

VOICES FOR FOOD

FOOD COUNCIL CREATION GUIDE
Using Food Councils to Bridge the Gap Between
Food Security and Healthy Food Choices



Produced by:



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INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization defines food security as “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.”

Many communities throughout the United States value connecting efforts to improve food security with work to improve local food systems. This connection has the potential to address community food security in lasting and comprehensive ways, while promoting equity, preserving natural resources, and developing stronger local economies.

Food councils offer a unique platform to bring together food security efforts and engage a broad group of stakeholders and community members in creating change in the food system. By coordinating public and private efforts to create a more robust local food system and improve access to nutritious, affordable, safe food for all, food councils can foster the economic, social, physical, and environmental health of the community.

This guide outlines basic steps for organizing and running a food council. It focuses on practical ways to connect food system work to community food security. This section defines a few important concepts that are woven throughout the guide – and the work of food councils.

What are Community Stakeholders?

Community stakeholders are those who can affect or be affected by an organization's actions, objectives, and policies.

What is a Food System?

A food system is made up of the people, processes, and places involved with moving food from the farm to its final destination, whether it is the family dinner table, a local restaurant, or a cafeteria lunch line. Food systems are generally made up of six sectors: growing, processing, distributing, preparing, retailing, and eating food (see Figure 1). Food systems at all levels (local, regional, national, and global) are interrelated and can be studied at all levels (adapted from Colasanti et al., 2010).

What is a Food Council?

Definition

A food council is a group of people who come together to assess and recommend practices that affect one or more aspects of the food system in a specific area.

A food council may operate as part of a local, regional, or state government, as a private group, or as a public-private partnership. Members might be appointed by a government official or executive board, nominated by other members, or informally self-selected. They are

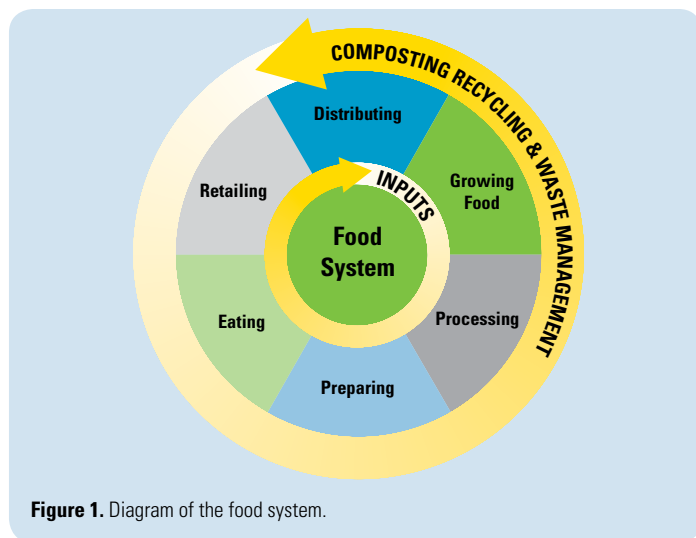


Figure 1. Diagram of the food system.

often chosen to represent particular stakeholder groups in the food system. Members often include hunger relief and food justice advocates, educators, representatives from nonprofit organizations, health care industry, concerned residents, government officials, farmers, grocers, chefs, food service workers, food processors, and food distributors. Ideally, councils should include representatives from all six sectors of the food system.

Following are common functions of food councils:

- Serve as public forums for discussing food-related issues.
- Create a place for assessing the community food system as a whole.
- Identify and address gaps in the food system.
- Act as liaison between public and private sectors of the food system.
- Build relationships among stakeholders in the food system.
- Work to make food systems more environmentally sustainable and socially just.
- Give a voice to often-marginalized stakeholders, such as those who rely on the emergency food system.
- Play an active role in educating policy makers and the public about food system challenges and barriers.

According to the Michigan Food Policy Council, “Food policy councils, often established by state or local governments, bring together a broad array of food-related public and private stakeholders to investigate every stage of the food process from farm to table. Consumers, producers, and public officials are becoming more aware of the economic and health impacts of supporting fresh

and local foods, resulting in greater attention to many food-related issues. Food policy councils are tapping into this increasing interest to explore policy options that improve the food system” ([State of] Michigan, 2001–14).

Origins

For more than 30 years, food experts and advocates for food security have been working to bring together all sectors of the food system to improve the world’s food security. Food councils, the focus of this guide, can be significant players in local, regional, and state food system work, whether they’re public, private, or a combination.

The nation’s first food council was organized in 1982 in Knoxville, Tennessee, in response to an alarming study done in 1977 by Robert Wilson, a University of Tennessee (UT) professor. Wilson and his team of graduate students from the UT School of Planning studied the availability of affordable and nutritious food in the city of Knoxville. The Knoxville Food Policy Council lobbied successfully for city schools to provide free or low-cost breakfast to low-income students. The council also worked to improve the access of families with limited resources to grocery stores through public transportation.

Since 1982, food councils have been created across the nation as more people become aware of issues related to food and agriculture, such as increasing poverty levels, the rising cost of food-related health issues (including obesity, diabetes, and heart disease), some neighborhoods’ limited access to healthy food, the rise of the local food movement, loss of farmland and farmers, and soil erosion.

Policy or Not: What’s in a Name?

Many food councils do at least some policy work. Some of the groups (such as the Every County Food Policy Council) include the word *policy* in their names. Others (such as the Eating Good Food Council) don’t.

Groups that leave *policy* out of their names have expressed concerns that using it might drive away people and organizations who don’t see policy work as part of the mission or their external stakeholders are threatened by it.

We use *food council* in this guide to refer to all groups – with and without *policy* in their names – that work to identify and address food system issues in their communities.

STARTING A FOOD COUNCIL

Many new food councils are started by a small group of local people who see a critical need in their community and want to address it. Some of the earliest steps might include the following;

- Identifying the purpose and role of the group.
- Assessing community interest in issues related to the food system.
- Creating a structure for a food council – informal or formal.
- Informing residents of their progress.

According to the American Planning Association (DiLisio, 2011), food councils tend to have some operating characteristics in common. These are as follows:

- Take a comprehensive approach.
- Pursue long-term strategies.
- Offer tangible solutions.
- Are based on place.
- Advocate on behalf of the larger community.
- Seek buy-in from the government.
- Set formal policies and criteria for membership.
- Are able to operate with little or no funding. (They learn to use existing community resources and build on the collaborative strength of their members.)

Resource

The *Food Policy Networks* website at <https://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-a-livable-future/projects/FPN/index.html> offers an extensive list of resources on setting up food councils. The site was developed by the Center for a Livable Future at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Identifying and Recruiting Potential Members

Food council organizers should be sure to include two main stakeholder groups in early community conversations that lead to creating a food council: food system actors and food system partners. Both groups are described in this section. Also include organizations and individuals in the community who don’t fall into one of these two groups.

Food System Actors

The food system actors group includes representatives from each link in the food supply chain from farm to table. A list of these actors follows:

- **Growing** – Farmers, ranchers, livestock producers, farm workers, community garden managers, home gardeners, and community gardeners.
- **Processing** – Packers; shippers; aggregators; businesses that wash, freeze, can, or otherwise process fresh foods; meat processing businesses; and food manufacturers.
- **Distributing** – Wholesale food businesses and markets, food hubs, and food banks.
- **Preparing** – Businesses that prepare and serve meals, including restaurants, schools, hospitals, universities, correctional facilities, childcare sites, long-term care facilities, and food service management companies.
- **Retailing** – Grocery and convenience stores, farmers markets, and farm stands.
- **Eating** – Consumers of diverse age, race, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, and geographic location.
- **Inputs** – Businesses (such as seed companies, agricultural chemical companies, farm equipment manufacturers, farm and food business loan agencies) that produce the supplies used by the food sectors.
- **Waste management** – Businesses and government agencies that compost, recycle, or otherwise dispose of waste products from the food sectors.

Food System Partners

Food system partners are representatives of stakeholder groups that intersect with the food system in key ways. A list of these partners follows:

- **State Cooperative Extension System members** – Each state has a Cooperative Extension Service (though not all of them are known by that name) based at its land-grant university. Extension addresses a wide range of human, plant, and animal needs in both urban and rural areas. It provides research-based education, technical information, and community development expertise in many aspects of the food system.
- **Hunger relief** – Representatives from food banks, food pantries, and food benefit and distribution programs (such as SNAP, WIC, Project Fresh, and Double Up Food Bucks) all play major roles in improving food access. It's also important to include food pantry clients, volunteers, and staff who can speak directly to the needs of the most vulnerable

populations in the community.

- **Natural resources** – Environmental groups, conservation agencies, and municipal water departments all have a stake in preserving the land and water quality needed to produce food.
- **Education** – Schools and extracurricular youth programs such as 4-H and FFA are essential to the education of the next generation of food system producers and consumers.
- **Culture and community** – Chambers of commerce and tourism bureaus can encourage the place-making and community-building elements of local food systems by organizing, providing space for, and publicizing farmers markets, local food and agritourism opportunities, and food-based festivals.
- **Planners** – Planning commissions and professional planners can shape the food system through master plan, ordinance, and zoning decisions.
- **Nutrition and public health** – Nutrition advocates, dietitians, local health departments, medical staff, and hospitals all have a stake in encouraging healthy eating patterns as a strategy for turning around negative trends in diet-related diseases and chronic conditions.
- **Economic development** – Investors and economic development agencies can help channel capital investments toward food system development.
- **Disaster response and emergency preparedness** – Government groups and relief agencies have a stake in planning for food access during and after natural disasters, major power outages, and other emergencies.
- **Government** – Elected and appointed officials can be called on to address the food system concerns of their constituents. Governmental units can also play a role in bringing together stakeholders in the food system.
- **Labor** – Unions and labor groups can represent the needs and concerns of consumers and workers across the food system.
- **Transportation** – Transportation planners and transportation departments play important roles in improving food distribution and access.
- **Food justice** – Food and social justice advocates can help ensure that discussions about the food system consider equity and represent the concerns of people who are often marginalized.
- **Land** – Land banks and trusts can help facilitate urban

agriculture, preserve farmland, and identify potential sites for food system business developments such as food hubs and food innovation districts.

- **Residents** – Neighborhood associations, community groups, and individuals can represent the interests of local residents of all ages. Faith-based organizations can also help organizers connect with community members.

Youth Involvement

Young people play important roles on effective food councils. Early involvement in and education about food system work can lead to a lifetime of engagement. Youth members often provide unique insights into their peers' needs and can communicate effectively with other young people in the community.

Youth-serving organizations such as 4-H, Junior Master Gardener programs, FFA, and scouts; faith-based organizations; and schools are great places to recruit young people to work with the food council.

Young people can participate in the work of food councils in many ways. Following are a few examples:

- Serve as a voice for the community's youth and vote as a council member.
- Volunteer for food council work such as planning, organizing, and working in community gardens; working in food pantries; organizing and conducting community PhotoVoice™ projects; and lobbying for healthy school lunches and safe routes to school.

Youth Engagement

The activities, worksheets, and videos from an online resource called *Pantry Panic* (www.midohiofoodbank.org/pantrypanic) can help your food council encourage young people to get involved with local food pantries. The program is sponsored by the Mid-Ohio Food Bank, Ohio State University Extension, Ohio 4-H, and Abbott.

Resource

The Oregon Food Bank, recognized nationally for its innovative approach to community organizing, holds a process called FEAST: Food, Education, Agriculture Solutions Together (<https://www.oregonfoodbank.org/our-work/partnerships/community-food-systems/feast>). They use the FEAST model to spur community conversations and map out food systems in small communities. During the conversations, held over a meal, a facilitator helps community members map the assets, opportunities, and barriers that exist in their food system.

Find the FEAST Planning Manual: Community Foods Organizing resource at <http://www.ruralgrocery.org/resources/FEAST%20Planning%20Manual-%202012%20Final.pdf>

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE YOUR FOOD SYSTEM

Considering a Community Coach

In the early stages of development, a new food council may enlist a trained community coach or facilitator to lead conversations and help participants set goals and plan how to achieve them. Community coaches can help individuals and groups work through the necessary steps in forming a council, work through challenges, and come up with locally conceived, locally led solutions that fit the unique identity of the community. In the Voices for Food project, it was found that communities that used Extension professionals and nutrition educators as community coaches were more successful in developing food councils, organizing and carrying out key activities, and achieving their goals.

Following are appropriate roles for the community coach or facilitator:

- Engage the community in the process of moving from ideas to sustainable actions.
- Ask questions to clarify issues and make suggestions based on the answers.
- Provide training, guidance, and friendly accountability.
- Identify “what next” steps for the group.
- Provide an outside perspective and help keep the group on track.
- Connect the group to outside resources.

Many state Cooperative Extension Services have community development, SNAP-Ed, or community food system staff members who can serve as coaches or facilitators. A variety of community coaching tools is listed in the appendices.

Community coaches seeking professional development opportunities in how to engage with local food councils might consider training such as the MSU Extension Supporting Local Food Councils Online Course, which provides basic information and a set of skills to increase confidence in engaging with food councils. The online course is self-paced, free, and contains videos and

Resource

Supporting Local Food Councils Online Course: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/supporting-local-food-councils/>

This course was supported by the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development. Course facilitators are Jodee Ellett, Local Foods Coordinator with Purdue University, and Kendra Wills, Community Food Systems Educator with Michigan State University Extension.

resources that can be used during food council meetings.

