

# **GETTING FOOD ON THE TABLE**

## **AN ACTION GUIDE TO LOCAL FOOD POLICY**

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This guidebook is truly a collaborative project; it reflects substantive contributions from dozens of individuals and organizations.

Many people generously shared ideas and stories about their work in the young fields of food policy and community food security. We are grateful to these pioneering individuals: Kate Fitzgerald, Steven Garrett, Bob Gottlieb, Robert Wilson, Gail Harris, Rod MacRae, Sean Cosgrove, Dick Goebel, Vivica Kraak, Bill Glidden, Jack McLaughlin, Patrick Temple-West, Doug Clopp, Patti Brandt, Cindy Javor, Suzanne Perkins, and Jerry Kaufman.

The extensive work conducted by Ken Dahlberg, Kate Clancy, and Heather Yeatman in their Local Food Systems Project proved invaluable in identifying the criteria used in evaluating local food policy efforts. Through their writing and in discussions, these individuals highlighted many ways that local food policy work can be attuned to community needs and address a broad range of issues.

Michelle Mascarenhas, Bob Gottlieb, and Rod MacRae all shared their expertise as reviewers. Many thanks to them for critiquing our drafts and making this publication more robust and reflective of the breadth of local food policy work underway in North America. We also thank Lucia Sanchez, Debbie Fryman, Carolyn Olney, Jodi Nafis, Leslie Pohl-Kosbau, Cathy Sneed, Frank Tamborello, Marty Johnson, and Gloria Ohland for their helpful comments.

We are grateful to Kendall Dunnigan for helping develop the concept and initial proposal for this project. We thank Steve Lustgarden for providing skilled editing services and Yuki Kidokoro for developing the design.

Many thanks to other individuals, including Viv Veith, Janet Brown, Zy Weinberg, Carolyn Olney, Roxane Hernandez, John Piotti, Marla Rhodes, Michele Tingling-Clemmens, and Jim Smith, who shared stories and information that was vital to bringing together the pieces of this guide.

Finally, we are most grateful to the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund for providing financial support for the development and publication of this guidebook.

# INTRODUCTION

## WHY THIS GUIDEBOOK?

In our nation's food system, it is both the best and worst of times. Supermarket shelves offer a wider variety of foods at lower prices than at any time in recent history. Yet chronic hunger persists and an ever increasing number of Americans suffer from diet-related diseases. Family farmers struggle to make a living in a marketplace; farm proprietor income fell 37% from 1997 to 1998. Farmland is being devoured by suburban sprawl, with one million acres of prime agricultural land in California's Central Valley expected to be lost in the next 40 years. In 16 out of 21 metropolitan areas nationwide, supermarkets have abandoned inner city neighborhoods.

At the same time, in many neighborhoods innovative food-related projects and businesses are springing up that meet a range of community and environmental needs and offer hope for reversing these grim national trends. Such local efforts are joining forces through an emerging community food security movement, which advocates for developing comprehensive, community-based solutions to food system problems. However, developing these solutions is a tremendous challenge, one that exceeds the resources of local organizations acting on their own. Thus, community groups are looking for ways to expand small-scale successes, draw broader attention to food system issues, and leverage greater resources for community food security.

Local governments can be a valuable ally in addressing food security issues. They command significant resources, have mandates to address social needs, and provide opportunities for citizen involvement. City and county policies profoundly shape local food production and distribution, in ways that include the location of supermarkets, the availability of land for urban agriculture, and the delivery of nutrition education.

Unfortunately, city and county governments do not plan for food security as comprehensively as they do for other basic needs such as housing and transportation. The isolation among various departments that deal with food (and relevant private sector organizations) can lead to policies that are fragmented or even counterproductive. This lack of coordination also makes it difficult to piece together the puzzle of food-related policies, and

to identify policy barriers or opportunities to advance community food security.

This guidebook is designed to support local efforts to promote community food security, by helping readers to understand the breadth of policies affecting their local food system, evaluate policy barriers and opportunities, develop innovative policy solutions, and identify useful resources. It provides food advocates with tools to engage city and county government as a partner and resource in advancing community food security. While community activists are the primary audience for this guidebook, we hope it will also be useful to local government staff and others with an interest in shaping local food policy — including you!

As we developed this guidebook, we were often reminded that local food policy is a very young field, and that sharing ideas and experiences with one another is crucial to advance our collective efforts. We welcome comments on this guidebook and how you use this it, and wish you great success in your efforts to improve your community's food security.

