to move from plan to action is to build bridges with the community. This outreach goes on since the first discussions of forming an FPC, but now it takes on added importance. To meet your strategic objectives you'll need support from people outside the council—other non-profits, citizens, and especially government officials. Food "summits" and other public events are ways to bring people together, discuss the issues facing the community food system, and share your vision for how to address them. The Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council holds an annual food summit, which features presentations on different food system topics from various community stakeholders. The 2012 summit included a look at how to use the Internet to inform consumers about food issues.

It's hard to underestimate the importance of education, both external and internal. Food summits are just one kind of external education. So is using the media to spread your message. That means sending press releases to local outlets to promote events and public meetings. It could also mean designating someone on the council or affiliated with it to write opinion pieces for the local paper. Researcher Rebecca Schiff notes that FPC members also see great value in their personal networking with government officials, as well as producing and distributing a variety of reports. Internally, members educate each other, with some councils setting aside time at meetings for members to share information, while others bring in outside specialists to help educate members.[14]

Whatever form your education and promotional efforts take, the underlying goal is to work for policy change. You want stakeholders in the community to be informed about issues in your local food system, then work with you to address them.

Chapter Four: Putting the "Policy" in an FPC

You've seen examples of the kind of policy work a council can do, and we'll give a few more in this chapter. But this is not meant to be an encyclopedic look at the kind of issues your council might address. For one thing, it's beyond the scope of this manual. For another, only you and fellow council members are going to know what your community's most pressing food system needs are.

With your vision/mission statement in place, some sort of strategic plan in hand, and a working council, you now have to prioritize which policies to pursue first. Martha Page of the Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy said her council "tries to make recommendations that have some chance of action being taken. You don't do pie in the sky stuff…"[15] One example she offered is creating a policy that gives incentives to city stores that are doing more to sell healthy food—making the licensing system less onerous for them, for example.

Or maybe the impetus for creating your council came from a specific issue—a documented rise in hunger, the loss of historic farmland, a natural disaster like Hurricane Katrina, or an incoming government that has stated its interest in addressing food system issues. With public attention already focused on that topic, you might want to promote policies that address that immediate concern.

Whatever policies you tackle, use the affiliation of your members—whether they come from business, government, education, or non-profits—to leverage their contacts to help turn policy recommendations into reality, with meaningful impact on your community food system.

Promoting New Mexican Agriculture

Farming has been a way of life for New Mexicans for thousands of years. Recently, the New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council and others working on food issues thought the state could do more to promote agriculture in the state today. Pam Roy, a council member and executive director of the non-profit Farm to Table, based in Santa Fe, worked closely with a state senator to craft a procurement bill. The city of Santa Fe already had a buy-local resolution, but state law directed procurement policies for the surrounding county. Roy said in 2011, "Our goal is to build an understanding around procurement across public, private and advocacy sectors."[16] A state bill, introduced in the 2011 legislative session, called for state agencies to purchase two percent of their food from local sources, with the amount increasing to ten percent by 2016. The bill received support from the legislature but was vetoed by the governor. It will be reintroduced in 2013.

Policy Areas

As an accompaniment to this manual, we worked with the Harvard Law School Food Policy Clinic to develop a primer on developing and implementing local and state policies. This information is available at www.markwinne.com. In the meantime, here's a look at some of the most common topics food policies address.

Procurement – Or, in simpler terms, getting more locally grown food into local institutions. Addressing this has both economic (more money to local farmers) and public-health (better food served) impacts. Procurement changes can be achieved by an ordinance or state law that requires schools or other public institutions to buy a certain amount of produce from local farmers. Or governing bodies might offer discounts to local food producers bidding on contracts, as Cleveland did in 2010, thanks in part to the efforts of the Cleveland/Cuyahoga County FPC.

Setting new standards for food procurement could target more than just locally grown food. Procurement regulations could be tailored to discourage the purchase of genetically modified organism (GMO) foods, a topic that is increasingly discussed in food-system circles. Or a procurement laws could encourage:

- buying organic food;
- using vendors who pay a living wage;
- promoting traditional foods and local food customs.

Land Use – Across the country, communities are seeing local farmland disappear, the victim of unchecked commercial and residential development. Particularly in rural and suburban areas, shaping land-use policies that preserve farmland is a major concern. In Connecticut, state officials had a goal of preserving 130,000 acres of farmland. When the annual amount preserved fell to virtually zero, the state's food policy council stepped in, hosting a conference to draw attention to the problem. Out of those efforts, a separate organization dedicated to land preservation, the Working Lands Alliance, was formed.

For Cabarrus County, North Carolina, the increasing encroachment of development on the county's farmlands was one of the impetuses for forming a food policy council. Aaron Newton, the council's staff member, said, "The county, in reviewing its land-use plan for the future, decided it was probably in the community's best interest to try to conserve that area as rural instead of letting it turn into…sprawl."[17] Even before the creation of the Cabarrus County FPC, county officials met with leaders of Concord, the county's large city, to hammer out an agreement not to extend utilities to a rural section of the county. The FPC will continue to address land-use issues and help rebuild the local food economy by connecting institutional buyers with local growers.

The GMO Battle and FPCs

As mentioned earlier, some food-policy battles are fought on a national level, involving multinational players with massive assets—not necessarily the kinds of battle community FPCs might take on. Recently, two states sought to address GMOs in food, and food policy councils were mostly silent. California voters placed an initiative on the 2012 November ballot to require labeling of foods that contain GMO ingredients. Vermont tried to address the issue with a state law. In both states, no food policy councils endorsed the labeling.

In California, the Humboldt County Food Policy Council informed members about the effort and directed them to another organization if they wanted to collect signatures or otherwise help. But at the Berkeley Food Policy Council, one member said, the issue never came up. In Vermont, one member of the Burlington Food Policy Council said the group did consider endorsing the proposed state law, but attendance at the meeting at which the issue arose was weak, so those present were reluctant to decide. In addition, there was "some sense of it being an 'outside issue' whose controversy could detract from our ability to build a local food system." The moral of the story: Each FPC has to decide on its own the nature of the issues that serve its mission and that it can realistically support.