Assessing Your Food Council's Readiness

Before carrying out any Voices for Food activities, you should assess the readiness of your food council to collectively implement new policies, practices, or activities. The National Institute of Health (NIH) Organizational Readiness for Implementing Change (ORIC) assessment is a valuable tool available at: <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/library/materials/organizational-readiness-implementing-change-oric>, that helps draw attention to the change readiness of the council, steps that need to be taken first, and coaching needed to help the group move forward.

By completing the NIH ORIC, community champions, food council members, or both can determine their shared confidence, willingness, and motivation to take actions that create change.

The ORIC assessment has a total of 60 points available. A group that scores low in total points may not be quite ready to work on making major changes or may need a little more time to work into a mindset for change. Coaches can work with the group to meet them where they are and help them move to the next level of change. A group scoring high in total points is looking forward to making opportunities come to life. Move forward with the Food Council Scorecard if the ORIC assessment indicates that your group is ready. The Food Council Scorecard measures ST5: Readiness and Need from the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework.

Here's how to begin the assessment:

1. Meet with the leadership, champions, council, or those who are responsible for administering the organization or group wanting to change their food environment.
2. Distribute the Executive Summary and supporting materials.
3. Have each member of the group complete the ORIC assessment.

The Food Council Scorecard

Before beginning to take action, it is helpful to have an objective picture of where the food council is being used in terms of organizing. Whether this guide to start from scratch or to strengthen an existing food council, the Voices for Food: Food Council Scorecard (Appendix A) can help identify a group's starting point. This practical scorecard contains 31 questions about council structure, purpose, activities, and accomplishments for a total of 62 points possible. All councils are unique in how they form, their operations, the activities they carry out, and the accomplishments they achieve. That's why the scorecard

is meant to mark progress over time rather than to provide a grade.

The Voices for Food study found that food councils that implemented more components from the Food Council Creation Guide had higher scores and accomplished many achievements. Encourage the council to strive for higher scores by using the scorecard to periodically check progress and use as a guide for new opportunities to grow and develop. The order in which items appear in the Food Council Scorecard denotes the chronological importance of completion. Most items contain a page number that corresponds with the guide. Starting at the top of the scorecard and working through the scorecard is recommended. Full directions and a copy of the scorecard are found in Appendix A.

If you are community coach using this Food Council Scorecard, find the Food Council Scorecard Coaching Questions in Appendix B.

Holding Community Conversations

A good way to involve residents and organizations and increase awareness of the emerging local food council is to hold a community conversation. These conversations also help the planning committee better understand local needs, interests, and ideas related to food. Using a volunteer or professional to facilitate the meetings will increase their effectiveness. Community conversations can help frame a more targeted community food assessment (see Appendix C) that provides baseline data to help organizers set realistic goals and offers additional insight into effective strategies and tactics for reaching the food council's goals.

Community conversations should be held on more than one day, at varying times and locations throughout the community, to maximize the number of people who can attend. The goal is to involve a diverse group of people with varying degrees of food system engagement to set the stage for a wide-ranging discussion. To inform people about scheduled conversations use newsletter and newspaper articles, public service announcements on radio and television, social media posts, email messages, letters, and web advertisements.

Here are some sample questions to ask during a community conversation:

- What food-related activities are already going on in our community?
- What food resources do we already have and what food resources do we need to help us carry out this work?
- What food resources or outlets do we wish we had more of?

- What do we want to achieve as it relates to food?
- In your own opinion, what are the most important food system-related issues for us to tackle?
- How can we involve our community in this effort?
- Who are some of the key “food champions” we should involve in this process?

Considering Food Charters or ByLaws

After completing a community conversation or another process to intentionally engage a broad group of stakeholders in the planning process, a community may choose to create a local food charter. A food charter and ByLaws (sample ByLaws can be found in Appendix D) are documents that spell out a food council’s guiding values, principles, vision, mission, goals, and priorities.

Both food charters and ByLaws provide a framework under which many people and groups can work toward a shared set of priorities and strategies. It becomes the foundation for activities designed to:

- Address barriers in food access.
- Promote healthy food choices.
- Increase public awareness of the availability of healthy food.
- Educate residents about the local food system.
- Advocate for nutritious food offerings in schools and institutions.

Developing a Vision and Mission

Even if a food council chooses not to create a food charter or develop formal ByLaws, it’s still important for the group to clearly articulate its purpose, mission, and vision before launching into the myriad issues it could consider.

Food councils need to recognize their own capabilities and limitations, then define their roles accordingly. Otherwise, they risk being spread too thin and relying on relatively inexperienced volunteer members to carry out major program development tasks.

It’s important for food councils to keep in mind that many of their members don’t have much time to give the council beyond attending regular meetings. It probably makes sense for most food councils to develop a shared agenda that partner organizations with dedicated staff can implement. Three important guiding steps in that effort are the creation of the purpose, mission, and vision statements:

- A **purpose statement** explains the reason for taking action. It answers the question, “Why is the food council doing what it is doing?”

Success Story: Ohio Food Bank Hosts Community Conversations

Fayette County, Ohio, and the Mid-Ohio Food Bank held a successful series of 2-hour lunchtime community conversations to create a food council plan of action.

The meetings took place every 2 weeks for 10 weeks, with conversation topics chosen beforehand. Ground rules were set at the first meeting. Each conversation began with a review of the ground rules and a recap of the previous meeting.

For each conversation, participants broke into three- or four-person groups and discussed a set of questions framed around the meeting topic. At the end of the discussion period, the small groups reported their main ideas to the larger group. All ideas were recorded for later use. Participants were encouraged to participate in different groups for each discussion.

At the final meeting of the series, participants shaped a plan of action based on their discussions.

Everyone who attended was encouraged to invite – if not bring along – someone new to each conversation. Participants included government employees, human services employees, concerned residents, healthcare workers, school food service managers, food producers, and members of the faith community.

Resources: Sample Food Charters

The Michigan Good Food Charter (<https://www.canr.msu.edu/michiganfood/uploads/files/Charter.pdf>), released in 2010, sets out six goals for the year 2020, along with 25 strategies for achieving those goals.

Other sample charters and similar documents are listed here:

- Minnesota Food Charter for Our Healthy Future (mnfoodcharter.com)
- Vermont – Farm to Plate Strategic Plan (www.vtfarmtoplate.com)
- Iowa – Cultivating Resilience: A Food System Blueprint That Advances the Health of Iowans, Farms and Communities ([https://www.farmlandinfo.org/sites/default/files/Cultivating Resilience Iowa Blueprint 1.pdf](https://www.farmlandinfo.org/sites/default/files/Cultivating%20Resilience%20Iowa%20Blueprint%201.pdf))
- Colorado – Food Policy Blueprint (<https://livewellcolorado.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/final-food-policy-blueprint.pdf>)

- A **mission statement** spells out how the food council is operating to achieve its purpose. It answers the question, “How will members of the council work together?”
- A **vision statement** explains what success would look like for the group. It answers the question, “What kind of food system would our community or region like to see?”

The purpose, mission, and vision statements should be referred to again and again to ensure that the group is staying on track toward its stated purpose. These statements can help local food councils explain how their work is different from, and perhaps actually complements, that of other food-related organizations in the community. Doing so can help reduce competition among groups for funding, recognition, and volunteer time.

It is critical that members agree on these guiding statements in order to align the council’s interest and efforts, govern the council’s focus, and help members explain the council’s direction to the community.

Setting Goals

Once a council has conducted community conversations and is clear on its vision, mission, and role, it can begin to identify specific goals. Ideally, goals are measurable and based on current conditions. These goals could be the ones that were identified in the food charter or other guiding document, such as bylaws.

Current conditions and issues of concern in the region can be determined through a comprehensive community food assessment process. Such an assessment typically aims to cover all major areas of the food system, though some groups may choose to focus on particular areas of interest. Assessments may involve a range of methods, from interviews with residents, surveys of farmers, and focus groups of business leaders to analysis of existing data sets. They are used to answer factual questions, such as these:

- What is the extent to which local residents have adequate access to healthy food?
- At what rate is farmland lost in the area?
- How much capacity does the area have for processing food?
- How much food is produced in the area?

Assessments can be used as opportunities to solicit the perspectives of community members. The answers to many of the questions suggested for a community conversation could be included as data points in an assessment process.

Success Story: Michigan Uses Food Charter to Galvanize Partnership

In Michigan a lot of exciting work was being done around local food system development in the late 2000s. Seeing the good work unfold, several foundation, university, and nonprofit leaders began to ask how the various efforts could be brought together and taken to the next level.

In 2009, the Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems, the Michigan Food Policy Council, and the Food Bank Council of Michigan, with funding from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, came together to begin developing a statewide food system roadmap.

The partner organizations brought together a diverse planning committee to guide the process. They created five work groups based on key areas of the food system. As the work groups were engaging people around the state to come up with draft priorities for Michigan, the planning committee was designing the process of soliciting input on their proposed recommendations. Six months after first coming together, the partner organizations presented draft goals and priorities at a statewide summit.

At the daylong event, organizers gathered audience feedback on draft food system goals and worked to build momentum and the partnerships needed to implement the goals.

Later the work groups refined their ideas based on input from the summit. The final product of their work, called the Michigan Good Food Charter, was released in June 2010.

Since then, many local food councils and regional networks have incorporated the charter into their missions, goals, and strategic plans. More than 360 groups and individuals have signed a resolution supporting the charter, and its shared framework has helped leverage grant funding for food system work for multiple groups.

Working under the guidance of a steering committee of 20 organizations, the staff at the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems continues to coordinate the initiative. They promote the charter and organize a summit every two years to inform the public of work being done to fulfill the goals outlined in the charter.

Community Food Assessments

Community food assessment is the name given to the process of gathering data about the food system in an area of interest, such as a neighborhood, town, county, or region. Appendix C provides information on data that could be included in such an assessment, potential data sources, and research methods.

A community food system assessment is an important step in the process of developing an action plan for change in the food system. In the early stages of food council development, an assessment will identify gaps, assets, opportunities, barriers, and potential linkages that will, when addressed, help improve the community food system. Assessment activities also can be an excellent way to identify which food-related issues are most important to members of the local community.

Some food councils may be tempted to skip the community food assessment and jump right into focus groups and action teams based on what council members think are the community's food system-related needs. This may lead the council to pursue only objectives that are important to council members themselves, rather than to focus on addressing issues that affect the majority of the community.

Keep in mind that each community has unique circumstances and issues, so the goals of food councils in different areas of the country – or even the state – may be very different. On the other hand, it may be valuable for a food council to identify any state, regional, or local goals that align with their own local goals.

Councils would be wise to explore whether there are any food system initiatives at the state or regional levels – or initiatives that have arisen from related sectors such as water quality, the environment, and health – to align with. For example, many Michigan food councils have found it useful to align their goals with those of the Michigan Good Food Charter discussed earlier in this guide. They have also used the priorities in the charter as a starting point for researching their communities' needs.

Forming Task Forces

In some instances, councils may find it valuable to form task forces to more effectively address particular issues. Task forces typically meet separately from the full council and report to the council regularly. Task forces may consist of council members or could engage a broader group of people. Members might be nominated and elected by the council or the groups might be open to anyone interested in serving.

Task forces should have a clearly identified purpose and should be formed and dissolved as needed. For example, a task force might form to review land-use policies, then dissolve after making its recommendations to the full council.

Other councils may find they need standing subcommittees related to topics that need to be continually addressed. For example, a subcommittee on diversity and inclusion might continually work to engage underserved communities.

Communicating With Stakeholders and State Partners

A food council should work to engage and communicate with community residents as much as possible from the outset. Food system challenges cannot be addressed effectively without understanding the insights and perspectives of residents. The more open and transparent a council is, the more likely residents will support its actions, and even volunteer where needed. In addition, communicating with residents can help councils identify stakeholder groups they may have overlooked.

Food councils may find it helpful to have a communication plan in place that outlines the following:

- Target audiences.
- Channels of communication the council will use (for example, websites, social media, newsletters, press releases).
- Types of news and information that will be shared.
- Frequency of distributing news and information.

Some councils release an annual report on the status of the food system in their jurisdiction and the work of the council. Regardless of the mechanism and the frequency, councils should strive to regularly report to the broad community of food system stakeholders in their area. This communication can help keep stakeholders engaged and aware of the council's progress toward meeting its goals.

In addition to reporting to the local community, food councils in places with a state-level council or similar group will likely want to report to that council or group. Data gathered by several local councils may be aggregated to track progress toward statewide food system goals. Additionally, connecting with other food councils often provides insights about lessons learned, encouragement, and a sounding board about challenges and opportunities that councils are facing.

Working With Food Banks and Food Pantries

One key to addressing community hunger and food insecurity issues is for food councils to build effective partnerships with food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens, and faith-based food distributors. Partnering with these agencies can help address hunger and food access issues with programs and initiatives that will eventually lead to transitioning recipients of emergency food assistance away from dependence on them.

Many food banks have already started programs supporting local food systems and advocating for regulations that support the production, distribution, and consumption of fresh local produce. Specifically, they have worked to increase the amount of local fresh produce

Resource

The Center for a Livable Future at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health maintains a national directory of food councils at www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-a-livable-future/projects/FPN/. Taking the time to register and connect with other councils in the network may prove rewarding.

Food Councils and Guided Client-Choice Food Pantry Development

A growing number of food pantries are transitioning from a pre-packaged box or bag disbursement food pantry model to what is called a *guided client-choice model*. The new model allows pantry clients to choose the food they and their families need and will use from the pantry's stock. It cuts down on food waste and protects clients' dignity.