## **WHAT'S IN THIS GUIDEBOOK?**

### **Chapter 1. Food Policy Inventory**

Provides an overview of typical city and county government policies, programs, and functions that affect community food security. Also highlights opportunities to work for change, and includes brief success stories and potential funding sources.

### **Chapter 2. Case Studies**

Profiles nine established organizations that have worked on food policy issues in their communities, providing examples and lessons for other efforts.

### **Chapter 3. Food Policy Organizing**

Presents guidance on local food policy organizing, drawing on the experience of successful advocates. Also features an overview of issues related to establishing and operating food policy councils.

### **Resource Guide**

Describes various local food policy and related publications and where to order them.

### **Appendices**

Include a sample food policy inventory, sample ordinances, and an overview of federal funding sources.

# FOOD POLICY INVENTORY

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a department-by-department overview of the local government policies, programs, and functions that impact a community's food security. It is intended to help readers understand the scope of local policies affecting their food system, and to identify opportunities to shape local policies and programs to advance community food security. This sample inventory, based on a composite city/county government, can also serve as a model for a policy assessment of a real local government. Such an assessment, even when conducted on a more limited departmental scale, can point out policy barriers, funding opportunities, or programmatic avenues for specific community food projects. A sample policy assessment can be found in Appendix A.

The following policy inventory is composed of sections that each address a particular city/county agency or department. Each section contains background information on policies and practices that affect food security; action ideas for integrating food-related concerns into local government activities (highlighted in italics); and information on funding sources.

Our composite city/county government provides an overview of local food policy, rather than an exhaustive listing of agencies and programs that affect the food system. For example, we give only limited attention to food assistance programs because extensive information is already available from groups such as the Food Research and Action Center and World Hunger Year, as referenced in our Resource Guide. Also, while the examples are as representative as possible, significant variations exist between communities. In some areas, programs will be operated in different departments, or agencies not listed may play a very active role. Also, names of some departments vary across municipalities, for example the Department of Human Services may also be known as the Department of Social Services.

In each section, potential federal funding sources are listed. Local and/or private funding sources are very significant and often easier to obtain, but



they are beyond the scope of this guidebook. While the federal Community Food Projects program was created specifically for local food system projects, few of the other grants we have identified are so targeted. Most of them however, have been received by community food organizations. The key to their success has been to creatively demonstrate how their project can achieve the goals of the grant program. Funding sources are summarized in Appendix D.

For those interested in researching their local government, mission statements and annual objectives, budgets and sources of funds, staff structures, and legal mandates (from both through state and local legislation) may be very helpful. This information is available through agency offices, county or city clerk's offices, or the local public library: Interviews with city staff and non-profit advocates may also be very helpful.

## 1.1 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Schools have a considerable impact on the food system, through both educating and feeding children. Many schools face resource limitations that prevent them from improving food-related practices.

### MEALS

#### MEAL QUALITY AND LOCALLY-GROWN FOOD

Limited budgets, and kitchens equipped to deal with canned or frozen products, can block changes such as the use of fresh, local food. Food service contracts often indirectly discourage the purchase of locally-grown food. Many food corporations offer donations that entrench their relationship with school food services. Also, it may be challenging to change food delivery systems since many depend on wholesale delivery.

- ◆ *Develop a proposal for using locally-grown food in meals with attention to changes in menus and kitchen procedures; demonstrate to administrators cost-effective means for supplying quality produce. Advocate for adoption of a stronger food services mission that integrates cafeteria, curricula, and school gardens, and that includes oversight by the school board and parents' groups.*

#### MEAL PROGRAMS

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) reimburse school districts for serving free and reduced-price meals, but many schools choose not to participate.

- ◆ *Investigate whether schools are eligible for universal meal service, which reduces administrative workload. Urge the school board to enact a district-wide policy of meal service participation. Work with food service, health department, and other staff to improve outreach or serve breakfasts in class to boost student participation.*

### NUTRITION AND AGRICULTURE EDUCATION

#### NUTRITION EDUCATION

Schools often do not employ a nutritionist to oversee meal content and/or provide and coordinate nutrition education.