Balancing Farms and Development

The work of the Missoula County Community Food & Agriculture Coalition shows the role FPCs can play in land-use issues. Its recent recommendations have included designating "cornerstone" agricultural areas in the county in which land conservation will be a top priority. And in 2011, the council organized a coalition of stakeholders to defeat a proposal by the state's Realtor association that would have prohibited local governments from considering the impact of proposed subdivisions on agricultural land use. On the county level, the council's Bonnie Buckingham noted, "Our County Commissioners have made a commitment to passing a policy that will provide a comprehensive and predictable process for subdivision review and will ensure new developments permanently conserve farmland."[18]

"Food policy councils have proven to be an effective tool...for developing comprehensive food system policies that can improve public health." ~*Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition* (2009)

Zoning – If crafting land-use policy is long-term, big picture work, creating food-system friendly zoning policy is more focused and immediate. Zoning laws can make it easier for urban dwellers to keep a few chickens or raise bees. They can expand land available for growing crops, as New York City did in 2011.[19] The city doesn't have a formal food policy council, but its city council has taken an interest in the local food system. One 2011 zoning initiative waived height restrictions for some rooftop greenhouses. In 2012, the Portland Multnomah County FPC joined other stakeholders in drafting suggestions to the city council for a wide range of zoning changes. The new code would remove barriers to increasing urban food production and distribution. These included:

- defining farmers' markets and specifying in what zones, and under what conditions, they could operate;
- recognizing and allowing residential sales for market gardens;
- affirming existing code that allows the use of community gardens in any zone.

Food Safety and Public Health – Whether it's *e. coli*, salmonella, or other food-borne pathogens, food producers and consumers are concerned about food safety. Each new outbreak reported in the media only fans that concern. Food policy councils sometimes play a role in educating farmers about best practices to reduce the risk of food contamination or to strengthen laws that regulate food safety.

In 2011, the Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy recommended that the city adopt a restaurant scoring policy to improve consumer awareness about restaurant cleanliness. Subsequently, a city ordinance was passed and implemented. In 2009, the New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council took a slightly different tack on food safety, one meant to reassure consumers and promote the sale of local foods. The council worked with the state Environment Department to make it easier for people to sell certain home-produced foods at farmers' markets and other direct-to-consumer outlets—after the producers went through food-safety training and met other licensing requirements.

In the larger issue of public health, food policy councils are playing a major role. We've mentioned throughout this manual the ways councils are trying to improve food choices in schools and provide easier access to fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets—two steps in improving nutrition for all. In some cases, a council might want to conduct a "mini community food assessment," as the Cabarrus County Food Policy Council began doing in 2012 with the local school food system. That detailed study will direct future policy recommendations for improving the nutritional value of the food kids eat during school.

For the Centers for Disease Control, increasing access to fruits and vegetables and educating Americans about their nutritional value are key parts of the strategy in improving health across the country.[20] That's one reason the CDC has supported the work of the nation's food policy councils. And a 2009 report in the *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition* argues for the crucial role FPCs play in the process: "Food policy councils have proven to be an effective tool, particularly at the local and state level, for developing comprehensive food system policies that can improve public health."[21]

A Group Effort

In the summer of 2011, contaminated cantaloupe from Colorado farms brought home the issue of food safety. The tainted melons spread listeria across the country, killing more than 30 people. In light of that, the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council has taken new steps to promote food safety. The council already had subcommittees that worked with state public health officials. In 2012, the council brought together a small group of staff from state and local public health agencies, Colorado State University, the University of Colorado-Denver, the Colorado Department of Agriculture, Extension, and other farm interest groups to begin the discussion of where and how groups could communicate more with one another and how to share similar messages about food safety to the public. The group decided to continue to work with a new food safety center emerging out of the state's universities to help ensure that diverse stakeholder groups are represented and are communicating with one another on an on-going basis.

Chapter Five: Operating a Food Policy Council

As you can see, policy work can take a variety of forms. Since FPCs are advisory—they can't set policies—they have to marshal good evidence and key allies to get things done. Those efforts are easier when council members have a handle on operational issues. This chapter gives a brief look at some of those issues and how existing FPCs handle them.

The Governing Structure

Who serves on a council, what their responsibilities are, and what the council will do can be spelled out a number of ways. For government-affiliated councils, some of these basic issues are defined in the resolution or law that created the council. The Santa Fe Advisory Council on Food Policy was created by a joint resolution of the city and Santa Fe County. It set the number of members at 13 and specified that nine would come from the private sector and two each from the city and the county. The resolution also outlined the council's basic duties, such as monitoring city and county nutrition programs and making policy recommendations for the food system. (The resolution is available online at http://www.santafecounty.org/userfiles/FoodPolicyResolution2008-26.pdf.)

Details of the organization's structure and duties also appear in a council's by-laws, though not all councils have by-laws per se. For volunteer or non-incorporated councils, these are sometimes called governance guidelines. The New Mexico Food and Agricultural Advisory Council has the latter, which can be viewed at the CFSC website, [http://www.foodsecurity.org/FPC/doc-organizational.html#by-laws] along with sample bylaws from other organizations.

In general, bylaws and governing guidelines are the formal rules detailing how the council will be run. The Ohio State University Extension has some tips for writing bylaws, available here: http://ohioline.osu.edu/cd-fact/co-bl.html.

Leadership

We've talked often about the need for consensus, as much as possible, when doing food policy work. And a multiplicity of voice is a given. But when it comes time to make a food policy council operate, having an effective leader is key. The process that selects the chair and vice chair (or co-chairs) should be intentional.

In the formative stages of the FPC, members should appoint a leadership committee to identify several worthwhile candidates to run for the top position. Some key words of advice, based on experience: Don't delay this process! And don't have rotating chairs. The council's stability and effectiveness, in part, rests on having structured leadership from the beginning. A chair's term, of course, should be limited, with many councils choosing one-year terms.

This search committee should consider candidates who have certain qualifications, such as:

- an ability to remain neutral during discussions;
- skill at facilitating meetings;
- respect from the other members;
- a history of managing an organization with diverse membership.

The chair and vice chair's duties are often spelled out in a council's by-laws (more on this below). The Missoula County Community Food & Agricultural Coalition drew up a list of duties for a chair that now serves as a model for other FPC's. Some duties include:

- developing agendas with staff help;
- leading meetings;
- serving as main liaison between the council and government agencies;
- representing the council to the community;
- ensuring the council follows its policies and mission.