Food councils can help food pantries overcome the actual and perceived barriers to moving to this emerging food delivery model. Food pantry organizers have some concerns about the guided client-choice model. Common concerns include:

- It will require more space than is available to the pantry. The pantry will need to stock a greater variety of foods from the different food groups to suit differing client tastes.
- They won't be able to recruit enough volunteers to handle the new system.
- It will increase the strain on the pantry's facilities and equipment.

The *Voices for Food MyChoice: Guided Client-Choice Pantry Guide* is designed to help food pantries make the transition.

available to food pantries, school meal programs, and community feeding programs. Food banks have begun to conduct public education campaigns on the benefits of healthy eating, and have created opportunities to learn hands-on skills such as cooking and gardening. Most food banks have networks that include food handling and storage facilities, trucks and distribution routes, and staff members to support their endeavors. Your food council may benefit greatly through partnerships with these groups.

The potential for partnerships between food councils and food banks can be seen in examples from around the country. In San Mateo County, California, the food council toured the local food bank's facilities and discussed opportunities for growers to provide fresh produce to the food bank for distribution to agencies serving the needy. Now, food bank delivery trucks pick up produce from growers, and county food banks negotiate direct contracts with growers.

Understanding that food access and food security are partially cultural and educational issues, some food councils have promoted the implementation of culturally sensitive nutrition education programs. They have partnered with nutrition education providers, food banks, pantries, and other food assistance programs.

Food councils can help connect educational programs to the community at large. This can raise awareness of the prevalence of local food insecurity and the importance of looking at the food system comprehensively to increase food security in lasting and sustainable ways. Community education can also help motivate more people to take action in addressing barriers and gaps in the local food system.

Food councils can also help connect emergency food providers to other parts of the food system to help them meet the most basic needs of community residents. Creating community links and relationships to reduce breakdowns in the food system, as well as promoting new and innovative solutions that improve access to food are paramount.

An example of the power of expanded community relationships is a farmers market that creates a donation station. When the market closes for the day, vendors may choose to donate their excess produce. The donated produce can then be delivered to an emergency food provider. Foods from gleaning operations at local restaurants, hospitals, and other food service organizations can be distributed in the same way. With the right connections in place, gleaning can be accomplished with relatively little effort or food loss.

Food councils tend to bring together a variety of people with a variety of skills. That diversity can be a great help in addressing the nutritional and social issues that often underlie causes of food insecurity. Food council members can help in the following ways:

- Change food bank policy.
- Improve the food pantry environment – food choices, freshness, placement of items, produce displays, signage, layout of the pantry space, availability of nutrition information, and so on.
- Link clients with resources and educational materials.
- Help individuals and families improve their food security.
- Link food pantries with programs such as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) outreach efforts, community gardens, nutrition education workshops, gleaning programs, and virtual social-service referral systems.

Training Voices for Food Ambassadors

The Voices for Food Ambassador Training program is intended for food pantry personnel, clients, and food council members. This training provides instruction on nutrition, food safety, and cultural competency. Participants also learn how to effectively promote nutrition and be proactive about their food concerns, preferences, and needs. Once trained, Voices for Food Ambassadors become champions for nutrition in their homes, food pantries, and communities. The trainings can be found in the Voices for Food: Food Pantry Toolkit. Training can be completed in ways that are tailored to the council's needs – in half-day sessions or in mini-sessions divided into multiple modules.

Working With the Agricultural Community

Agriculture is the food production base for the entire food system. Often, it's also an economic engine for small rural towns. It's important to include farmers, ranchers, and other food producers in community conversations and as food council members.

To identify people to recruit from the agriculture sector to the food council, talk with some of these people and organizations:

- Local Extension office – Check with staff in the agriculture, horticulture, 4-H, and community economic development program areas.
- Regional agricultural research centers at your state's land grant university – Contact the researchers, managers, and technicians.
- Farmers market managers and vendors.
- Farm Bureau administrative offices.
- K–12 and community college teachers of agriculture, agriscience, or agribusiness.
- Agricultural commodity groups.
- Seed dealers.
- Large-animal veterinarians.
- Agricultural loan officers.
- Local and regional offices of the USDA Farm Service Agency.

Visiting local businesses where farmers and ranchers gather can also lead to potential volunteers. These places might include coffee shops, diners, and grain elevators.

Asking a person to help out the food council in a face-to-face meeting can work well. Find out what type of agriculture the person is involved in (for example, fruit or

vegetable production, dairy farming, or running a cow-calf operation), and consider specifically.

(Note: Schedule meetings to avoid farmers' and ranchers' busiest times (planting, harvesting, and birthing seasons) to make it easier for them to attend. Seasons vary by region or state.)



Promoting Your Food Council Through Social Media

Social media is defined as any online medium that provides for user interaction, discussion, and commenting. Some examples are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flickr, Tumblr, and blogging). Voices for Food encourages the use of social media. A food council may find social media tools helpful in addressing food issues in the community by:

- Providing information on the food council and its activities.
- Educating people.
- Developing relationships.
- Fostering conversations.

It is important to consider the goal of using social media and to select the social networks that fit the unique needs of the council. Listed below are general guidelines and best practices for using social media:

- **Plan ahead:** Consider the time and resources available before beginning a social media program. How much time and resources can be dedicated to social media? Determine the purpose of the social network being considered and formulate a few guidelines to drive the content the council will post.
- **Secure your site:** Set up a page, rather than a group or a personal profile, for your food council.

- **Assign social media coordinators:** It is a good idea to have at least two administrators who will share in the task of maintaining social media for the food council. If only one person has the council's password and contact with him or her, is lost access to the social media account will also be lost.
- **Monitor social media:** Make sure that content is relevant to the food council's mission, vision and goals, comments are appropriate, and users are being engaged.
- **Safeguard privacy:** It is good practice to avoid sharing personal information about anyone and to ask individuals for their consent before posting photographs of them.
- **Use proper etiquette:** A food council represents the community. As such, avoid using derogatory, inflammatory, or discriminatory language.

For Extension professionals:

- Check with your institution to see whether it has guidelines, recommendations, best practices, and internal resources.
- Maintain a clear distinction between personal and professional use of social media, blogs, and websites. Some of your viewers or users will recognize you as an Extension employee.
- Your online activity is observable when you're using a public account or site, and not a private or closed account or site. End-users, stakeholders, and other professional audiences may observe it. Your behavior and content should represent you well and reflect positively on Extension.
- When sharing hyperlinks, stick with sources that are considered unbiased and evidence-based. Those are generally from organizations or associations affiliated with the U.S. government (such as USDA, CDC, and FDA), university Extension offices, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and evidence-based nonprofit institutions such as American Heart Association and American Diabetes Association.

STRATEGIES FOR FOOD COUNCILS

Food councils are designed to help communities identify and act on opportunities to create stronger and fairer local food systems. There is no one right way to set up or run a food council because every community is different. Therefore, the strategy suggestions in this section are not intended to make up a complete "food council recipe." They are simply suggestions for actions that food councils could take at various points in their local food system.

Emergency Food Assistance Sites

Food councils could work with emergency food assistance sites such as food banks and food pantries in some or all of the following ways:

- Work with sites to improve the availability of fresh produce and their capacity to offer it.
- Support them in moving to a guided client-choice model of food distribution.
- Encourage and help them offer nutrition education on site.
- Promote and participate in cultural competency training.
- Encourage site staff and clients to join or work with the food council.
- Partner with local farmers markets and establish donation stations where vendors can donate unsold produce that will be delivered to local food pantries and soup kitchens.
- Provide information about federal food assistance programs to clients of the site.
- Encourage food pantry clients to assess their own and their families' needs and wants.
- Help volunteers and staff assess inventory needs in each of the food groups.
- Provide recipes and demonstrations on items that clients aren't sure how to use, such as dry beans.
- Work with paid and volunteer food pantry staff to identify and acquire the facilities and resources the program needs, such as refrigeration, shopping carts, shelving, and volunteers.
- Organize "healthy food drives" to ensure that a variety of foods are offered in each of the food groups (fruits, vegetables, dairy, protein, grains).
- Promote onsite community gardens and recruit community gardeners to donate extra produce to food assistance sites. Promote "plant a row for the pantry"

programs.

- Arrange for services such as onsite SNAP sign-ups and referrals to social service agencies.
- Provide public education sessions on food security and how it affects community vitality.
- Promote a farm-to-pantry partnership to use locally sourced food in the pantries.
- Create an option for 4-H and FFA fair livestock to be donated to the pantry.
- Develop an option to accept wild game donations.

Transportation and Land Use Issues

Food councils could work on transportation and land use issues in some or all of the following ways:

- Assess current transportation resources and how they can be used to connect food and people.
- Design transportation methods and routes to food sources for people who need help with transportation.
- Consider setting up public transportation food delivery options for people who are eligible to receive commodity food items.
- Foster connections between public transportation services and local farmers markets and community gardens.
- Address parts of the zoning ordinance that prevent community residents from growing food.

Food Producers and Local Markets

Food councils could work to connect food producers and local markets in some or all of the following ways:

- Connect food producers with retailers interested in using or selling locally grown food.
- Encourage coordination among the various sectors of the food system to improve the availability of food for all members of the community.
- Create directories of local food producers and distributors to increase community awareness of their existence.
- Lobby for policies that would allow correctional facilities to purchase local food.
- Encourage local food establishments to offer local foods on their menus.
- Support schools, hospitals, and food pantries in growing their own food.

- Develop farm-to-institution initiatives by connecting schools, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and food pantries with local food producers.



Community Agriculture Programs and Direct Markets

Food councils could work to connect community agriculture programs with direct marketing opportunities in some or all of the following ways:

- Start a farmers market in the community.
- Establish a community garden.
- Work to place hydroponic growing equipment in schools, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and food pantries that want to grow their own food.
- Arrange the installation and use of equipment to accept EBT (electronic benefits transfer) cards at farmers markets.
- Encourage vendors at farmers markets to accept benefits of federal food assistance programs.
- Set up a donation program at the farmers market so vendors can donate extra produce to local food pantries.

FINANCING YOUR FOOD COUNCIL

While a great deal of food council work can be done without funding, councils that do have funding must adopt sound financial management standards. It's important for funded food councils to develop and operate within the bounds of detailed budgets.

Budgeting

Food council budgets should be created after goals and objectives are set because a sound budget strongly reflects the council's priorities.

When a food council begins to develop a budget, the first step is to project the expenses for the coming fiscal year. It's okay to overestimate expenses because doing so provides a cushion that will help cover unexpected expenses.

Be realistic. If the council's projected expenses are higher than its projected income, members must agree on how to cut expenses. Ideally the cuts won't have to be so drastic that they will harm affect the council's ability to address its major priorities. Once a budget has been adopted, it should be compared with the working budget regularly. Doing so will keep the whole council informed about where money is being spent and will flag any looming shortfalls. Food councils can use any one of the many online budgeting and financial record-keeping tools to help track their finances.

Fund-Raising

Most food councils must use a variety of fund-raising methods to build and sustain their budgets. Following are the most common methods:

- **Grants** – Grants are available from such sources as local, state, and federal government agencies, private foundations, and other nonprofit groups. Enlist the help of someone on your food council or in the community who has grant-seeking experience to research and write grant applications to potential funders who support food-related programs. If the group isn't able to identify anyone with this type of experience, consider creating a grant-writing committee made up of members who are willing to learn and gain experience in grantseeking. Funders who support the work of various parts of the food system are obvious targets, but don't overlook those who support education and community development if the food council works in those areas.
- **Direct government funding** – Becoming a direct line item in the budget of a local or county unit of government has the potential to provide a reasonably stable funding base for a food council.
- **Community fund-raising drives** – These efforts

to solicit monthly or one-time contributions from businesses and people in the food council's service area can serve multiple purposes, including raising funds, increasing awareness of the food council's work, and recruiting volunteers from the community to work with the food council. Face-to-face requests for support are a proven formula for success, especially if everyone involved remembers to stay positive and upbeat in explaining the work of the food council.

Whether writing a grant proposal, seeking direct government funding, or soliciting direct donations from businesses, organizations, and individuals, it's important to focus on the positive impact of the food council's work. Target any requests for funding to donors who support the kind of work your food council does. It won't be fruitful, for example, to seek grant funding from a foundation that focuses its support on the development of wind energy resources.

As the food council seeks funding, be aware of any strings that may be attached to support. It's not a good practice to accept funding from a source that requires a food council to shift its focus away from its established mission, goals, and priorities toward the funder's mission, goals, and priorities just to help secure the council's finances.

Nonprofit Status and Tax Exemption

As your food council matures, you will probably discuss the possibility of incorporating as a nonprofit.

Incorporating as a Nonprofit

If your food council is at that point, answering the following questions may help your group decide whether to take that step:

- What is the food council's purpose? What are its goals? What plans are in place or being developed to carry out the purpose and meet the goals?
- Are enough people committed to the work of the food council to carry out the group's short-term and long-term plans?
- How much money does the council need to maintain or expand its programs? Where do those funds come from? What are the council's plans for securing ongoing funding?
- Are volunteer board members concerned about personal liability issues related to their work with the food council?
- Will the food council take in a substantial amount of money and want to seek tax exemption?
- Will the food council seek public and private donations? Will some donations come from groups

that provide funds only to 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporations? If your food council is a federally recognized nonprofit corporation, individual donors can claim personal federal income tax deductions for their donations.

- Is there a desire to maintain the council's lifetime beyond the involvement of the people who began the council or who are managing it now?
- Will there be a need to establish employee benefits?
- Is there a desire to formalize the organizational structure of the food council?