- ◆ *Propose and advocate for the creation of a nutrition educator position that includes coordination of external education providers. Work with school nurses to promote delivery of nutrition education through the health department.*

#### SUCCESS STORY

*The Community Food Security Project at Occidental College worked with the Santa Monica School District and city-run farmers' markets to begin the Farmers' Market Fruit and Salad Bar to connect local farmers to schools and increase fresh fruit and vegetable consumption.*



#### SUCCESS STORY

*The Gardening, Recycling, Environmental Education and Nutrition (GREEN) Project in Tucson, Arizona includes gardens and a composting demonstration project at a public elementary school.*

#### SUCCESS STORY

*Low-income youth receive job training as they prepare SFSP meals through an employment program with Milwaukee's Social Development Commission.*

### FOOD CURRICULA

Required curricula can be a barrier to introducing food or agriculture lessons to classes, but there is often greater flexibility at the elementary level.

- ◆ *Work with teachers to determine where food and agriculture topics fit into courses. See also Cooperative Extension.*

### SCHOOLYARD GARDENS AND COMPOSTING

Many schools have initiated gardens and compost programs, but summer vacation can make maintenance a challenge. Also, teachers may need help integrating such programs into classes.

- ◆ *Develop a proposal with teachers, staff, administrators, and parents that links to the curriculum and the cafeteria and provides for summer garden maintenance.*

### SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM (SFSP)

School districts often operate SFSP, but Parks and Rec and private agencies often run sites as well. If meals are not prepared in-house, a vendor must be hired.

- ◆ *Work with SFSP administrators to secure a contract that ensures local jobs and fresh meals.*

### FUNDING: ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION GRANTS

Supports local educational agencies and non-profits in the development of novel curricula.

**Funds available:** \$3 million/year. 25% of awards are less than \$5,000.

**Funding stream:** National and regional competitions.

**Contact:** EPA Regional Office or Environmental Education Grant Program, Mail Code 1707, EPA, 401 M Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20460, (202) 260-8619.

## **1.2 REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, OR HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

A range of development functions typically are coordinated within one local agency, called the Redevelopment Authority, Economic Development Department, or Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Among those functions relevant to food systems are business development, employment, housing and construction, and property acquisition. Redevelopment administers funding in support of these functions, which is available to non-profit and for-profit organizations as well as public projects.

### **GRANT PROGRAMS**

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), state redevelopment bonds, and local funds all are distributed to non-profits and municipal agencies to deliver programs ranging from housing to microenterprise assistance to rural infrastructure. Community boards often determine the distribution of these funds.

- ◆ *Seek involvement in this board to promote funding for food projects.*

### **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

#### **ENTREPRENEURIAL ASSISTANCE**

Funding, loans, and credit are available for new and small businesses; in some areas special programs target people of color, women, and low-income entrepreneurs. Redevelopment Authorities may also operate or fund community kitchens or business incubators.

- ◆ *Investigate opportunities for food-related microenterprise to receive this assistance.*

#### **ECONOMIC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES**

Redevelopment works closely with planning agencies to study and project business and employment trends. These studies help determine development strategies and the distribution of funds. The resulting initiatives often involve public-private partnerships.

- ◆ *Become involved in economic planning to advocate for agriculture, food access, and food-related development considerations.*

#### **BUSINESS PLANNING AND PERMITS**

Redevelopment often handles relations with business, including attracting companies to the area; issuing permits and licenses; and enforcing building

codes.

- ◆ *Involve this agency in bringing in food retail or food production firms, and in helping small firms comply with regulations.*

## **EMPLOYMENT AND JOB PLACEMENT**

Many Redevelopment Authorities have implemented creative welfare-to-work programs. Jointly with Human Services, Redevelopment may operate job training and placement centers.

- ◆ *Work with administrators to gain resources for food-related job training programs.*

## **HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION, AND PROPERTY ACQUISITION**

**HOUSING AND FOOD ACCESS.** Housing authorities rarely plan for food access when siting public housing projects.

- ◆ *Advocate for the coordination of housing with transit or retail development. Develop a proposal to site farmstands, farmers' markets, community gardens, other food sources, and food waste composting within housing projects.*

### **COMPETITION FOR LAND**

Housing and business are typically prioritized over community gardens and farmers' markets as land uses. See Community Planning for a discussion of the planning process.

### **VACANT LAND**

Redevelopment may work with Planning to determine the use of brownfields.

- ◆ *Contact administrators to investigate the availability of rehabilitated land for food production.*

### **FUNDING: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS**

Federal HUD distributes funds to local governments for development projects that benefit low-to-moderate-income communities.