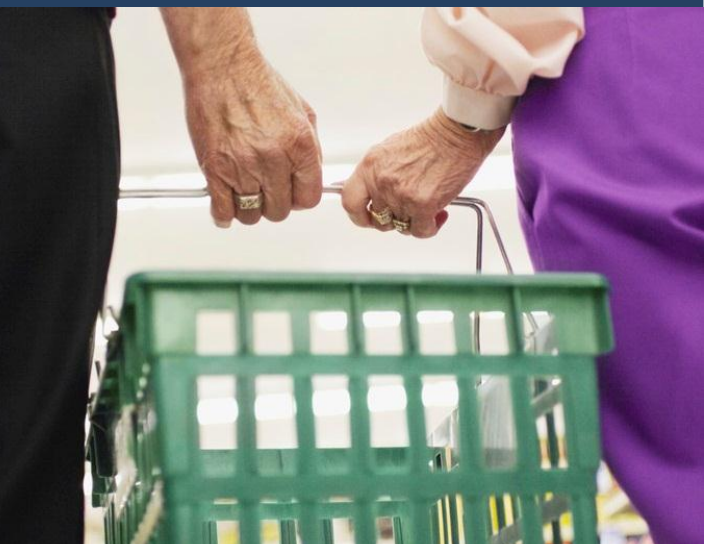
Reaching Consensus

Here are some general thoughts on what consensus is and isn't, from the Center for Collaborative Planning.[22]

Consensus involves:

- letting everyone be heard and take part in the process
- discussing all concerns presented
- finding common ground
- reaching a decision everyone can "live with"—not reaching unanimity.

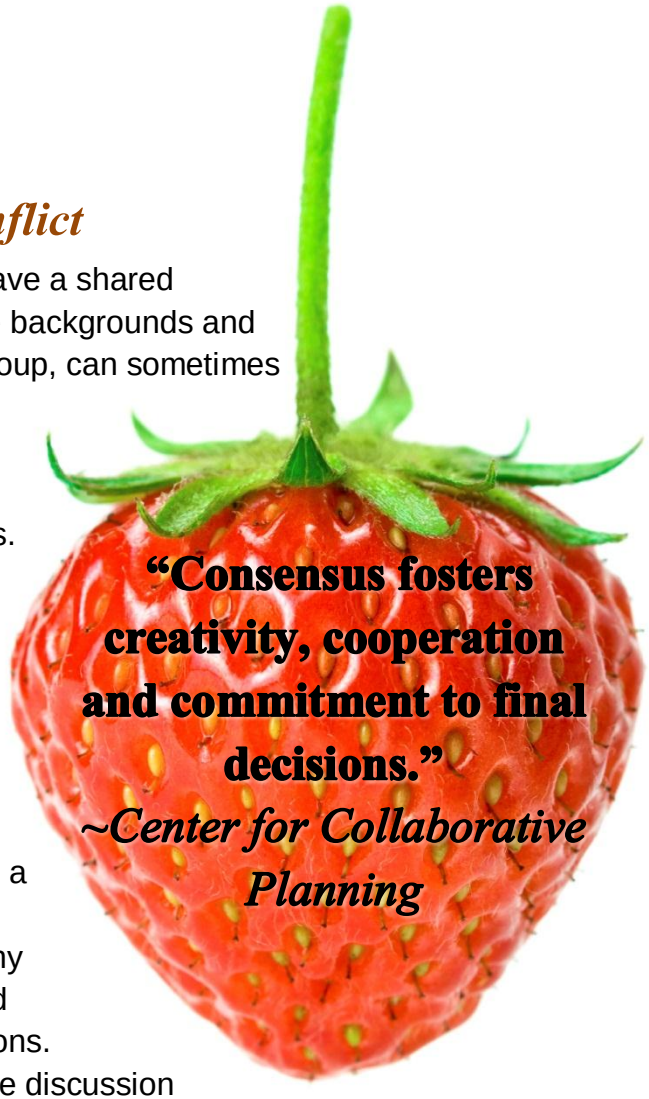
"Consensus," the Center says, "fosters creativity, cooperation and commitment to final decisions."



Making Decisions, Avoiding Conflict

Even though the members of food policy councils have a shared commitment to food security, they also have diverse backgrounds and experience. Making decisions as a group, in any group, can sometimes test the members' and staff's patience.

State food policy councils, according to Food First, rely exclusively on consensus for reaching decisions. At the regional and local level, majority vote sometimes come into play. But whenever possible, striving for consensus is the best approach—even though reaching it is not always easy.



As we mentioned earlier, much of the work on some FPCs is done by various committees. They shape proposals before bringing them to the full council for a vote. Whatever voting method is used to reach decisions, the council should engage in open, healthy debate before settling an issue. The process should allow everyone to feel comfortable expressing opinions. Following Roberts Rules of Orders can help keep the discussion flowing and make the ultimate decision easier to reach. The "open" part of the debate and decision-making process is also key. The council should work in a transparent way, with no back-room deals.