If the group's answers indicate that the food council has a clear purpose and a plan of action, has experienced success, is actively looking for funds to sustain its work, and uses sound financial management practices, it may be time to incorporate.

Nonprofit incorporation laws vary by state, so visit your state government website and search for such terms as "nonprofit corporation," "incorporating a nonprofit," or even "how do I incorporate a nonprofit?" The web pages that result from a search should help the food council decide whether it is eligible to incorporate as a nonprofit in your state. From there, incorporating is typically a matter of filling out and submitting a variety of forms and reports to the state agency in charge of the process.

Applying for Exemption From State Sales Tax

Once a food council has been incorporated in its home state, it can do business in the name of the corporation instead of as a group of individuals.

Applying for a state sales tax exemption is another process that can start at your state government website. A search on "applying for state sales tax exemption" with the name of your state should bring up information on the process in your state. After a state sales tax exemption has been granted, anyone making any purchase for the food council must present a copy of the exemption letter to the vendor in order to take advantage of the exemption. Sometimes nonprofit organizations – even incorporated ones – choose to pay state sales tax on purchases rather than deal with the paperwork involved in filing for and claiming exemption.

Gaining 501(c)(3) Status

After a food council has incorporated as a nonprofit, it may be eligible to apply for 501(c)(3) status with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Federal tax-exempt status is an important tool in the fund-raising efforts of many nonprofit food councils. The benefits of having 501(c)(3) status include the following:

- Exemption from federal income tax.

- Eligibility to receive tax-deductible charitable contributions. The ability to claim federal tax deductions for donations to the group is a strong incentive for some donors.
- Eligibility to apply for grants from the federal government and many private and public foundations that are open only to nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) status.
- Public evidence that the group's funds are being used to benefit the community and not board members.

An organization applying for 501(c)(3) status must show that it benefits the public and has "one or more exempt purposes: charitable, educational, religious, scientific, literary, fostering national or international sports competition, preventing cruelty to children or animals, and testing for public safety. The most common types of 501(c)(3) organizations are charitable, educational, and religious" (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2013, pp. 3–4).

Many nonprofits self-identify on their applications as community development corporations and list more than one IRS-approved purpose to increase their flexibility.

For example, instead of stating that its purpose is "running a food pantry," an organization might list its purpose as "helping people improve their lives through better nutrition, more stable family life, and more livable communities." That group would initially focus on running the food pantry. However, its broader statement of purpose could allow it to conduct related activities, such as rehabilitating and using donated property as the site for a foodservice training program for their food pantry clientele.

An IRS pamphlet called *Applying for 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Status* (available online at <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p4220.pdf>) provides basic information about eligibility, the application process, and requirements. Your food council may want to consult with a tax advisor or attorney about the application process and about the IRS record-keeping and annual filing requirements. Paying the user (or filing) fee that is required when applying for 501(c)(3) status can be challenging for a fledgling organization. Some groups raise the money through donations from their own membership, while others seek donations from local residents, businesses, and community foundations.

Once a food council has been notified that the IRS has received its application for federal tax-exempt status, it can tell potential donors that the application is pending.

Contributions made to the council after the application date will be tax deductible if the application is approved. The waiting period can be as long as six months,

depending on the number of applications in process when the application is filed and other factors.

When an application has been approved, the group will receive an exemption letter from the IRS that must be kept with its permanent records. The letter spells out the recordkeeping and filing requirements the group must meet to retain its tax-exempt status.

SUMMARY

Food councils have the potential to spark local initiatives to improve food environments and enhance food access. They can increase overall interest in community food systems and help motivate local residents and organizations to take action on a variety of issues. Neighboring community food councils can learn from one another and pave the way for the development of strong local food economies in which all people have access to healthy food on a consistent basis.



APPENDIX A: FOOD COUNCIL SCORECARD



Food Council Scorecard

Using the Food Council Scorecard**Who should use the Food Council Scorecard?**

The scorecard was developed for use by Extension staff or faculty members trained in community coaching. Although food council members can use the scorecard independently, it is highly recommended that trained Extension coaches collaborate in the process. Ideally, the community coach will work with council members or potential members to complete the scorecard.

What does the Food Council Scorecard measure?

It scores food councils based on the content of the Voices for Food: Food Council Guide. The scorecard is designed for use by community coaches in Extension to assess food councils and provide guidance on best practices. This easy-to-use scorecard allows coaches to determine potential food council actions based on the unique situation of the council and community.

When should I use the Food Council Scorecard?

A budding food council or coach working with a food council should complete the scorecard early and then semiannually to measure progress.

How should the results be used?

Based on the results, the coach can engage in conversations to help food councils become aware of their council's strengths and opportunities for growth. Additionally, the results of the scorecard can help the council set realistic organizational goals.

What does the score mean?

The total score should not be considered "good" or "bad." Rather, the scorecard should be used to measure progress toward establishing a food council. A lower score indicates more opportunities for growth, while a higher score indicates progress toward developing a food council.

Instructions

1. Read through the scorecard in its entirety.
2. Read each question and assign 2, 1, or 0 points based on the unique situation of the council.
3. Add the scores in columns A, B, and C; place the totals in TOTAL COLUMN SCORE.
4. Total the sum of columns A, B, and C; place the number in TOTAL SCORE (Sum of A, B, C).
5. Coaches can discuss each question with council members and use the Food Council Guide (corresponding page numbers in the guide appear next to each item in the scorecard) to determine next opportunities.
6. Reassess progress on a regular basis and set new goals using the same process.

Organizational Structure

Question	2 pt	1 pt	0 pt	Notes
Is there a formal executive committee in place (i.e. Chair-person, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer)? (p. 32)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Is there a food council champion or coordinator (paid or unpaid)? (p. 36)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Are committees, working groups, or task forces in place? (p. 11)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Is your membership comprised of at least three members that represent three different organizations? (pp. 6-7)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Have pantry volunteers/staff and client(s) been invited to participate? (pp. 6, 14-15)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Have youth been invited to participate? (p. 7)	Yes	Not fully	No	



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Have youth been invited to participate? (p. 7)	Yes	Not fully	No	

Organizational Purpose

Question	2 pt	1 pt	0 pt	Notes
Is there documentation that a purpose was agreed upon by members? (i.e. written, noted in agenda) (p. 10)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Has the purpose been shared with partners that were not present when it was agreed upon? (p. 11)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Have written goals been developed? (pp. 10-11)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Has a written mission or vision statement been developed? (p. 10)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Has a food charter been developed? (p. 9)	Yes	Not fully	No	

Key Implementation Activities

Question	2 pt	1 pt	0 pt	Notes
Has a Community Food Assessment (CFA) or community conversation been completed? (pp. 8, 24-31)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Were various food system sectors engaged in the CFA? (pp. 24-31)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Were the major findings of a CFA documented? (pp.24-31)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Have workgroup/committee actions plans/work plans been developed? (p. 11)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Were multiple (at least three) membership meetings (face to face, text, email, online) held in one year? (p. 36)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Were multiple executive committee meetings held in one year? (p. 36)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Were multiple workgroup/committee meetings (face-to-face, text, email, online) held in one year? (p. 36)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Has the council developed a partnership with local Voices for Food Pantry? (pp. 11-12)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Has the council developed a partnership with a local food bank or regional/state food bank? (pp. 11-12)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Has the council sought Extension assistance or coaching? (p. 7)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Has the council developed partnerships or with assistance from other community entities (p. 14)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Is there communication within council membership (email list, group sharing, etc.)? (p. 11)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Has there been communication with the community about accomplishments (press releases, presentations, social media, etc.)? (p. 11)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Has the council sought to obtain nonprofit [501(c)(3)] status? (pp. 17-18)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Has nonprofit [501(c)(3)] status been obtained or the use of a fiscal agent been arranged? (pp. 17-18)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Has sales tax exemption been obtained? (p. 17)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Has an annual budget been created? (p. 16)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Has funding been secured to support the council? (pp. 16-18)	Yes	Not fully	No	

Food Council Accomplishments

Question	2 pt	1 pt	0 pt	Notes
Has the council worked on policy, systems, or environmental changes? (pp.14-15)	Yes	Not fully	No	
Has the council done fund-raising to support its efforts? (p. 16)	Yes	Not fully	No	
TOTAL COLUMN SCORE	A.	B.	C.	
TOTAL SCORE (Sum of A, B, C)				

Total Possible = 62

Action Item	Person responsible	Timeframe

Comments

APPENDIX B: FOOD COUNCIL SCORECARD COACHING QUESTIONS

Voices for Food: Food Council Scorecard	Coaching Questions
Organizational Structure	
Is there a formal executive committee in place (i.e. chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer)? (p. 32)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I've noticed the council is organized but doesn't have a formal executive committee in place; what factors influenced the way the council is organized? 2. What might be some ways to encourage more organization within the food council? 3. What might be some ways to more equally divide the work of the food council? 4. What are some ways to promote long-term sustainability of the food council?
Is there a food council champion or coordinator (paid or unpaid)? (p. 36)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I've noticed that you don't have a council champion or paid coordinator; what are some ways that the council could benefit from having a champion or coordinator? 2. What are the barriers to having a food council champion or coordinator in place?
Are there committees, working groups or task forces in place? (p.11)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I have noticed that you don't have committees/work groups or task forces in place, what might be some ways to encourage sharing of food council work? 2. What factors influence how many activities the food council can take on? 3. What might be some ways to promote completion of goals and activities?
Is your membership comprised of at least three members that represent three different organizations? (p 6-7)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I have noticed that your members seem to come from only a couple of organizations; what would the benefits to engaging other organizations be? 2. What might be some ways to recruit other representatives from other organizations to the food council?
Have pantry volunteers/staff and client(s) been invited to participate? (pp. 6, 14-15)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are some ways that the food council could hear thoughts and opinions of food pantry staff/volunteers and clients? 2. How have you tried to include pantry staff/volunteers and clients thus far?
Have youth been invited to participate? (p. 7)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are some ways that the food council could hear thoughts and opinions of youth in the community? 2. How have you tried to include youth thus far?
Organizational Purpose	
<p>Is there documentation that a purpose was agreed upon by members? (i.e. written, noted in agenda) (p.10)</p> <p>Has the purpose been shared with partners that were not present when it was agreed upon? (p.11)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can you describe the process used to develop the purpose of the food council? 2. What might be some ways to make sure all members are working towards the same purpose? 3. How can you ensure that all members are in agreement on the purpose of the food council?

Voices for Food: Food Council Scorecard	Coaching Questions
Have written goals been developed? (p. 10-11)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Since many council members are volunteers, how might the council make sure that the activities you take on reflect the council's desires while honoring their time? 2. How might the council stay focused and organized? 3. What are some goals you have in mind for the food council? 4. How can the council make sure that all members are aware of the goals that are developed?
Has a written mission or vision statement been developed? (p.10)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Since many council members are volunteers, how might the council make sure that the activities you take on reflect the councils desires while honoring their time? 2. How might the council stay focused and organized? 3. If you could summarize the council's mission in one statement, what would it be? 4. How can the council make sure that all members are aware of the mission/vision statements that are developed?
Has a food charter been developed? (p.9)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are some benefits to developing a food charter? 2. What are some ways you can make sure the council has some standard ways of decision-making?
Key Implementation Activities	
Has a Community Food Assessment (CFA) or community conversation been completed? (pp. 8, 24-31)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How has the food council considered the needs of the community thus far? 2. How can the food council find out more about what is going on in the community regarding food issues?
Were various food system sectors engaged in the CFA? (pp. 24-31)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can the food council get a complete look at the needs of every food system sector in the CFA? 2. What are the benefits of engaging each sector in the CFA?
Were the major findings of CFA documented? (pp. 24-31)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are benefits to documenting the major findings of the CFA? 2. How can others in the council/community find out about the major findings?
Have workgroup/committee actions plans/work plans been developed? (p. 11)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are some ways that workgroups can stay true to the mission/vision and goals of the council? 2. What are some ways that workgroups can stay on task and on time? 3. What are some ways to enhance accountability within the workgroups?
Were multiple (at least three) membership meetings (face to face, text, email, online) held in one year? (p. 36)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many times do you think you need to hold membership meetings to be effective? 2. What are the benefits of meeting at least a few times per year?
Were multiple executive committee meetings held in one year?(p. 36)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many times do you think you need to hold executive committee meetings to be effective? 2. What are the benefits of meeting at least a few times per year?