**Funds available:** \$2.9-3.1 billion/year

**Funding stream:** Annual RFPs at local level; awards range from \$500 to over \$100,000.

**Contact:** Local Housing and Development Department or HUD affiliate.

### **SUCCESS STORY**

*Seattle's Office of Housing and Community*

*Development is a partner in the P-Patch community garden program, and has helped to develop market gardens in housing projects in Seattle.*

## **1.3 DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

The Department of Human Services delivers public assistance and increasingly works with Redevelopment Departments to use economic development as a stepping stone out of welfare. Divisions of DHS serve youth and the elderly. DHS may itself perform functions, such as the operation of day care, and/or it may contract these services out to businesses and non-profit agencies. The Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP) funds many DHS meal programs.

### **WELFARE AND EMPLOYMENT**

#### **FOOD STAMPS AND FARMERS' MARKETS**

The transition from paper food stamps to Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) has presented a challenge for many farmers' markets.

- ◆ *Work with administrators and staff to develop a pilot project to test new technologies.*

#### **WELFARE-TO-WORK**

Welfare recipients are increasingly referred to job training and placement programs.

- ◆ *Contact DHS to gain funds, assistance, and referrals to community food and food industry job training programs.*

#### **PUBLIC DAY CARE MEALS**

Restrictive budgets, purchasing contracts, and kitchens that are not staffed or equipped to use fresh products limit the ability of public day care facilities to improve meals and use locally-grown food.

- ◆ *Work with administrators to develop alternative programs that consider staffing, menu changes, and cost-effective food sources.*

### **YOUTH BUREAUS**

#### **MEALS AT FACILITIES**

Improving meals and introducing local food to youth centers and youth homeless shelters involves issues similar to those that apply to day care.

#### **YOUTH CENTERS**

Centers often operate service or entrepreneurial activities.

- ◆ *Contact counselors to engage youth in food-related projects, such as growing or marketing food.*

## **SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SYEP)**

SYEP provides paid jobs at public and sometimes non-profit agencies.

- ◆ *Contact the SYEP coordinator to place youth at food-related projects.*

## **AREA AGENCY ON AGING (AAA)**

### **MEALS AT FACILITIES**

Improving meals and introducing local food at senior homes and centers involves issues similar to those that apply to day care.

### **NUTRITION EDUCATION**

Senior centers and elderly homes provide activities for clients.

- ◆ *Contact activities coordinators to introduce nutrition education.*

### **FOOD SOURCES**

Farmers' markets located at congregate homes ensure access to fresh food for residents.

- ◆ *Consider bringing residents to farmers' markets or purchasing food from farmers' markets for meals programs.*

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Programs such as Dial-A-Ride that improve food access may be run jointly by AAA and the transit authority; see Department of Transportation.

### **FARMERS' MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM (FMNP)**

FMNP is available to seniors in only a few states.

- ◆ *Initiate a pilot with the local AAA. See Public Health for a full description.*

### **SENIOR VOLUNTEERS**

Many senior centers organize volunteer programs.

- ◆ *Use these programs to involve seniors in food-related projects.*

### **FUNDING: JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP ACT**

Funds both youth and adult job training.

**Funds available:** \$2 billion/year.

**Funding stream:** Federal funds are distributed through state and local departments of labor.

**Contact:** Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Ave NW, Washington, DC 20210, (202) 219-5303 x169; or regional office.

### **SUCCESS STORY**

*We Feed Minds, a project of the Public Health Foundation in Los Angeles, helps WIC recipients learn to garden in enclosed spaces, using innovative, low-cost containers.*

## **1.4 PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND BOARD OF HEALTH**

Public health departments assess community health; plan and administer facilities and programs to maintain and improve public health; conduct prevention-oriented public health campaigns and education; and provide direct health assistance to families and individuals. Any of these functions may address nutrition and food as ingredients of a healthy lifestyle.

### **SETTING HEALTH POLICY AND PRIORITIES**

#### **HEALTH ASSESSMENTS**

Department epidemiologists track data about health and disease indicators gathered from clinics, hospitals, and health professionals.

- ◆ *Lobby for greater attention to nutrition-related health indicators.*

#### **HEALTHY COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

Health departments organize partnerships among hospitals, clinics, health professionals, and business and community leaders to develop and implement initiatives.