When Members Don't Vote

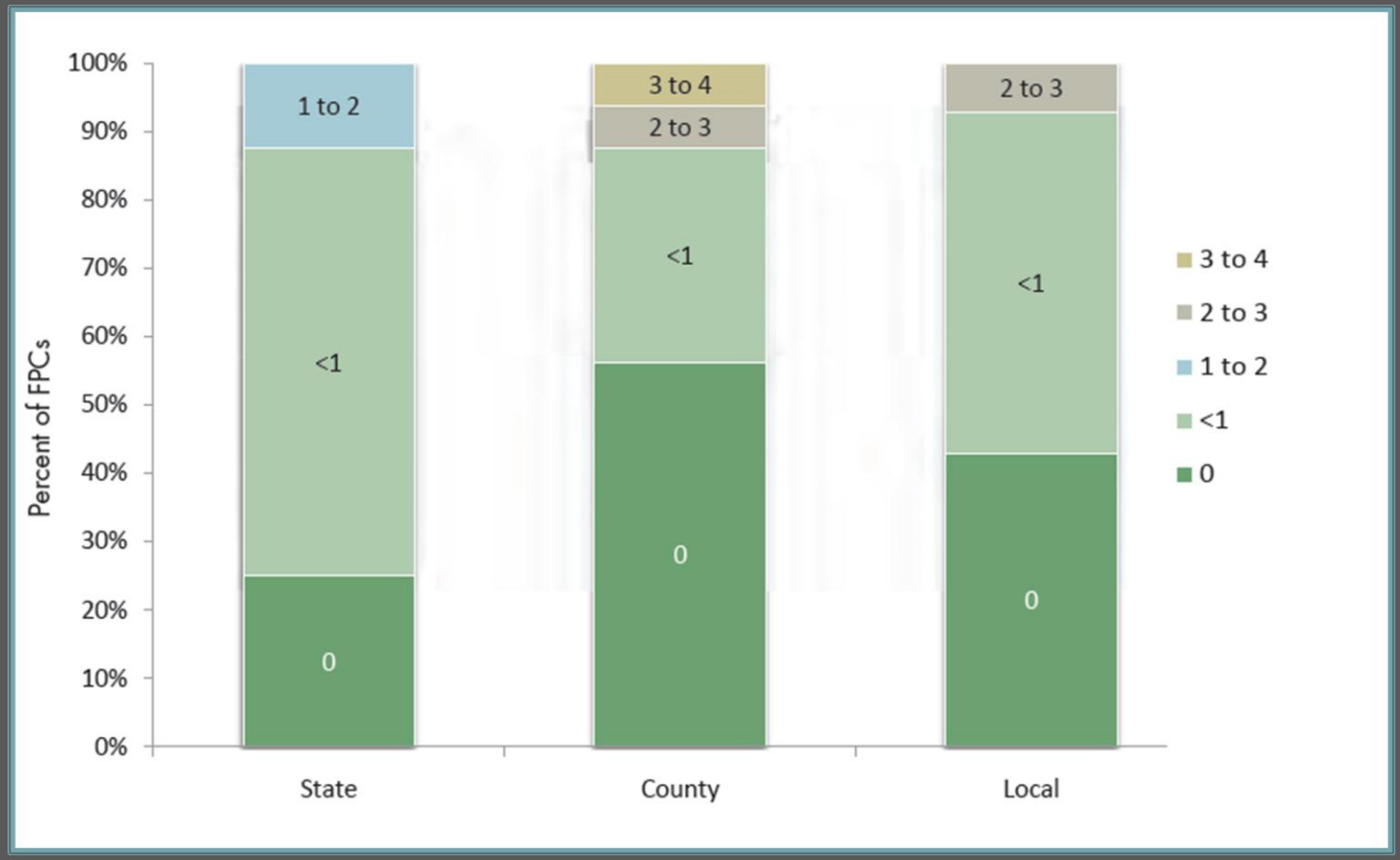
At times, some government-affiliated members of a food policy council might step out of the decision-making process on certain issues. This can happen when the members' specific department or the administration as a whole might have a stated position on the issue, and the members don't want to be in conflict with it. This circumstance, however, should not keep the council as a whole from pursuing the issue.

At times, the debate might move from healthy to heated, and a staff member from one county FPC said that's when he steps in to defuse the situation. That way, "they can be upset with a staff member and not someone else on the council." Keeping discussions focused and non-inflammatory also relies on the skills of the chair running the meetings. And one way to avoid some conflict is to stay away from more controversial issues, such as genetically modified organism (GMO) labeling, or assign the issue to a committee for further discussion.

Staffing

With leadership and a governing structure in place, food policy councils can turn to their day-to-day operations. Councils associated with government agencies can sometimes rely on a half-time or full-time staff person to help with those chores. For many FPCs, though, the idea of having staff is only a pipe dream. The reality is, the 2009 Food First report cited earlier shows, that most food policy councils have no paid staff or only a part-time person.[23] In some cases, government employees spend some time assisting councils, in addition to their regular duties. With the Connecticut Food Policy Council, staffing comes from a non-profit food advocacy group. For many councils, staff work falls on the members themselves or other volunteers. When staff is available, it helps with such clerical duties as arranging meetings and keeping records.

Typical Paid Staffing Levels at FPCs[23]



Funding

Whether or not a food policy council has paid staff and other resources comes down, of course, to money. State FPCs are more apt to receive some government funding than regional or local councils. At the local level, some receive no government funds at all—all work is done by volunteers. Most food policy councils count on a mixture of government money, foundation grants, and individual and in-kind donations. In the past, the United States Department of Agriculture has funded FPCs through its Hunger-Free Community Grants, but those funds are not always available. The Centers for Disease Control has funded food policy councils, and FPCs are eligible for money under the USDA's Community Food Project Competitive Grant Program.

Here are some suggestions for how to seek funding. When approaching foundations, remember the broad nature of FPC work and tailor grant requests from foundations that support the following areas:

- health and nutrition
- hunger
- education
- community development
- civic participation and engagement
- capacity building (improving non-profit effectiveness)
- environment

As you start the fundraising process, keep these ideas in mind, too:

- Think broadly and creatively about which local organizations and institutions may have common interests with the FPC (e.g. local utility or bank).
- Do your homework—research the funders' interests, guidelines, and what they have supported in the past. Once you have done some research, talk to a staff person about your ideas if possible.

A Sample Budget

Here's a sample budget taken from the Santa Fe Food Policy Council:

INCOME		**EXPENSES**	
Foundations		***Direct***	
Simon Foundation	5,000	Personnel (Contract)	21,638
Santa Fe Community Foundation	10,000	Office Supplies	100
NM Community Foundation	5,000	Phone	400
McCune Foundation	5,000	Postage	100
		Printing – Copies	400
Government		Fiscal Sponsor Fees	2,850
Santa Fe County	8,500	Meeting Supplies & Support	200
City of Santa Fe	10,000	Travel	2,000
Individuals	0	***Committees***	
		Education and Outreach (Printed	
Special Events	0	Materials/ Website)	1,500
Total Income	**43,500**	Assessment	9,000
		Policy	500
		Governance/Council Development	5,000
		Total Expenses	**43,688**

Additional Resources Invested	
Food Depot (in kind, meeting support)	4,428
Farm to Table (administrative support, in kind)	8,240
Mark Winne Associates (in kind, research and policy support)	4,500
Earthcare	18,240
Cooking with Kids	1,440
Kitchen Angels	2,225
City of Santa Fe – Environmental Services Division	7,600

- Consider whether accepting funds from a particular business or organization could affect the FPC's integrity or ability to speak out on important issues (or create even an appearance of this).
- Plan for continuity and sustainability of funding—what happens if one source dries up, for example if there is a change in government?

The CFSC website has more resources for fundraising. [http://www.foodsecurity.org/FPC/resources-funding.html]

Recording and Reporting Information

A food policy council with government ties might be required by law to fulfill certain record-keeping and reporting obligations. But the principles of "open government" are good ones for all FPCs to follow. Some of the basics include:

- issuing notices of meetings well in advance of their dates;
- publishing an agenda of the meeting beforehand;
- posting minutes of the meeting in a timely manner.