Voices for Food: Food Council Scorecard	Coaching Questions
Were multiple workgroup/committee meetings (face to face, text, email, online) held in one year? (p. 36)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many times do you think you need to hold workgroup meetings to be effective? 2. What are the benefits of meeting at least a few times per year?
Has the council developed a partnership with local Voices for Food Pantry? (pp. 11-12)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I've noticed that you haven't developed a partnership with the Voices for Food Pantry in your community, what has impacted the decision to not forge a relationship? 2. What might be some benefits to developing a partnership? 3. How can your food council go about developing a partnership?
Has the council developed a partnership with a food bank or regional/state food bank? (pp. 11-12)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I've noticed that you haven't developed a partnership with a food bank or regional/state food bank; what has impacted the decision to not forge a partnership? 2. What might be some benefits to developing a partnership? 3. How can your food council go about developing a partnership?
Has the council sought Extension assistance or coaching? (p. 7)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe how the council works through challenges to come to a decision. 2. How might Extension assistance or coaching help in the development of your food council? 3. What have been some barriers to seeking Extension assistance or coaching?
Has the council developed partnerships or assistance from other community entities (pp. 15-16)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How might developing partnerships or seeking assistance from other community entities benefit the council? 2. What are some ways the council could partner with other community entities? 3. Are there community entities that have the similar mission statements as the council?
Is there communication within council membership (listserv, group sharing, etc.)? (p. 11)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are some ways the council can enhance communication with council membership? 2. Why is communication with your membership important?
Has there been communication with the community about accomplishments (press releases, presentations, social media, etc.)? (p. 11)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are some ways the council can engage with the community? 2. What are some ways the council can communicate with the community on accomplishments or current activities?
<p>Has the council sought to obtain non-profit (501(c)(3)) status? (pp. 17-18)</p> <p>Has non-profit (501(c)(3)) status been obtained or the use of a fiscal agent? (pp. 17-18)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How has the council handled finances thus far? 2. What are some benefits to becoming a non-profit organization? 3. What are some barriers to becoming a non-profit organization? 4. If, non profit status is not feasible for the council, what are the benefits to obtaining a fiscal agent? 5. What entities in your community typically serve as a fiscal agent?

Voices for Food: Food Council Scorecard	Coaching Questions
Has sales tax exemption been obtained? (p. 17)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the benefits to obtaining sales tax exemption? 2. What are the barriers to obtaining sales tax exemption?
Has an annual budget been created? (p. 16)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the process used to lay out the financial needs of the council. 2. What might be some ways to ensure that the council's financial needs line up with the mission and goals of the council? 3. What are some ways to document the financial needs of the council? 4. What is a way to prepare for potential opportunities for funding?
Has funding been secured to support the council? (pp.16-18)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How might the council benefit from securing funding to support the council? 2. What are some activities that you would like to take on but haven't been able to due to lack of funding?
Food Council Accomplishments	
Has the council worked on policy, systems or environmental (PSE) changes? (p. 14, 15)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can the council make an impact in PSE? 2. What are some benefits to working on PSE? 3. What are some ways that the council can engage in PSE?
Has fundraising been done to support council efforts? (p.16)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How might the council benefit from engaging in fundraising efforts to support the council?

APPENDIX C: GUIDE TO COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENTS

A community food assessment is the process of documenting the food system sectors (such as food pantries) in a community and gauging how well they are working. A thorough food assessment covers each of the six major sectors of the food system in a community: growing, processing, distributing, preparing, retailing, and eating.

One of the first boundaries to set before starting a community food assessment is literally a boundary. The food council will need to decide on the geographic area of the community being studied. For a local food council, the boundaries may match those of the town, township, or county. A regional food council may extend across a significant part of a state.

Many comprehensive tools and indicators are available to help guide you in assessing your food system. To avoid gathering non-essential data, consider how the council's vision will be met by the food system assessment. What questions about the food system will lead to an action plan that aligns with the council's purpose, mission, and vision statements?

Completing a community food assessment can be a first success for a food council. It can help the council build

momentum, community support, and political legitimacy. Other organizations in the local food system may use the data gathered from the completed food assessment to examine the food needs within their own sectors. Sharing the data could create opportunities for collaboration among organizations.

Depending on what questions about the food system interest your community, the food council may choose to use existing data sets (called secondary data) or collect new data on specific topics (called primary data).

This section offers suggestions about:

- Relevant issues to study.
- Important questions to ask.
- Where to find the data you need.
- What tools for collecting data would be most helpful.

The diagram in Figure B-1 lists one goal from each of the six sectors of the food system and outlines some of the issues and questions related to achieving the goal.

Once the food council has gathered all of the primary and secondary data of interest to the community, it will be time to summarize and share the information. Prepare an in-depth report for council members and a less in-depth report for the public. The reports should highlight the key

Community Food System Assessment

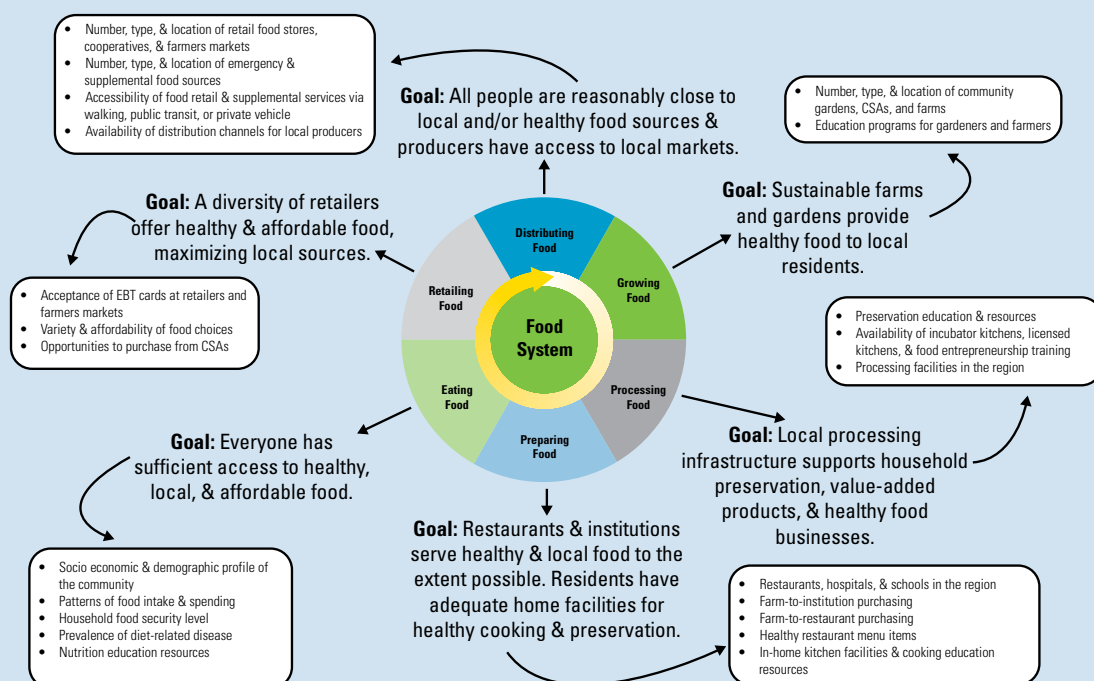


Figure B-1. This diagram lists one goal from each of the six food system sectors and some of the issues that affect the achievement of the goal.

findings from the assessment and explain how the food council plans to act on the findings.

Data can be effectively summarized and conveyed to audiences using charts, graphs, and maps. For example, a map is a powerful way to show the distribution of emergency food programs in a community. Mapping tools such as ArcGIS Online and presentation software such as PowerPoint or Prezi can help you organize and prepare data for presentation. If no one on the food council has computer-aided map-making experience, a local college or university may have mapmakers.

Food Sector 1: Growing

Key Issues

In developing an assessment of the production sector of a community food system, it's often useful to think about what food is produced in the community now and what could be produced in the future. Local production includes field crops, vegetables, and fruit, as well as livestock and dairy. It can vary in scale from household and community gardens to direct-market farms to large-scale commercial agricultural producers. Any fisheries based in the community are also considered part of the local food production sector.

One useful starting point in assessing production is to simply take inventory of (count) the number of farms and gardens of different types and scales that exist within the area being assessed. The next step is to identify the products and quantity of food the farms and gardens produce.

Considering the extent to which production methods in the region preserve natural resources for future generations can be another important part of a food assessment. This is not a simple question because of the many variables in any food production system.

Another important issue to consider is the stability of the local agricultural land and human resources.

Key Questions

- Does the community have any programs in place to preserve the land base for production in the future?
- What are the trends in the loss of agricultural land for production?
- Is the average age of local farmers increasing or are younger farmers replacing those who retire or die?
- Does the community have strategies for transferring land to the next generation – both within families and between unrelated people?
- What educational opportunities and programmatic support exist for new and emerging farmers and

gardeners? Educational opportunities could include school-based gardening programs that expose children to the possibilities of growing and consuming healthy, fresh produce.

- How many community gardens, community-supported agriculture (CSA) operations, and farms exist within the community?
- What type of farms and gardens are these? What are they producing and to whom are they selling or distributing what they produce?
- Are these farms and gardens located close to populations with limited access to fresh foods?
- Are education programs available for prospective new and beginning farmers and gardeners?

Assessment Methods

Most of the key questions related to food production can be addressed by either accessing national databases or by contacting state-level agencies. Conducting focus groups can give a food council a first-hand perspective on any of these topics. The Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit, a guide to hosting focus groups around local food production questions, is available online at <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=43179>.

Tables C-1 and C-2 show some sources where secondary (existing) data is available. To find the data sets online, enter proper titles into a search engine.

Table C-1. Where to find data on community gardens, CSAs, and farms

Indicator	Data source	Data scale
Existing data sets		
Number, type, and production of farms	USDA Census of Agriculture	County and state
List of local farms	Eat Well Guide: Local, Sustainable, Organic Food	ZIP Code
List of community gardens	American Community Gardening Association	ZIP Code, city, state
List of CSAs	Local Harvest: Community Supported Agriculture	ZIP Code, city, state
Agencies to call		
Organic farms	State departments of agriculture	Varies
Pasture-based animal farms	Land grant universities, county Extension office	State or county
Farms using integrated pest management (IPM) techniques	Land grant universities, county Extension office	State or county

Table C-2 gives some ideas for research you can do to gather primary data.

Table C-2. Researching the availability of and support for education programs for gardeners and farmers

Indicator	Data source	Data scale
Agencies to call		
Garden and farm education programs	County Extension office	Varies
Garden and farm education programs	Local community garden nonprofit	Varies
Data collection tools		
Political and economic support for local food producers	Focus group with local farmers, gardeners, and community members from Table C-6 of the Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit,	Varies
Market opportunities for local food producers	Focus group with local farmers, gardeners, and community members from Table C-6 of the Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit	Varies

Food Sector 2: Processing

Key Issues

Food processing can be assessed at both commercial and household levels. The key with this sector is to consider to what degree local processing opportunities increase the availability of healthy and local food by either increasing the market supply or by extending the season in which the supply is available.

Commercial processing facilities can expand the market for local producers by sourcing from them directly and by creating products that can be sold beyond the growing season. For example, if processors buy locally grown tomatoes and use them to make salsa, they can help ensure the viability of local producers. Plus, they can increase the availability of local food to different groups in the community – whether large institutional buyers or neighborhood shoppers – at different times of the year.

It is important to consider to what degree residents have the resources to process healthy foods at home – generally by canning, freezing, or drying. Home preservation can go a long way toward making healthy food accessible during the months outside of the growing season.

The final key issue within processing is the extent of resources and programmatic support available for the development of healthy food-based businesses. Food-based businesses have great potential to expand the availability of healthy (and often local) food within a given

neighborhood or demographic group and can also provide jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Tables C-3, C-4, C-5, and C-6 provide suggested resources that will help assess food processing capacity.

Key Questions

- What is the extent of education and resources about food preservation available to community members?
- Are incubator kitchens, licensed kitchens, and food entrepreneurship training programs available to farmers, gardeners, and others in the community?
- Are there food processing facilities in the region? Do they purchase from local producers?

Assessment Methods

Tables C-3, C-4, and C-5 show some sources where secondary (existing) data is available.

Table C-3. Where to find data on food preservation education and resources

Indicator	Data source	Data scale
Agencies to call		
Preservation education	County Extension office	County
Preservation education	Technical college and adult education	Varies

Table C-4. Where to find data on availability of incubator kitchens, licensed kitchens, and food entrepreneurship training programs

Indicator	Data source	Data scale
Agencies to call		
Kitchen resources	County Extension office	County
Support programs for food-related businesses	America's Small Business Development Center (Find your local organization at https://americassbdc.org/small-business-consulting-and-training/find-your-sbdc/)	Varies

Table C-5. Where to find to the number of processing facilities in the region

Indicator	Data source	Data scale
Existing data sets		
List of processors	InfoUSA (search by business type)	Varies

Table C-6 gives some ideas for research to do find primary data.

Table C-6. Tools for collecting data on food processing

Purpose	What	Who
Assess household cooking resources and capacity	Survey of community residents These types of survey questions could be included in an overall food security survey	Partners, volunteers, student interns
Assess constraints and opportunities for local farmers to create healthy value-added food products	Focus group with local growers These types of questions could be paired with other questions that address growing See “Food Sector 1: Growing” for more information	Partners, volunteers, student interns

Food Sector 3: Distributing

Key Issues

When assessing the community’s food distribution sector, pay attention to:

- The number, type, and location of conventional and alternative food outlets.
- Accessibility of local, fresh, and healthy food options.
- Household food security indicators.

The food distribution sector encompasses the routes that food travels from producers, processors, and emergency suppliers to consumers. While many consumers access food through conventional channels such as retail food stores, your assessment should include alternative outlets such as food banks, farmers markets, food cooperatives, and CSAs. Consumer access to local and healthy food is as important as local producers’ access to markets and distribution channels.

While a diversity of retailers sheds little light on actual accessibility, the community food assessment should also look into consumer access to healthy food choices. Assess issues such as availability of public transportation and physical locations of retail food outlets and consumer access to them by walking.

Key Questions

- Are food retailers, cooperatives, and farmers markets accessible to all neighborhoods and demographic groups?
- Are emergency and supplemental food sources accessible to all neighborhoods and demographic groups?

- Are food retailers and supplemental services accessible by walking, biking, and/or public transportation?
- Are wholesale, distribution, and marketing channels accessible to local growers?

