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- Resources: “Doing Food Policy Councils Right,” “Good Law, Good Food: Guide to Food Policy,” “Good Law...State Food Policy,”
- www.foodpolicynetworks.org : FPC resources, directory, and list serve

Why Have a Food Policy Council?

“No major famine has ever occurred in a functioning democracy with regular elections, opposition parties, basic freedom and relatively free media (even when the country is very poor).”

Amartya Sen, Nobel Laureate Economist

Purposes of Food Policy Councils

- **Influence government food policies, especially ones that promote justice, equity, and sustainability**
- **Coordinate efforts of food system stakeholders within a specified geography and jurisdictions**
- **Tend to favor policies over projects, but...**
- **Tend to not take on the most controversial food issues of the day**
- **Conduct food assessments and prepare food plans**

Food Policy Council Growth & Orientation

- **Specific geographic and jurisdictional focus: municipal, county, state (about 20), regional, and tribal**
- **Considers all elements of the food system**
- **Multi-stakeholder orientation**
- **2010: 111 FPCs**
- **2012: 193 FPCs**
- **2014: 202 FPCs**

FPCs: What They Do

- **There are no “Departments of Food”; FPCs can be a de facto Dept. of Food**
- **FPCs are food system planning venues**
- **Membership: government, academia, community members, farmers and gardeners, food banks, distributors, restaurants, retailers, and faith communities**
- **Focus gov’t functions – health, planning, econ. development, education, agriculture, social services – on food system concerns**
- **FPCs advise policy makers, address food-related regulations, budgeting, legislation, programs and administration**

Organizational Structure

FPCs can be created by:

- **State statute (Conn.) or local ordinance (Douglas County, KS)**
- **An executive order (North Carolina) or local resolution (Santa Fe, NM)**
- **May be independently organized (government agencies participate but FPC is not a part of government: California, Cleveland)**
- **Can also be organized as non-profits (Iowa) or operate under the aegis of an existing non-profit (New Mexico)**
- **May operate with direct support from a state agency (Alaska Health Dept.)**

Equity

- **Composition of Food Policy Council members: Does it reflect the community?**
- **Commitment to community engagement: Do your food assessment and public consultation processes target lower income communities?**
- **Selection of policy issues: Do your primary public policy interventions address the community's health, social, and economic disparities?**
- **Is there balance between policy makers, food system stakeholders, and grass roots? Ex: Top down – Mayors direct the work; bottom up – grass roots and private sector stakeholders direct the work**

Determining Focus of a FPC

Use Food System Assessments to:

- ↳ **Inform** the work and focus of a FPC
- ↳ **Engage** the wider community
- ↳ **Develop** your community's food profile
- ↳ **Educate** everyone about needs, gaps, resources and features of food system

How:

- ↳ **Use** existing studies, reports and stats; **supplement** with original research such key stakeholder interviews
- ↳ **Conduct** public forums and hearings

Often lead to: Food Plans, Strategies, and Charters

Remember: Don't over do it! Stay grounded!

Purpose of Food Plan or Charter

- **Secure stakeholder buy-in and participation in food system change**
- **Develop common policy agenda**
- **Identify food system opportunities and challenges**
- **Gather food system data**
- **Develop measurable goals**
- **Organize and coordinate stakeholders: Plan is more a means than an end**
- **Nurture the development of local and regional networks**

Minnesota Food Charter (about 5 states have food charters) www.MNfoodcharter.com

- Minnesota Blue Cross/Blue Shield Foundation played a major role**
- No single backbone organization**
- Cooperative Extension heavily involved**
- About a two-year effort**
- Local FPCs were involved**
- Used collective impact approach**

2500 participants, 200 events and convenings (some had 8 people; some 100), surveys and focus groups

Minnesota Continued:

- Major investment in relationship and network building is probably biggest outcome**
- Some policy recommendations: 1) Establish Healthy Food Financing Initiative to combat food deserts; 2) Offer more high nutrition food at state food pantries; 3) provide tax credits to farmers for donated food to food pantries**
- Political pushback: because MN is a big sugar beet state, the only major item left out of Charter was tax on sugary soft drinks.**

Food Policies and Actions

- **Supermarket Development (food to the people):**
 - **New Haven, Conn.(Dwight CDC)**
 - **Fresh Food Financing Initiative (Penn.)**
- **Optimizing impact of Federal nutrition programs**
 - **Improving WIC caseload and services in Hartford**
 - **Bringing EBT to farmers' markets**
- **Public transportation (people to the food)**
 - **new bus routes in Hartford**
- **Procurement regulations that favor the purchase of locally produced food and support local economies – New Mexico and Los Angeles**

Local & State Food Policy

- **Farmland Preservation (Connecticut and Montana)**
- **Nutrition Rules in Schools and Farm to School (New Mexico)**
- **Improved farm economy (Michigan)**
- **Developing a local and sustainable food economy (Illinois)**
- **Comprehensive food planning (Massachusetts)**

FPC Actions and Accomplishments

Cleveland/Cuyahoga County FPC:

- **Secured zoning changes to promote urban agriculture and raising of chickens and bees**
- **Expanding food businesses with city economic development funds and using city/county purchasing funds for locally grown food**
- **Healthy Cleveland Initiative – Banning trans-fat; clash between public and private interests.**

Funding and Staffing

- **Funding**
 - **Federal: Community Food Projects; Center for Disease Control; Community Development Block Grants**
 - **Community funding: foundations; state, county, and city sources**
 - **In-kind support: colleges and universities, larger non-profits, Cooperative Extension**
- **Staffing: Most FPCs use one, half to full-time person; in-kind staffing from public agencies and larger non-profits**

Lessons Learned (Challenges)

- **Organizational effectiveness in a coalition setting determined by strength of vision and leadership**
- **Inclusivity of food system interests**
- **Engage community and policymakers**
- **On conflict: work for consensus; foster climate of healthy debate; evaluate and rate policy options**
- **Educate your members, the general public, and policy makers constantly; develop strong internal and external communication**
- **Set measurable goals and evaluate regularly**
- **Community food assessment is an on-going enterprise, not a one-time act**
- **Look for synergy between all levels of government**
- **Practice good facilitation skills**