To recap their achievements, some food policy councils choose or are required to release an annual report. A sample of an annual report from the Iowa Food System Council can be found here: http://www.iowafoodsystemscouncil.org/storage/2010-2011%20IFSC%20Annual%20Report.pdf. But a council shouldn't feel obligated to publish a glossy report, or to wait for a year to pass to trumpet its accomplishments. A website is a good way to produce more frequent records of the council's work. And members should attend relevant local or regional government meetings to present updates whenever possible.

Electronic Education

Face-to-face contact is the best way to educate people and establish relationships that can help an FPC thrive. And having small flyers or brochures to hand out is always a good idea whenever your council members are at a public event. But don't overlook the role of social media as an educational tool. To some people, if a Google search of an organization doesn't lead to some web presence, it's like that group doesn't even exist. You don't need to build and maintain a fancy website, though some organizations offer free web hosting for non-profits (one of them is Grassroots.org, http://www.grassroots.org/services/free-website-hosting). Many councils piggyback their web presence on the sites of affiliated government or non-profit agencies. And you probably don't need to tweet your council's every action. But starting at least a Facebook page where you can update supporters about current and upcoming events and offer the council's goals and programs is an easy—and free—place to start.

In the Public Eye

A food policy council is most effective when the community knows it exists and understands what its goals are. You'll need support from people and organizations outside the council to turn your recommendations into policies that impact the food system.

Communicate your concerns and achievements frequently with your local, state, and national elected officials. If your FPC is part of a city or state government, you may need to go through your appointing body, such as the city council, but often you can directly communicate your support of a certain bill or possible legislative action.

For at least one council, drawing up a formal plan was one way to achieve some of this outreach. Starting in 2012, the Alaska Food Policy Council has been working on a communications plan that will help with its recruitment efforts and educate policy-makers.

One way to create visibility is to cultivate relations with the media. Publicize meetings, events, and policy/legislative successes. Send out press releases announcing findings from studies. The Hartford Advisory Council on Food Policy got regular press coverage of its supermarket price surveys, thanks to press releases. The surveys showed that urban residents often paid more for their food than suburbanites did.

Chapter Six: Evaluating Partnership, Goals, and Accomplishments

Evaluation of FPCs can serve many purposes. You may want to evaluate the FPC itself and how it operates; you may want to evaluate what the FPC has been able to accomplish in its action plan, or to evaluate a specific program or policy in the action plan.

So what kind of evaluation can and should you do? Begin by convening a smaller working group of FPC members that includes a member or partner that has knowledge of evaluation methods and experience evaluating partnerships like FPCs. This working group can serve to guide the evaluation process of planning, prioritizing, designing, and implementing evaluation activities. The evaluation working group can also help with sharing the evaluation results and using evaluation findings to improve the work of the FPC.

Let's begin with the evaluation of how the FPC is operating. This is sometimes referred to as partnership or coalition evaluation. FPCs can gather information to assess the satisfaction of its members with the general operations of the council. This type of evaluation is important to understand what is working well, and where improvements are needed. Partnership evaluation can help build and strengthening partnerships to provide a strong infrastructure to support food policy changes. Partnership evaluations usually ask questions about how the FPC is operating, relationships, benefits, etc. Evaluation questions may include the following:

- Are partnership meetings productive, focused, and effective?
- Are partners engaged across multiple sectors? Do you have the right mix?
- What were partners' expectations of the FPC and were these expectations met?
- According to partners, how successful was the partnership? What factors help support this success?
- What were challenges of the partnership? How did partners overcome challenges related to this partnership?
- What are ways to improve the partnership?

Evaluation results can be used to make improvements in the partnership that may include expanding membership to represent food-related sectors, building the knowledge and skills of partners, improving the functioning and effectiveness of the partnership, or increasing engagement of partners in program planning, implementation, and evaluation.

The Michigan Department of Community Health developed a Coalition Assessment tool to evaluate the performance, synergy, leadership, coordination and administration, decision-making and capacity of their FPC. The assessment was given as an on line survey to members and results were anonymous. More information about the assessment can be found on pages 33-35 at http://publichealth.msu.edu/pph/pdf/capstones/m_holtsclaw_capstone.pdf.

The Oakland Food Policy Council conducts a membership evaluation annually using an online survey. The survey includes questions on length of membership, the recruitment process, communication efforts, staffing and relationships, decision making, conflict, structure and operations, community engagement, participation and benefits, policy development, and next steps. The survey results are summarized and used to generate a report and presentation that is shared with members. More information about the Member Evaluation Survey can be found in the evaluation section of following document at http://www.foodfirst.org/en/food+policy+council.

The Centers for Disease Control's *Partnership Evaluation: Guidebook and Resources* clarifies approaches and methods of partnership evaluation, provides examples and tools, and recommends resources for additional reading, available online at http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/PartnershipEvaluation.pdf.

Evaluation can also be used to track accomplishments of goals and determine when revisions of the action plan are needed so that the FPC remains current on new developments and the evolving needs of citizens. Strategic plans, blueprints, and action plans guide the FPC activities; serve as a way to communicate to members and the public the actions the FPC is working to accomplish; and help to leverage resources from partners to facilitate the development and implementation of the action plan. These action plans can be used to keep you on track and help you monitor your progress and successes through well-defined goals, objectives and activities.

Evaluation of your action plan should occur during both the development and the implementation stages. FPCs can evaluate the development process of the action plan and assess the satisfaction of its members with the process. Examples of evaluation questions may include:

- Did the process engage members and how likely are members to endorse the action plan and participate in the implementation of the plan?
- What is the quality of the plan and was sufficient data collected to support the objectives in the plan?
- Are partners responsible for accomplishing a specific objective aware of the action plan? How well has the action plan been communicated to partners?

The benefits of evaluating your action plan include:

- determining progress toward achieving outcomes;
- providing accountability to community, funding agencies, and partners;
- increasing community awareness and support.

Evaluation of the implementation of the action plan focuses on the extent to which policies, initiatives, and approaches specified in the plan are implemented and more clearly defines successes and challenges in accomplishing objectives in the plan. Evaluation of the implementation of the action plan requires you to collect evaluation measures. For example, if you have an objective to create a program or adopt a policy, you will need to count the number of programs created or policies adopted. In addition, you will need to collect or look for available sources of data to show implementation of these programs or policies. For example, if you have an activity to provide electronic benefits transfer (EBT) machines to farmers' markets to accept the SNAP benefits, then detailed information on the farmers' markets participating in the program and increased EBT sales can be obtained from both your SNAP program and the Department of Agriculture as evaluation

measures to show implementation of the program. Also, if you have an activity that includes the passage of a chicken and/or bee ordinance you can collect the number of ordinances adopted as well as the number of permits issued.