Assessment Methods

Tables C-7 through C-10 provide suggested resources for assessing the food distribution sector by showing some sources where secondary (existing) data is available. To find the data sets online, enter proper titles into a search engine.

Table C-7. Where to find the number, type, and location of retail food stores, cooperatives, and farmers markets

Indicator	Data source	Data scale
Where to find existing data sets		
Number and location of retail food outlets	InfoUSA	County and state
	MapQuest	ZIP Code
	Yellow Pages	County and state
List of local farmers markets	Eat Well Guide: Local, Sustainable, Organic Food	ZIP Code
List of local farmers markets	Local Harvest: Farmers Markets	ZIP Code
List of local farmers markets	USDA Agricultural Marketing Service: Farmers Markets and Local Food Marketing	State
List of local food cooperatives	Eat Well Guide: Local, Sustainable, Organic Food	ZIP Code
List of local food cooperatives	Coop Directory Service	State
List of local food cooperatives	Local Harvest: Food Co-ops	ZIP Code
Agencies to call		
List of cooperatives	County Extension office	County and state

Table C-8. Where to find the number, type, and location of emergency and supplemental food sources

Indicator	Data source	Data scale
Where to find existing data sets		
List of supplemental food sources	Second Harvest Food Bank Locator	ZIP Code
Agencies to call		
List of supplemental food sources	State departments of health	State

Table C-9. Where to find data on the accessibility of retail food and supplemental services

Indicator	Data source	Data scale
Existing data sets		
Services via walking	Walk Score	Street address
Agencies to call		
Public transit routes	City transportation and planning departments	City

Table C-10. Where to find data on the availability of distribution channels for local growers

Indicator	Data source	Data scale
Existing data sets		
Business and consumer information	InfoUSA	Multiple

Food Sector 4: Preparing

Key Issues

The way food is prepared affects its nutritional value. Thus, kitchen skills, nutrition knowledge, and food safety are important for anyone cooking either at home or commercially. Institutions, restaurants, and homes can be assessed for their capacity to produce healthy menu items. Moreover, cultural, social, and family environments and traditions, as well as economic and time constraints, affect the level of skills and resources available to prepare healthy food.

Lower income populations are more likely to experience barriers to preparing or being served healthy and local food. For example, the pricing and location of restaurants and food vendors that offer healthy and local menu items may exclude certain income groups. Likewise, the location, hours, and customer service level of kitchen supply retailers play a role in the likelihood of preparing healthy food in the home.

The ability of restaurants and institutions such as schools, hospitals, and prisons to purchase food from local producers depends on production capacity. It also raises issues of price, quality, and consistency. The affordability of local produce for residents to prepare at home is increased through farmers markets, especially where WIC and SNAP program benefits are accepted.

Key Questions

- What restaurants, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and schools operate in the region?
- What is the level of farm-to-institution purchasing within these institutions and restaurants?
- What is the level of inclusion of healthy menu items within these institutions?
- At what level are the in-home kitchen facilities, nutrition knowledge, and cooking skills for community residents?
- What are the household barriers to healthy meal preparation?
- What cooking and nutrition education resources are available?

Assessment Methods

Table C-11 provides suggestions for determining the extent of food preparation in the community by giving some ideas for research to do to find primary data.

Table C-11. Tools for collecting data on food variety and affordability

Purpose	What	Who
Extent of farm-to-institution purchasing	Survey of institutions	
Extent of farm-to-restaurant purchasing	Survey of restaurants	
In-home kitchen facilities and cooking education resources	Surveys or interviews with county Extension, secondary education institutions, recreation and parks departments	

Food Sector 5: Retailing

Key Issues

When assessing the retailing sector of the community food system, it's important to look at the availability, variety, and affordability of healthy and local food options in retail settings. Is local food sold at retail outlets in the community?

A useful starting point in assessing the community's food retailing sector is to take an inventory of both conventional retailers (such as supermarkets and convenience stores) and alternative retailers and outlets (such as farmers markets, CSAs, and food banks). Pay attention not only to the number and type of food outlets, but also to the variety and affordability of healthy and local food choices.

Some indicators related to retail food and emergency food outlets are the price of healthy and local food options offered and the acceptance of federal food assistance programs such as WIC and SNAP at retail food outlets and farmers markets. Issues pertaining to consumer access to

affordable local and healthy food choices are discussed in the section, “Food Sector 3: Distribution.”

Key Questions

- Are EBT (electronic benefits transfer) services available at food retailers and farmers markets?
- Are local and healthy food choices available and affordable in retail food stores?
- Are there opportunities to purchase local and healthy food products from farmers markets and CSAs?

Assessment Methods

Tables C-12, C-13, and C-14 give suggested activities to assess the retail sector, showing some sources where secondary (existing) data is available. To find the data sets online, enter proper titles into a search engine.

Table C-12. Where to find data on acceptance of EBT cards at retailers and farmers markets

Indicator	Data source	Data scale
Existing data sets		
Retail stores participating in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	USDA SNAP Program: SNAP Retailer Locator	State
Agencies to call		
Farmers markets	State departments of agriculture	State
Farmers markets	State SNAP office	State

Table C-13. Where to find food variety and affordability data

Indicator	Data source	Data scale
Existing data sets		
Thrifty food basket food prices	USDA Food Plans: Cost of Food	National average cost

Table C-14. Where to find data on opportunities to purchase from community-supported agriculture operations (CSAs)

Indicator	Data source	Data scale
Existing data sets		
Number and location of CSAs	Eat Well Guide: Local, Sustainable, Organic Food	ZIP Code
Number and location of CSAs	Local Harvest: Community Supported Agriculture	ZIP Code

Food Sector 6: Eating

Key Issues

The quality and quantity of food resources available in a community play a part in whether residents eat a healthy diet. USDA MyPlate guidelines can be used as a measure of a balanced diet, where each food group is consumed in a proportion that meets nutrient needs. In addition, freshness and variety may play a role in dietary quality, especially where fruits and vegetables are concerned. Production practices such as pesticide use and antibiotic use can be included in the assessment if the community is concerned about those practices.

To measure the affordability of a nutritious and balanced weekly menu, USDA created the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP). The TFP shopping list contains one food item from each of eight food groups: grains, vegetables, fruits, milk, meat and meat alternatives, sugars and sweets, fats and oils, and condiments.

Lower income populations tend to face more barriers to food accessibility. Barriers can include limited availability of specific types of food. Other barriers are locations of food stores and restaurants in low-income neighborhoods, as well as limited motor vehicle ownership. It is also important to look at the availability of public transportation and the walkability and safety of neighborhood streets near food retailers. Each community has a unique capacity for producing food, but price, quantity, and seasonality are common concerns for equitable access to food.

There may be value in assessing who in the community is eating what, especially when it comes to fruit and vegetable intake. This is most easily accomplished by simply finding ways for young people and adults to self-report their intake through simple surveys conducted at programs, fairs, or online, or distributed as inserts into mail such as utility bills.

Key Questions

- What would a socioeconomic and demographic profile of the community look like?
- What are the dietary patterns in the community in terms of food intake and dollars spent?
- What is the level of household food security?
- How many people use emergency food providers?
- What is the prevalence of diet-related disease?
- What nutrition education resources are available?

Assessment Methods

Tables C-15 through C-19 provide suggested resources for assessing the eating sector of the community food system, showing some sources where you can find secondary (existing) data. To find the data sets online, enter proper titles into a search engine.

Table C-15. Where to find socioeconomic and demographic profile data

Indicator	Data source	Data scale
Existing data sets		
Demographics	U.S. Census Bureau: American Factfinder	City
Demographics	Bureau of Labor Statistics	Varies
SNAP and WIC participation	USDA Food and Nutrition Service: Program Data	State/region
Various statistics	FedStats (federal agency statistics)	Varies

Table C-16. Where to find patterns of consumer food intake and dollars spent

Indicator	Data source	Data scale
Existing data sets		
Food and nutrient intake	USDA Nutrient Intake Data	Per capita
Food availability data	USDA Economic Research Service: Food Availability Documentation	Varies
Youths' fruit and vegetable intake	CDC Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System	State
Food expenditures	Bureau of Labor Statistics	State/region

Table C-17. Where to find household food security data

Indicator	Data source	Data scale
Existing data sets		
Household food security	USDA Food Security Measurement	State

Table C-18. Where to find data on trends in diet-related disease

Indicator	Data source	Data scale
Existing data sets		
Health trends	CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Data	State/region
Children's health trends	CDC School Health Profiles	City

Table C-19. Where to find data on nutrition education resources

Indicator	Data Source	Data Scale
Existing data sets		
Existing programs	CDC School Health Profiles	State
Agencies to call		
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and nutrition education programs (SNAP-Ed)	County Extension, school district wellness coordinator, food banks, secondary education institutions	Local



Summary of Links:**Table C-1**

- USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, Census of Agriculture – http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full_Report/Census_by_State/index.asp
- Eat Well Guide – www.eatwellguide.org
- American Community Gardening Association – <https://communitygarden.org/>
- Local Harvest – www.localharvest.org/csa

Table C-5

- InfoUSA – www.infousa.com

Table C-6

- Guide to Measuring Household Food Security – <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/FSGuide.pdf>

Table C-7

- InfoUSA – www.infousa.com
- MapQuest – www.mapquest.com
- Eat Well Guide – www.eatwellguide.org
- Local Harvest, Farmers Markets – www.localharvest.org/farmers-markets/
- Local Food Research and Development – www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets
- Local Food Coops search – www.eatwellguide.org
- Coop Directory – www.coopdirectory.org
- Local Harvest, Food Coops – www.localharvest.org/food-coops/

Table C-8

- Second Harvest – <https://www.feedingamerica.org/>

Table C-9

- Walk Score – www.walkscore.com

Table C-10

- InfoUSA – www.infousa.com

Table C-12

- USDA Food and Nutrition Service, SNAP Program – <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailerlocator>

Table C-13

- USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, Food Plan – <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/USDAFoodPlansCostofFood>

Table C-14

- Eat Well Guide – www.eatwellguide.org
- Local Harvest – www.localharvest.org/csa

Table C-15

- U.S. Census Bureau – <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>
- U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics – www.bls.gov

- USDA, Food and Nutrition Service – www.fns.usda.gov/pd/
- FedStats – <https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp>

Table C-16

- USDA, Nutrient Intake Estimates – <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-consumption-and-nutrient-intakes/>
- USDA Economic Research Service, Food Availability (Per Capita) Data System – <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-availability-per-capita-data-system/>
- CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System – www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/yrbs/index.htm
- U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics – www.bls.gov

Table C-17

- USDA, Food Security – <https://www.fns.usda.gov/guide-measuring-household-food-security-revised-2000>

Table C-18

- CDC, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System – <https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/>
- CDC, School Health – www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/profiles/index.htm

Table C-19

- CDC, School Health Profiles – www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/profiles/index.htm

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE BYLAWS

Two sets of sample bylaws that a food council could adapt to fit their own organization follow.

BYLAWS OF EATING GREAT FOOD COUNCIL

Purpose Statement

The Eating Great Food Council (EGFC or “the council”) develops collaborative partnerships and relationships across Every County to increase production, consumption, and easy access to good food; educate residents about how to access nutritious local foods; advocate for policies and systems that strengthen quality and equality in our local food system; and increase agricultural production and economic viability.

Mission

The EGFC mission is that everyone in Every County has equitable access to safe, healthy, and affordable food.

Vision

The EGFC functions to

- provide forums for discussing food issues.
- foster coordination among sectors in the food system.
- evaluate and influence policy.
- launch or support programs and services that address local needs.

Definitions

The EGFC adopts the State Good Food Charter’s definition of good food. Good food is

- healthy – It provides nourishment and enables people to thrive.
- green – It was produced in a manner that is environmentally sustainable.
- fair – No one along the production line was exploited for its creation.
- affordable – All people have access to it.

Membership

The EGFC has no limit on the number of members. Membership does not require any specific actions. EGFC will strive to encourage racial, socioeconomic, ethnic, and geographic diversity in its membership.

EGFC will recruit participants with a broad array of perspectives, including farmers, growers, elected officials, community members, educators, and representatives of the following groups: emergency food systems, health and wellness, food services, restaurateurs, food manufacturers and distributors, waste management,

planning, transportation, schools, groceries, businesses and economic development agencies, human services agencies, education, community organizations, faith-based organizations, and land use.

Structure

A Chair, a Vice Chair, and a Secretary will be elected by the membership annually.

The duties of the Chair and the Vice Chair are to

- develop meeting agendas and lead council meetings.
- serve as the main liaison between EGFC and the government.
- represent EGFC to the community.
- ensure that EGFC acts in accordance with its policies and mission.
- facilitate consensus-based decision-making whenever possible.
- put aside personal opinions when speaking for the EGFC.
- commit to keeping the work of EGFC going between meetings.
- serve a one-year term, with a three-term limit. The term may be extended by approval of a majority of the membership.
- chair workgroups as appropriate.

The duties of the Secretary are to

- record and retain minutes of all meetings.
- conduct official correspondence as directed by agreement at meetings.
- serve a one-year term, with a three-term limit. The term may be extended by approval of a majority of the membership.
- chair workgroups as appropriate.

The three elected officers will make up the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is authorized to act if required between general meetings.

Workgroups may be established as needed to carry out council projects. Workgroups will meet a minimum of once per quarter.

Meetings

The council will meet at least quarterly at a schedule set one year in advance.

Each workgroup will determine its meeting schedule and

report to the council at membership meetings or via email.