- ◆ *Get involved in these partnerships to advocate for food security programs.*

#### **HEALTH CAMPAIGNS**

Education priorities (see below) and general policy are based largely on assessment results, partnership ideas, and directives and funding from state and national health agencies. Crisis-oriented or “medical model” approaches taken by some health departments detract from a more preventative focus.

- ◆ *Become involved in health campaigns to promote food access and nutrition-related campaigns.*

### **DIRECT SERVICES AND EDUCATION**

#### **WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC)**

WIC provides checks for healthful food items to low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and post-partum women, and children up to age five.

- ◆ *Support innovative programs that include gardening for WIC participants.*  
*Encourage increased funding to reach more eligible persons.*

#### **FARMERS’ MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM (FMNP)**

FMNP provides vouchers for farmers’ market produce to WIC clients in

## SUCCESS STORY

*The New York City*

*Department of Health and Human Services produces and distributes "Diets and Dollars," a free newsletter that contains consumer tips, nutrition information, and simple, healthful recipes.*

many states; a few states extend FMNP to the elderly as well. Local agencies may organize a pilot project in areas where WIC and/or senior FMNP is not offered.

- ◆ *Contact the state department of agriculture for details about beginning a local pilot. Conduct outreach and food preparation education to help clients take advantage of FMNP. See also Cooperative Extension and health educators, below.*

## COMMUNITY CLINICS

Clinics provide medical care and free screenings for the public, especially low-income people.

- ◆ *Collaborate with staff and caseworkers to deliver nutrition education and refer patients to other nutrition programs in conjunction with screenings. Encourage record-keeping on the incidence of diet-related diseases, such as anemia or obesity.*

## PUBLIC HEALTH NURSES AND OUTREACH EDUCATORS

These professionals provide care, education, casework, and referrals, particularly for such groups as low-income mothers, the elderly, and food pantry clients. They may also develop outreach materials and advertisements.

- ◆ *Work with them to coordinate and improve nutrition education offerings.*

## PUBLIC AIDS CLINICS

Some health departments offer treatment for HIV and AIDS patients, which may include nutrition-based counseling and care.

- ◆ *Contact counselors to link clinics with nutrition education and other food-related programs.*

## HEALTH CODES

### FOOD BUSINESSES

Health codes, while important for protecting the public, may act as an obstacle for food-related businesses, farmers' markets, and small-scale entrepreneurs.

- ◆ *Investigate and develop business incubators or community kitchens that meet health codes.*

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Some health departments conduct Environmental Impact Reviews (EIRs)

and Site Assessment and Mitigation (SAM). EIRs are required for new businesses.

- ◆ *Advocate for adding land for food production to review criteria.*  
SAM performs mitigation on contaminated resources.
- ◆ *Use this service for remediating community garden land.* See also Environmental Services.

### **FUNDING: COMMUNITY FOOD & NUTRITION GRANTS**

Supports nutrition programs operated by states and local non-profits.

**Funds available:** \$6 million/year; average award \$27,000-\$33,000.

**Funding stream:** 60% goes to state agencies; 40% distributed through national competition.

**Contact:** Office of Community Services, Dept. of Health and Human Services; state grants, (202) 401-9343; direct grants (202) 401-9345.

### **FUNDING: COMMUNITY SERVICE BLOCK GRANT**

Funds local anti-poverty projects.

**Funds available:** \$525 million/year; state awards range from \$2.1-34.6 million.

**Funding stream:** States apply for funds to be distributed to local agencies.

**Contact:** Office of Community Services, Department of Health and Human Services, (202) 401-9343.



#### SUCCESS STORY

*In Boulder, CO, DPW donates water for community gardens. The community gardens' connection with Boulder's Department of Parks and Recreation helped secure this donation.*

#### SUCCESS STORY

*The County of San Diego passed an ordinance that sets sewer service rates based on wastewater content, encouraging restaurants to reduce the amount of food waste flushed through disposals. The County is now working with businesses to devise waste separation programs and compost food waste.*

## 1.5 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Department of Public Works is a key contact for community gardeners. It manages water resources, including the connection of vacant lots to municipal water supplies. DPW often maintains public grounds and may be involved in composting, providing a good source of soil amendments for gardeners and farmers. DPW may contract with private services for some functions.

### WATER

#### WATER ACCESS

DPW connects properties to the public water supply; it may exercise some restrictions on water access and charge fees to connect plumbing to a new lot.