The Centers for Disease Control's *Evaluation of State Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Plans* is a guide for evaluation of state-level obesity plans but the approaches and methods of evaluation can be used to evaluate action plans developed by other groups. It provides examples and tools, and recommends resources for additional reading, available online at www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/EvaluationofStateNPAOPlans.pdf

A more comprehensive evaluation of an FPC includes the forming or development of the council (formative evaluation), implementation (process evaluation) and effectiveness (outcome evaluation) of the FPC. This type of evaluation includes partnership successes, and challenges as well as accomplishments of program and policy work. It helps to answer questions like, how successful was the FPC at building member and community partners' capacity to implement policy changes to improve access to affordable healthy food? What are the lessons learned for developing and implementing programs and policies through an FPC or coalition representing diverse food-related sectors?

A review of the formative, implementation, and outcome data of the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County (CCC) Food Policy Coalition was recently conducted. The review found that the CCC Food Policy Council's strong formative work and organizational structure have successfully increased the capacity of its broad member base to engage in food systems work and achieve meaningful community-level policy change. Some key CCC Food Policy Council outcomes or policy successes include passage of the City of Cleveland's Chickens and Bees Ordinance, the Water Access for Urban Agriculture administrative policy, and the EBT at Farmers' Markets organizational policy, which has already increased sales at many participating farmers' markets across Cuyahoga County. The CCC Food Policy Council's formative evaluation included case studies, environmental scans, and multiple stakeholder surveys. These efforts resulted in a coalition with strong community buy-in and tight alignment with existing community priorities and assets. Implementation evaluation included a grassroots approach consisting of topic-specific working groups, a member driven agenda-setting process and leveraging member resources that achieved policy successes.

The North Carolina Center for Training and Translation conducted the review of the CCC Food Policy Council. The review posted on their website includes detailed descriptions of the CCC Food Policy Council's formative phase, organizational structure, implementation process as well as supporting materials including working group planning tools, a generic logic model and evaluation plan, available at http://www.centertrt.org/index.cfm?fa=opinterventions.intervention&intervention=ccc&page=overview

So far, we have been talking about evaluations that track specific objectives, outputs, and outcomes. Another approach is the values-based planning and evaluation described in the *Whole Measures for Community Food Systems* (CFS) tool. Whole Measures CFS reflects ideas developed by the Center for Whole Communities, whose mission is to create "inclusive communities that are strongly rooted in place and where all people—regardless of income, race, or background—have access to and a healthy relationship with the natural world." The *Whole Measures* CFS tool is based on six fields of practices that reflect a vision for whole communities. The fields include Justice and Fairness, Strong Communities, Vibrant Farms, Healthy People, Sustainable EcoSystems, and Thriving Local Economies.

Evaluation Resources

A variety of resources are available online to evaluate programs and policies from the Center for Training and Research Translation website at http://www.center-trt.org including:

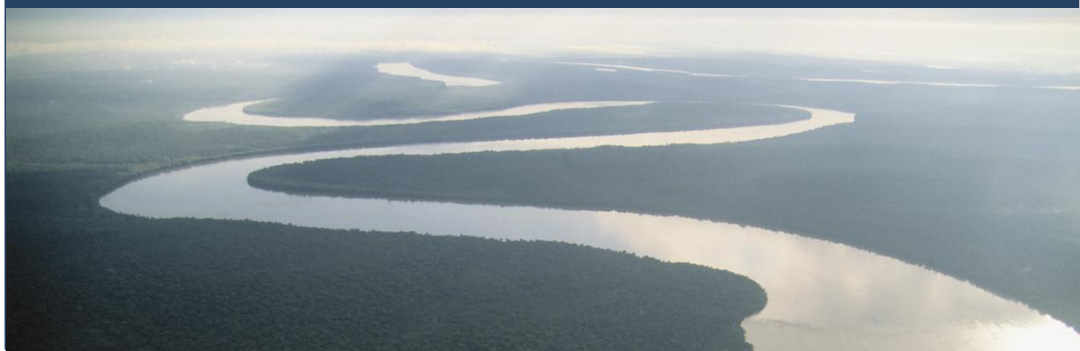
Evaluation Framework for Obesity Prevention Policy Interventions
http://www.center-trt.org/index.cfm?fa=evidence.evaluation

Riverside Unified School District Farmers' Market Salad Bar Program
http://www.center-trt.org/index.cfm?fa=opinterventions.intervention&intervention=rusd&page=evaluation

West Virginia School Nutrition Standards
http://www.center-trt.org/index.cfm?fa=opinterventions.intervention&intervention=wva&page=evaluation

Health Bucks
http://www.center-trt.org/index.cfm?fa=opinterventions.intervention&intervention=healthbucks&page=evaluation

Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Policy Approach
http://www.center-trt.org/index.cfm?fa=opinterventions.intervention&intervention=fts&page=evaluation



At its core, Whole Measures CFS aims to assess strengths and weaknesses of food system activities based on values assigned to each of the fields. This type of planning and evaluation helps develop a shared vision and common measures among partner organizations. It also helps explore areas of difference so that stronger collaborations can develop. Dialogue between diverse groups in the community is a key part of the process—as it is, really, in all aspects of a food policy council's work. For a copy of *Whole Measures for Community Food Systems,* go to http://foodsecurity.org/pub/WholeMeasuresCFS-web.pdf.

Evaluation of food policy councils can take many forms and be conducted for different purposes. At a minimum the evaluation should address *what worked* and *what changed*. For example, how did you implement the initiative and how could it be improved (what worked) and in what ways did the initiative make a difference (what changed)? Your partners must be engaged in developing the evaluation purpose and questions to help ensure that the evaluation is designed to answer questions important to the partners, which increases the likelihood of continued support of the program and that the evaluation findings will be used.