Meeting Ground Rules

Members agree to

- attend meetings.
- turn cell phones and other electronic devices to vibrate or off during all meetings.
- read the minutes of any meeting they missed.
- build trust by meeting commitments made to the council.
- participate fully, listen actively, and use open communication methods.
- value one another's opinions.
- maintain a focus on the EGFC vision, mission, and strategies.
- work toward progress of the EGFG.
- uphold decisions made by the council, speaking with a unified voice.
- bring their own perspectives of their food sector to the group, but not necessarily represent their sector.

Decision-Making

The council, the Executive Committee, and all workgroups will use an inclusive decision-making model. General decisions for the workgroup will be made during regular meetings.

- Voting will take place at regular quarterly membership meetings, special meetings, by email, or by referendum.
- Each member may vote at each meeting they attend.
- Voting may take place via email. The voting period will end 5 days (120 hours) after any motion has been sent by email.
- Main motions will be passed by a simple majority vote. A simple majority is more than half of the members present and voting at meetings or more than half of the members who return an emailed ballot.
- The executive committee may call for referendum votes, defined as polling of all members conducted outside of a regular or special meeting. Email or other methods of voting may be employed for referenda.

Bylaw Changes

Any amendments to the bylaws will require the approval of two thirds of the council members present and voting at a scheduled meeting.

BYLAWS OF EVERY COUNTY FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

Mission

The mission of the Every County Food Policy Council is to increase and preserve access to safe, local, and healthy food for all residents of Every County.

Vision

Every County Food Policy Council envisions a healthy community with a thriving local food system that

- provides access to healthy and culturally appropriate food for all residents.
- values and preserves community land for food production.
- maximizes the use of local, regional, and seasonal foods.
- meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations.
- promotes economic development and a strong local economy within and surrounding the food system.

Strategies

Every County Food Policy Council supports a viable, economical, and sustainable local food system through multiple strategies including the following:

- Working to strengthen the connections among food, health, natural resource protection, economic development, and the agricultural community.
- Researching, analyzing, and reporting on information about the local food system.
- Advocating for and advising about the food system.
- Implementing food policy.
- Promoting and providing education on food system issues.

Background

The idea for the Every County Food Policy Council arose during meetings of the Food System Economic Partnership's policy committee meetings. After seeing the rise of food policy councils around the country, committee members saw a growing need for the same sort of unifying structure in Every County. The idea gained traction after the Every County Public Health Department secured grant funding for the development of a food policy council. With grant support the policy committee was able to move the idea further, hiring a part-time council coordinator and applying for recognition by the Every County Board of Commissioners in late 2012.

Section 1: Purpose

The purpose of the council is to

- establish and maintain a comprehensive dialogue and assessment of the current food system throughout Every County.
- provide a forum for people involved in different parts of our community food system and government to meet and learn about how the actions of each affect the food system.
- identify and prioritize issues and make recommendations that promote, support, and strengthen access to healthy food for all residents of the county.
- promote economic development and job creation through improvements in the local food system.

Section 2: Council Membership

The council is composed of 15 members representing as many of the following professions and viewpoints as possible:

- Concerned resident.
- Economic development.
- Education.
- Emergency food system.
- Every County Board of Commissioners.
- Faith-based organization.
- Food manufacturer and distributor.
- Food service.
- Health care.
- Human services.
- Nutrition.
- Planning or transportation.
- Public health.
- Rural agriculture.
- Urban agriculture.
- Waste management.

Members must live or work in Every County and will serve without compensation. The membership selection process will consider racial, socioeconomic, gender, ethnic, and geographic diversity. The membership committee will submit applicants for council seats to the Every County

Board of Commissioners, which will appoint council members.

The Every County Board of Commissioners (BOC) will appoint one of its members to the council. The BOC member will have the same rights and responsibilities as other council members, including voting. The appointee will serve as liaison between the food council and the BOC, keeping the BOC informed of council activities and providing a link for BOC support as requested by the council.

After the council has been established for 2 years, council members will be appointed for 2-year terms. Terms will be staggered. Initial council members will serve 1- or 2-year terms.

Initially, representatives from the following groups and organizations will serve 1-year terms:

- Concerned residents.
- Education.
- Emergency food system.
- Faith-based organizations.
- Food service.
- Health care.
- Human services.
- Urban agriculture.

Initially, representatives from the following groups and organizations will serve 2-year terms:

- Economic development.
- Every County Board of Commissioners.
- Food manufacturer or distributor.
- Nutrition.
- Public health.
- Rural agriculture.
- Waste management.

At the end of the initial terms, all council members will be appointed for two-year terms.

Section 3: Committees

The council will establish standing committees and instructs committees to perform the work of the council and will include additional stakeholders as needed. As circumstances warrant, the council may alter, change, or disband any committees.

Membership Committee

The membership committee is responsible for

- recruiting new council members.
- ensuring that council members are representative of the local food system.
- receiving and reviewing the qualifications of at-large candidates.
- submitting the names of candidates to the to the Every County Board of Commissioners.

Executive Committee

The executive committee consists of the chairperson, vice-chairperson, treasurer, and secretary. The executive committee is responsible for

- maintaining organizational records.
- recording member attendance at council meetings.
- maintaining sound financial records.
- coordinating the council's actions.

Duties of Officers

Chairperson

The chairperson presides over meetings and performs other duties as prescribed by these bylaws. The chairperson is the principal spokesperson for the food council and signs official communications from the council. The chairperson may, from time to time, appoint committees to perform specific duties related to the council's purpose.

Vice-Chairperson

The vice-chairperson will preside over meetings in the absence of the chairperson and performs other duties of the chairperson as empowered by the chairperson.

Treasurer

The treasurer is the point person for all of the council's fiduciary issues. Additionally, the treasurer is required to present a report of the council's finances at every meeting. In the absence of the chairperson and vice-chairperson the treasurer will preside over meetings.

Secretary

The secretary records accurate minutes, distributes them to the membership, and oversees the maintenance of the official records of the organization. The secretary records and tracks meeting attendance and reports to the membership committee any member subject to dismissal for non-attendance. The secretary is responsible for ensuring that the council complies with the state Open Meetings Act. In the absence of the chairperson, vice-chairperson, and treasurer, the secretary will preside over meetings.

Officer Elections

Officers will be elected by a majority vote of the council. Officers will serve for 1-year terms or until their successors are elected.

Grounds for Removal From Council

Council members are expected to attend all meetings to ensure full community representation on the council at all times. Excused absences (for sickness, death in the family, business trips, or emergencies) will not affect a member's status. However, if a member misses three consecutive meetings or has more than three unexcused absences in a 12-month period, the member will be considered to have resigned from the council. At that point the council will ask the Every County Board of Commissioners to appoint someone to fill the vacancy.

Section 4: Meetings

The council will hold regularly scheduled meetings that are publicly announced at least 2 weeks in advance to allow for community input.

The Executive Committee may call special meetings with 5 days' public notice except in cases of emergency. The purpose of the special meeting must be given in the meeting notice.

All meetings will comply with the state Open Meetings Act, but only council members may vote and take action on the recommendations and work activities of the council. The public will have the right to speak during one public comment period at each meeting. Each speaker will be limited to 3 minutes.

Section 5: Parliamentary Authority

The council will generally be ruled by consensus. The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, *Newly Revised* will govern the council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the council may adopt.

Section 6: Ground Rules

Council members agree to:

- attend meetings.
- turn cell phones to vibrate or off during all meetings.
- read the minutes of any meeting they missed.
- build trust by meeting commitments made to the council.
- participate fully, listen actively, and use open communication methods.
- value one another's opinions.
- maintain a focus on the council's vision, mission, and strategies.
- work toward progress of the council.
- uphold decisions made by the council, speaking with a unified voice.

The ground rules will be revisited annually to maintain healthy group dynamics and council efficiency.

Section 7: Duties of the Food Policy Coordinator

The food council will employ a food policy coordinator to the extent funding allows. The coordinator will have the following duties:

- Draft meeting agendas with input from the chair and vice-chair.
- Plan meetings.
- Collect agenda items from members up a week before each meeting.
- Work with chairperson and vice-chairperson to prioritize meeting agenda items.
- Set up meetings and provide support to officers and members.
- Set up the meeting facilities.
- Make sure that a secretary and meeting leaders are present. Identify a substitute note taker if needed.
- Assist with flow and time-keeping during meetings.
- Review minutes with chairperson and vice-chairperson to check completeness and accuracy.
- Send minutes, next agenda, and any attachments to council members 1 to 2 weeks before a meeting.
- Promote the food council.
- Provide general and technical support to the food council.
- Participate actively in council activities.
- Receive and distribute appropriate informational email messages to council members.
- Help seek resources for council work.
- Help the council connect with other boards, committees, community groups, and elected officials.
- Assist committees and task forces, as needed.

Section 8: Decision-Making

The chair should make it clear to everyone whether an issue being discussed is time-sensitive. When possible, decisions will be made by consensus. The food council will check consensus by a voice of approval, yea, or disapproval, nay, with no abstentions counted.

If consensus is not reached among the members present, a motion will be required, seconded, and then passed or defeated by a simple majority of the members voting.

Before voting, each council member should consider whether their support will further mission of the food council.

A council member who disagrees should clearly articulate concerns and try to offer an alternative solution.

Any council member who must miss a meeting may deliver his or her opinion and vote about any agenda item to the group before the meeting. Votes must be delivered in writing, by letter or email.

A quorum must be present for voting on an issue to be official. A quorum consists of one-half of the council's members, plus either the chairperson or vice-chairperson). No proxy votes will be accepted.

In rare circumstances, issues that arise from committee work that must be dealt with before a council meeting can be voted on by email. Members will be notified of the issue to be voted on and given a response window. Lack of response from any member within the window will be taken as approval of moving the issue forward.

Changes to the council bylaws can be suggested and voted on by the executive committee and then the council at large. All bylaw changes must be approved by the Every County Board of Commissioners.

Section 9: Criteria for Addressing Issues

In accordance with its mission and purpose, the food policy council will consider the following criteria when addressing issues:

- Is there a direct connection between the issue and the council's vision, mission, and strategies?
- Will this issue have a major effect on the food system?
- Is the issue urgent or time sensitive?
- Does the issue build or sustain an existing effort of the council?
- Can the council make a difference on or influence the discussion or action on an issue?
- What community or organization is the council trying to influence related to this issue?
- Does the council have the resources to commit to addressing this issue?
- Does the council have enough information to make a decision about the issue?
- What information does the council need before addressing this issue?
- Who else is working on this issue?

APPENDIX E: RESOURCES

Resources and Guides for Community Food Assessments

- A Food Systems Assessment for Oakland, CA: Toward a Sustainable Food Plan**
http://oaklandfoodsystem.pbworks.com/f/Oakland%20FSA_6.13.pdf – Report of a food system assessment done in 2005 in Oakland, California. The study explored how systems of production, distribution, processing, consumption, and waste management, as well as city planning and policy-making, could support the objective to source at least 30 percent of the city's food needs from within the city or immediate region. (Oakland Mayor's Office of Sustainability and University of California, Berkeley, Department of City and Regional Planning; 2006).
- Cabarrus County Food System Assessment**
<https://www.cabarrusfpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Cabarrus-County-Food-System-Assessment-Final-Report.pdf> – In 2010, the Cabarrus County (North Carolina) Board of Commissioners authorized a food system assessment. This report identifies key findings and recommendations derived from secondary data sources and interviews with more than 60 different stakeholders involved in the county's food system. (Center for Environmental Farming Systems; 2011).
- Community-Based Food System Assessment and Planning – Facilitator's Guidebook – 2018**
<https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/3108/3108-9029/3108-9029.html> – This guide is designed for Extension agents and local food system champions to use in helping others in their communities work toward a sustainable food system. (Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education; 2011).
- Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit**
<https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=43179> – This toolkit provides standardized measurement tools for assessing various aspects of community food security. It includes a general guide to community assessment and focused materials for examining six basic assessment components related to community food security. The toolkit is designed to be used by community-based nonprofit organizations and business groups, local government officials, private residents, and community planners. (USDA Economic Research Service; 2002).
- Conversations Across the Food System: A Guide to Coordinating Grassroots Community Food Assessments**
https://www.oregonfoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Conversations-Across-the-Food-System_First-Edition.pdf – The guide provides a background and overview of the process involved in coordinating a grassroots community food assessment. It is divided into five sections: background, preparation, process, completion, and organizing. (Oregon Food Bank; 2013).
- Food System Assessments as a Tool for Sustainability**
www.slideshare.net/maripqz/food-system-assessments-as-a-tool-for-sustainability – This report takes a critical look at 15 food system assessments from across the United States and Canada. It seeks to answer the question, "If these reports attempt to address the entire food system, what are they including, and what is left out?" (Mari Pierce-Quinonez; 2011).
- Guide to Developing a Community Food Profile**
<https://www.canr.msu.edu/foodsystems/uploads/files/CFPdevtguide-1.pdf> – A community food profile provides a framework for communicating community food system ideas through vignettes of the people and enterprises involved. This guide details the steps and considerations in developing a community food profile. (Center for Regional Food Systems at Michigan State University [formerly C. S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems]; 2005).
- Salt Lake City Community Food Assessment: Food System Analysis**
http://www.slcdocs.com/slcgreen/SLC_Food_Assessment_Report_complete.pdf – To help make relevant and practical decisions about Salt Lake City's future, city officials embarked on a project to look at the challenges and opportunities that could lead to a more sustainable local food system. This report discusses the results of the city's community food assessment. (Salt Lake City Green; 2013).
- Sonoma County Community Food Assessment**
<http://www.aginnovations.org/result/2015-05-10/sonoma-county-community-food-assessment> – Information from this report on a food system assessment conducted in Sonoma County, California, will be used to help inform policy and decision-making and to develop broader awareness and partnerships needed to facilitate systems change. (Ag Innovations Network/Sonoma County Food System Alliance; 2011).

Resources and Guides for Creating a Food Council

- **Center for Collaborative Planning** (www.connectccp.org/) – The CCP promotes health and social justice by providing training and technical assistance and by connecting people and resources. (Public Health Institute; Center for Collaborative Planning; n.d.).
- **Center for Whole Communities** (www.wholecommunities.org/) – The Center for Whole Communities is a place-based leadership development organization. Its leadership hopes to foster innovative and collaborative responses from different sectors of the environment and social movements that are necessary to address the complexity of today's challenges. (Center for Whole Communities; n.d.).
- **Cleveland – Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition** (cccfoodpolicy.org/) – The Cleveland–Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition was formed in 2007 to help bring about public and private policy-based changes that foster an all-around healthier food system. The Coalition has based its work on assessments of how food can impact the health of individuals, communities, the economy, and the environment. (Cleveland–Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition; 2010).
- **DNPAO State Program Highlights: Food Policy Councils** (<https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/FoodPolicyCouncils.pdf>) – The Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program (NPAO) is a cooperative agreement among the CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO) and 25 state health departments. The goal of the program is to prevent and control obesity and other chronic disease through healthful eating and physical activity. This document is a report on state activities promoting food policy councils. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, DNPAO; 2010).
- **Doing Food Policy Councils Right: A Guide to Development and Action** (www.markwinne.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/FPC-manual.pdf) – This guide is designed to help organizers create and run food policy councils. (Mark Winne Associates; 2012).
- **Food Circles Networking Project: Connecting Farmers, Consumers, and Communities** (www.foodcircles.missouri.edu/) – Food circle are designed to help promote the consumption of safe regionally grown food that will encourage sustainable agriculture and help sustain farmers who will, in turn, sustain rural areas. (University of Missouri; n.d.).
- **Food Policy Councils: Helping Local, Regional, and State Governments Address Food System Challenges** (<http://ucanr.edu/sites/MarinFoodPolicyCouncil/files/178441.pdf>) – This report provides an overview of food policy councils, charts the functions of planners in a detailed matrix, highlights common ways that planning departments support food policy councils, and offers lessons learned. (American Planning Association, Planning and Community Health Research Center; 2011).
- **Food Policy Councils: Lessons Learned** (<https://foodfirst.org/publication/food-policy-councils-lessons-learned/>) – What lessons can be taken from North America's three-decade experiment in formulating local food policy? This publication is an assessment based on an extensive literature review and testimony from 48 individual interviews with the people most involved in food policy councils. (Institute for Food and Development Policy; 2009).
- **Food System Assessments Forum** (www.mendeley.com/groups/1995073/food-system-assessments/) – In this online forum users share food system assessment literature and documents. (Stephanie Ritchie; n.d.).
- **FoodShare Toronto: Good Healthy Food for All!** (www.foodshare.net/) – FoodShare Toronto is a nonprofit community organization whose vision is Good Healthy Food for All. FoodShare works to empower individuals, families, and communities through food-based initiatives, while advocating for the broader public policies needed to ensure that everyone has adequate access to sustainably produced, good, healthy food. (FoodShare Toronto; n.d.).
- **Hartford Food System** (www.hartfordfood.org/) – Since 1978, Hartford (Connecticut) Food System has been a leader in grassroots efforts to fight hunger and improve nutrition in Hartford's low-income neighborhoods. Its work and programs are based on three reinforcing strategies: increase access for all residents to normal food outlets, particularly grocery stores and farmers markets; deepen the connection between food consumers, especially youth, and agricultural production; and advance public policies to improve affordability and quality of food. (Hartford Food System; 2014).
- **Healthy Places – Healthy Food: Food Policy Councils** (www.cdc.gov/healthypaces/healthtopics/healthyfood/foodpolicy.htm) – Part of the CDC Healthy Places initiative, this site provides a variety

of resources for food policy councils. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2010).

- **Local and Regional Food Systems**
(https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/local_food/) – This website offers resources and tools for understanding the place of local food in the global food system, how producers can participate in this movement, and examples of successful local food systems that secure fresh foods for their communities. (ATTRA: National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service; 1997–2014).
- **Marketing and Food Systems Initiatives**
(www.leopold.iastate.edu/marketing) – This site focuses on local food topics. It features research reports, publications, presentations, and media that address farmer profitability; food miles and food pathways; supply networks; economic impacts; market research; farm to institution programs; food, health, and climate change; food system assessments; and place-based food and viticulture. (Iowa State University, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture; n.d.).
- **Oregon Food Bank**
(www.oregonfoodbank.org/) – The Oregon Food Bank leads statewide efforts to increase resources for hungry families and to eliminate the root causes of hunger by advocating for fair public policies, strengthening community food systems, and providing nutrition and garden education to help people become more self-sufficient and resourceful. (Oregon Food Bank; n.d.).
- **PSE Readiness Assessment and Decision Instrument (READI)**
(www.PSEREADI.org) – PSE (policy, systems, and environmental change) READI (Readiness Assessment and Decision Instrument) was developed by Building Capacity for Obesity Prevention, a partnership among Case Western Reserve University, Ohio State University, SNAP-Ed program, and Ohio Department of Health, Creating Healthy Communities program. A food council can assess the community's readiness and capacity to implement community nutrition changes online. The assessment can be taken as an individual or as a team by inviting food council members to share their input. Assessments available include Farmers Markets, Healthy Food Retail, Farm to School, and Healthy Eating Policies in Childcare. After completing the assessment, a report with three recommendations tailored to the community will be generated. The recommendations will help plan next steps and guide implementation. The site has organized over 1,000 toolkits, guides, and

other resources into an online library to help you put your community nutrition plan into action. (Building Capacity for Obesity Prevention Project; n.d.).

- **Roots of Change: California Food Policy Council**
(www.rootsofchange.org/content/activities-2/california-food-policy-council) – This group works to develop and support a collaborative network of California leaders and institutions interested in establishing a sustainable food system in the state by 2030. This network involves food producers, businesses, nonprofits, communities, government agencies, and foundations that share a commitment to changing food thinking, food markets, and food policies. (California Food Policy Council; n.d.).

Examples of Food Council Toolkits and Documents

- **Partnership Evaluation: Guidebook and Resources**
(www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/PartnershipEvaluation.pdf)
- **Evaluation of State Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Plans**
(www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/EvaluationofStateNPAOPPlans.pdf)
- **Center TRT Evaluation Resources**
(http://www.centertrt.org/?p=evaluation_resources) – Provides resources for constructing evaluation of a policy or program.
- **Healthier Food Retail: Beginning the Assessment Process in Your State or Community**
(www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/HFRassessment.pdf)
- **Santa Fe (New Mexico) City and County Advisory Council on Food Policy**
(<http://www.santafecounty.org/userfiles/FoodPolicyResolution2008-26.pdf>) – Provides a sample founding resolution.

Working With a Community Coach

- **Field Guide to Community Coaching**
(https://cyfar.org/sites/default/files/cyfar_research_docs/A%20Field%20Guide%20to%20Community%20Coaching.pdf) – A community coach can help create a ripple effect within a community to expand the capacity of the community to create a thriving future.
- **Guiding Sustainable Community Change: An Introduction to Coaching**
(<https://www.aecf.org/resources/guiding-sustainable-community-change/>) – The guidebook provides an introduction to both the concept and the practice of coaching for community change.

Annotated Resources and Additional Reading

- Garrett, S., Feenstra, G. (n.d.). Growing a community food system. Retrieved from https://www.iatp.org/sites/default/files/Growing_a_Community_Food_System.htm. Explains that creating and maintaining successful community food system projects is a complex but rewarding process.
- Hill, H. (2008). Food miles: Background and marketing. Washington, DC: ATTRA: National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service. Retrieved from <https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/summaries/summary.php?pub=281>. Addresses how food miles are calculated, investigates how food miles affect producers and consumers, and evaluates methods for curbing the energy intensiveness of our food transportation system.
- Johnson, R., Aussenberg, R. A., & Cowan, T. (2013). The role of local food systems in U.S. farm policy. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service. Retrieved from https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc815841/m2/1/high_res_d/R42155_2014Jul17.pdf. Provides background information and data on local and regional food systems; highlights available resources within existing federal programs that may be applied to support local food systems; describes related initiatives of the Obama Administration; and discusses legislative options and proposals related to local and regional food systems, as part of the 2012 farm bill process.
- Lang, T. (2007). Food security or food democracy? Pesticide News, 78. Brighton, UK: Pesticide Action Network UK. Retrieved from www.pan-uk.org/pestnews/pn78p12-16.pdf. In the Rachel Carson Memorial Lecture, Tim Lang, professor of food policy at City University, London, said that as food production faces greater challenges, single issue nongovernmental organizations need to work together to ensure that food policy moves toward greater food democracy – safe, justly produced, sustainable food for all.
- Martinez, S., Hand, M., Da Pra, M., Pollack, S., Ralston, K., Smith, T., ... & Newman, C. (2010). Local food systems: Concepts, impacts, and issues [ERR 97]. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Retrieved from <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=46395>. Explores alternative definitions of local food, estimates market size and reach, describes the characteristics of local consumers and producers, and examines early indications of the economic and health impacts of local food systems
- Muller, M., Tagtow, A., Roberts, S. L., & MacDougall, E. (2009). Aligning food system policies to advance public health. *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition*, (4) 3–4. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19320240903321193>
- Pothukuchi, K. (2011). The Detroit food system report 2009–2010. Detroit, MI: Detroit Food Policy Council. Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1005&context=urbstud_frp. Assesses the state of the city's food system, including activities in production, distribution, consumption, waste generation and composting, participation in nutrition and food assistance programs, and innovative food system programs.
- Sanders, B., & Shattuck, A. (2011). Cutting through the red tape: A resource guide for local food practitioners and organizers [policy brief 19]. Oakland, CA: Food First Books. Retrieved from <https://foodfirst.org/publication/cutting-through-the-red-tape-a-resource-guide-for-local-food-policy-practitioners-organizers/>. Policies and tools for each area of the food system: production, processing, distribution, consumption, and food waste recovery. Highlights city-level ordinances and zoning changes as well as pilot projects.
- Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program. (2013). Community food systems resources. Davis: University of California Davis, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program. Retrieved from www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/sfs/CFS_Bibliography_Updated_2013.pdf. Community food systems are gaining attention nationwide as an important way to create links among farmers, consumers, and communities in particular regions. This bibliography documents the growing interest in community food systems, focusing mostly on analysis of food-related activities and trends within the United States.
- Wilkins, J. L., & Eames-Sheavly, M. (2003). A primer on community food systems: Linking food, nutrition, and agriculture. *Discovering the Food System: An Experiential Learning Program for Young and Inquiring Minds*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University. Retrieved from www.discoverfoodsys.cornell.edu/pdfs/Primer.pdf. We all can benefit from learning about our own food system and participating in its development. Community food systems offer an alternative to the current approach to meeting daily food and nutrition needs, and promise several social, environmental, and economic benefits. Individual stakeholders have a role to play in shaping the future of community food systems.

Examples of Social Marketing Campaigns

Baltimore City Food Policy Task Force. (2009). Developing a city-wide healthy eating publicity campaign.

Baltimore City Food Policy Task Force: Final Report and Recommendations, pp. 33–35. Retrieved from <http://cleanergreenerbaltimore.org/uploads/files/Baltimore%20City%20Food%20Policy%20Task%20Force%20Report.pdf>. Develop clear, simple, focused messages about healthy eating, encouraging consumption of foods readily accessible to the targeted population. Promote culturally relevant single foods as part of a broader healthy eating campaign. Employ creative means to publicize and generate awareness of the health message, involving existing community-based organizations.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011). Strategies to prevent obesity and other chronic diseases: The CDC guide to strategies to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/fandv_2011_web_tag508.pdf. Provides guidance for program managers, policy makers, and others on how to select strategies to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables. Offers the most relevant information on each type of strategy.

Cheng, H., Kotler, P., & Lee, N. R. (2009). Social marketing for public health: An introduction. Burlington, MA: Jones and Bartlett. Retrieved from samples.jbpub.com/9780763757977/57977_ch01_final.pdf. Provides a clear definition for social marketing and discusses the focus on behavior change in any social marketing campaign.

Department of Health. (2009). Change4Life marketing strategy. London, England, UK. Retrieved from www.nhs.uk/change4life/supporter-resources/downloads/change4life_marketing%20strategy_april09.pdf. Sets out the Department of Health's marketing strategy for reducing obesity in England. It represents the marketing sector of a much broader response to obesity, set out in Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: A Cross-Government Strategy for England, and was written to coincide with the first annual report of the Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives program.

World Health Organization. (2012). Population-based approaches to childhood obesity prevention. Geneva, Switzerland: Author. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/childhood/WHO_new_childhoodobesity_PREVENTION_27nov_HR_PRINT_OK.pdf. Outlines guiding principles for the development of a population-based childhood obesity prevention strategy. Aims to provide WHO Member States with an overview of the types of childhood obesity prevention interventions that can be undertaken at national, subnational and local levels. Where relevant, it aims to indicate which prevention measures are likely to be the most effective.

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- World Health Organization: Trade, foreign policy, diplomacy and health [web page]. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/trade/en/>