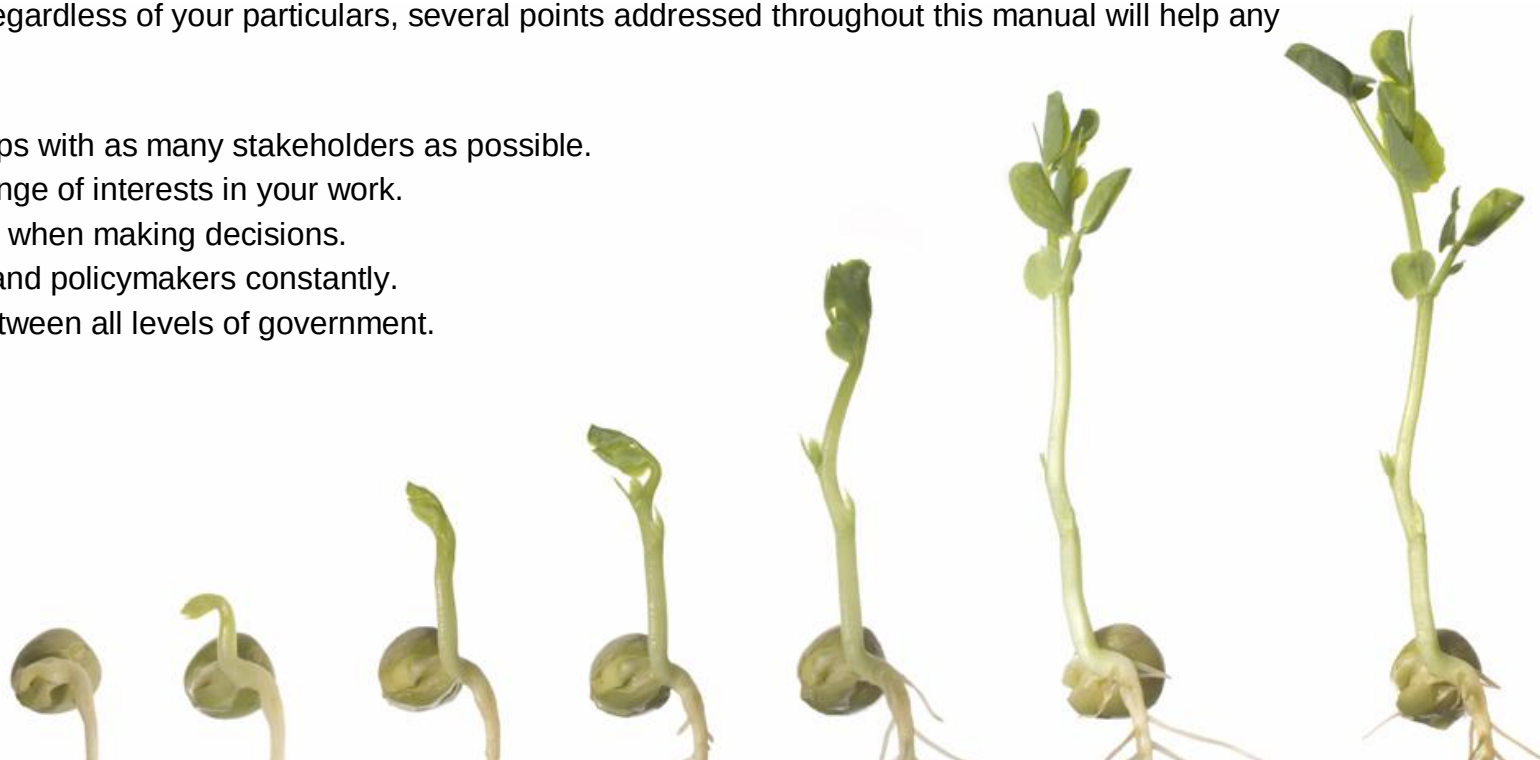
Chapter Seven: Lessons Learned

The people who form a food policy council often come from diverse backgrounds—socioeconomically, ethnically, geographically. They may have various experiences with or knowledge of the community food system. But they share a commitment to achieving food security and food justice where they live, and they're willing to do some hard work to reach those goals.

Making changes to the food system means focusing on the three P's of Projects, Partners, and Policies. FPCs, of course, sometimes work on projects and must form partnerships. But their real concern should be the third part of that troika—shaping the creation of policies at the state and regional level that promote access to affordable, nutritious food for all.

You've seen that food policy councils come in many "flavors," and only you and those you work with know what works best where you live. But regardless of your particulars, several points addressed throughout this manual will help any FPC do its work:

- Cultivate relationships with as many stakeholders as possible.
- Include a diverse range of interests in your work.
- Work for consensus when making decisions.
- Educate the public and policymakers constantly.
- Look for synergy between all levels of government.



We've looked at examples of what food policies councils have done to achieve those goals, and there are dozens more. In Ohio, the Athens Food Policy Council helped win passage of an ordinance to allow front-yard food gardening; in Pima County, Arizona, the county Food System Alliance helped overturn county health regulations that made it hard for schools and restaurants to serve food raised on small farms. Across the country, people see a need for systemic change in how we raise, process, distribute, and consume our food.

Pam Roy, a veteran of food-system work and a member of the New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council, offers a good recap of what food policy council members should be doing, "I think the most important approach we could share with others is to stick to a set of priorities: Do your homework (research and community input); engage a diverse set of stakeholders; build your alliances even with those who may have differing interests; engage policymakers at all levels (local, state, executive branch, and federal); and build on one main issue over time. It may take years. Once you have a policy in place the work continues. It is imperative to engage in 'administrative advocacy'– following up with the policy and how it is implemented."[24]

You now have the tools to create a key component in bringing change to the food system. You can follow the models of others dedicated to food security while forging specific policies and programs that target the needs of the people you care about most: your family, your friends and neighbors, and your community as a whole. The problems we face across the country in providing affordable, nutritious food to all sometimes seem overwhelming. But working with like-minded people from across the food-system spectrum, you can build networks, educate, and create policy changes that help many people. As part of a food policy council, you can make a difference.

At times, food policy work can be frustrating. Lawmakers might ignore your recommendations; funding can be scarce; members might have varying levels of commitment to the cause. But seeing a policy put in place that brings fresh fruits and vegetables to school kids, or helps farmers save land their families have worked for generations, makes the frustrations melt away. Food policy council work is vital to ensuring the fruits of this land of plenty are enjoyed by all.

Food Policy Council Resources

Articles and Reports

Biehler, Dawn, Andy Fisher, Kai Siedenburg, Mark Winne, and Jill Zachary. *Getting Food on the Table: An Action Guide to Local Food Policy*. Community Food Security Coalition and California Sustainable Working Group, 1999. Available online at http://www.foodsecurity.org/GettingFoodOnTheTable.pdf

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Pothukuchi, Kami, Hugh Joseph, Hannah Burton, and Andy Fisher. *What’s Cooking in Your Food System?: A Guide to Community Food Assessment*. Community Food Security Coalition, 2002. Available online at http://foodsecurity.org/pub/whats_cooking.pdf

Scherb, Allyson, Anne Palmer, Shannon Frattaroli, and Keshia Pollack. “Exploring Food System Policy: A Survey of Food Policy Councils in the United States.” *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems and Community Development*, Vol. 2, Issue 4 (Summer 2012).

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Toolkits and Document Examples

Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit. United States Department of Agriculture,
http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efan02013/

Evaluation tools and resources:

Coalition Assessment Tool
http://publichealth.msu.edu/pph/pdf/capstones/m_holtsclaw_capstone.pdf

Member Evaluation Survey
http://www.foodfirst.org/en/food+policy+council

Partnership Evaluation: Guidebook and Resources
http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/PartnershipEvaluation.pdf

Evaluation of State Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Plans
www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/EvaluationofStateNPAOPlans.pdf

North Carolina Center for Training and Translation
http://www.center-rt.org/index.cfm?fa=opinterventions.intervention&intervention=ccc&page=overview

Center TRT Evaluation Resources
http://www.center-trt.org

Free website-hosting for non-profits
Grassroots.org
http://www.grassroots.org/services/free-website-hosting

Guidelines for community food assessments
http://foodsecurity.org/pub/whats_cooking.pdf

Guidelines for conducting surveys and focus groups for community food assessments
http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EFAN02013/

Guidelines for retail food assessments
http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/HFRassessment.pdf

Recommendations for writing bylaws
http://ohioline.osu.edu/cd-fact/co-bl.html.

Resources for fundraising
http://www.foodsecurity.org/FPC/resources-funding.html

Sample annual report
http://www.iowafoodsystemscouncil.org/storage/2010-2011%20IFSC%20Annual%20Report.pdf

Sample bylaws
http://www.foodsecurity.org/FPC/doc-organizational.html#by-laws

Sample founding resolution
http://www.santafecounty.org/userfiles/FoodPolicyResolution2008-26.pdf

Tips for finding a facilitator for strategic planning sessions
http://www.philanthropyjournal.org/resources/managementleadership/choosing-strategic-planning-facilitator

Websites

Centers for Disease Control– Food Policy Councils
http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/healthyfood/foodpolicy.htm

Center for Collaborative Planning
http://www.connectccp.org/

Center for Whole Communities
http://www.wholecommunities.org/

Community Commons
http://www.communitycommons.org/

Community Food Security Coalition
http://www.foodsecurity.org/

Food System Assessments – Mendeley.com, http://www.mendeley.com/groups/1995073/food-system-assessments/

United States Department of Agriculture Hunger-Free Community Grants
http://www.fns.usda.gov/outreach/grants/hfc_grants.htm

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http://www.accesstohealthyfoods.org/

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http://alaskafoodpolicy.blogspot.com/

Athens Food Policy Council
http://ohiofoodshed.ning.com/group/athensfoodpolicycouncil

Baltimore City Food Policy Advisory Committee
http://baltimorecity.gov/Government/AgenciesDepartments/Planning/BaltimoreFoodPolicyInitiative/About.aspx

Berkeley, California, Food Policy Council
http://www.berkeleyside.com/tag/berkeley-food-policy-council/

Birmingham-Jefferson County Food Policy Council
http://www.championsforhealth.org/birmingham-jefferson-food-policy-council-formed.php

Boulder County, Colorado, Food and Agriculture Policy Council
http://www.bouldercounty.org/gov/boards/pages/fapc.aspx

Burlington, Vermont, Food Policy Council
http://burlingtonfoodcouncil.org/

Aaron Newton
Cabarrus County, North Carolina, Food Policy Council
http://www.cabarruscounty.us/government/departments/sustainability/local%20food/Pages/Cabarrus-County-Food-Policy-Council.aspx

Central Oregon Food Policy Council
http://centraloregonfoodpolicy.org/

Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council
http://www.chicagofoodpolicy.org/

Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Council
http://cccfoodpolicy.org/

Wendy Peters Moschetti
Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council
http://www.cofoodsystemscouncil.org/

Linda Drake
Connecticut Food Policy Council
http://www.ct.gov/doag/cwp/view.asp?a=3595&q=423834

Martin Bailkey
Dane County, Wisconsin, Food Council
http://www.countyofdane.com/foodcouncil/

Detroit Food Policy Council
http://www.detroitfoodpolicycouncil.net/

Evanston, Illinois, Food Policy Council
http://www.thetalkingfarm.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=78

Martha Page
Hartford, Connecticut, Advisory Commission on Food Policy
http://hartfordfood.org/publications/FoodPolicy2011.pdf

Humboldt County, California, Food Policy Council
https://www.humboldt.edu/ccrp/humboldt-food-policy-council

Stephanie Welch
Knoxville-Knox County, Tennessee, Food Policy Council
http://www.cityofknoxville.org/boards/food.asp

Lane County, Oregon, Food Policy Council
http://www.fpclanecounty.org/

Louisville, Kentucky, Metro Food Policy Advisory Council
http://www.louisvilleky.gov/Health/PuttingPreventiontoWork/FoodPolicyChanel/

Massachusetts Food Policy Council
http://www.mass.gov/agr/boards-commissions/mfpc.htm

Jane Whitacre
Michigan Food Policy Council
http://www.michigan.gov/mfpc

Bonnie Buckingham
Missoula, Montana, Community Food & Agriculture Coalition
http://www.missoulacfac.org/

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Food and Fitness Policy Council
http://www.mvskokefood.org/component/content/article/99-muscogee-creek-nation-food-a-fitness-policy-council.html

Pam Roy
New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council
http://www.farmtotablenm.org/policy/

New Orleans Food & Farm Network
http://www.noffn.org/

Oakland Food Policy Council
http://www.oaklandfood.org/home

Pima County Food Systems Alliance
http://pimafoodalliance.org/

Steve Cohen
Portland Multnomah County, Oregon, Food Policy Council
https://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=42290

Puget Sound, Washington, Regional Food Policy Council
http://psrc.org/about/advisory/regional-food-policy-council

Sacramento Food System Collaborative
http://www.foodsystemcollaborative.org/

San Diego Food System
http://sandiegofoodsystem.com/

San Mateo, California, Food System Alliance
http://aginnovations.org/alliances/sanmateo/

Santa Fe Food Policy Council
http://www.santafefoodpolicy.org/

Rita Scott
Tahlequah Food Policy Council
Oklahoma Farm and Food Alliance
http://www.okfarmandfood.org/food-policy-councils