- ◆ *Contact DPW to arrange for crews to hook up water pipes to community garden lots and to reduce or waive fees for meters and other hook-up charges.*

#### WATER RATES

DPW charges per-unit fees for water use.

- ◆ *Negotiate with DPW for fee waivers or sponsorships for community gardens.*

### LAND USE AND SERVICES

#### SITE CLEAN-UPS

DPW often is responsible for clearing debris from abandoned lots.

- ◆ *Contact DPW to arrange for staff to help clean up new garden sites on public land.*

#### VACANT LAND

DPW may manage some idle lots.

- ◆ *Investigate their availability for community gardens.*

### COMPOST

#### MUNICIPAL ORGANIC WASTE

DPW often composts green waste.

- ◆ *Contact DPW to obtain this material for community gardens.*

#### WASTE REDUCTION

Some states require municipalities to divert a portion of the waste stream from landfills. Many cities and counties have complied by diverting

compostible materials, and/or by legislating incentives for businesses to divert food waste.

- ◆ *Develop and advocate for creative incentives and uses for compost.*

### **WASTE DISPOSAL COSTS**

The growing costs of waste disposal along with concerns about waste facility siting can help support the case for municipal composting. Some cities encourage households to compost by subsidizing the price of backyard compost bins.

- ◆ *Advocate for DPW to pursue such alternatives by demonstrating potential savings and benefits.*

### **WASTEWATER COMPOST**

County or municipal sewer districts may use treatment methods that produce safe soil amendments, although heavy metals may be a concern.

- ◆ *Work with administrators to explore the appropriateness of using compost for food production.*

### **SUCCESS STORY**

*Through a grant program, the City of San Francisco offered free backyard composting bins and Cooperative Extension Master Composter training to several thousand households to encourage food waste composting.*

## **1.6 TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT AND REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

Departments of Transportation (DOT) are closely linked with overall metropolitan or local planning, and may affect food access in at least two distinct ways. First, the regional or metropolitan transit authority affects residents' access to food sources and to jobs that can help them toward food security. Second, the regional or state DOT plans roads that impact land uses, including agricultural land.

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

#### **BUS ROUTES**

Metropolitan bus routes often make food shopping challenging because they are designed on a radial plan and do not cater to passengers that travel within or between neighborhoods. Transit authorities periodically evaluate their systems, often with community input.

- ◆ *Advocate for food access needs to be included in transportation planning.*

#### **PARATRANSIT**

Paratransit is transportation that is specialized, non-fixed, and/or on-demand. Dial-A-Ride, for example, provides access to food retailers for low fares, typically for seniors and low-income public housing residents.

- ◆ *Advocate for paratransit that addresses food access needs and is broadly available.*

### **TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE & LAND USE**

#### **HIGHWAYS AND SPRAWL**

Highways often contribute to urban sprawl, spurring farmland development and the loss of supermarkets and other businesses from cities. See Community Planning for a discussion of the planning processes.

**ROADS AND LAND USE.** Rights-of-way are plots of land purchased by DOT for constructing highways; excess real estate is often sold.

- ◆ *Investigate DOT land sales as a possible source of land for community gardens.*

## 1.7 LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CORRECTIONS

Law enforcement facilities can be sites for food gardens, food composting, and purchasing local food. Criminal sentencing can also involve convicts in food production.

### FACILITIES

#### LOCALLY-GROWN FOOD

Restricted budgets, purchasing contracts, and kitchens that are not equipped and staffed to use fresh food limit the ability of prisons to use locally-grown food.

- ◆ *Develop a proposal that demonstrates cost-effective food sources and appropriate changes to kitchens and menus.*

#### PRISON FOOD SYSTEMS

Some prisons have involved inmates in maintaining food gardens and composting projects.

- ◆ *Propose such a project as a way to encourage rehabilitation and reduce recidivism while reducing food supply costs and waste disposal costs.*

#### POLICE STABLES

Police horses are kept in local stables.

- ◆ *Investigate these as a source of manure for community gardens.*

### ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING

Youth and adult non-violent offenders may be placed at non-profits for rehabilitary community service.

- ◆ *Contact caseworkers to encourage placements at garden and food-related projects.*

#### FUNDING: BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE GRANTS

Funds support sustainable community development projects.

**Funds available:** \$250,000/year; no more than \$50,000 per award.

**Funding stream:** Non-profits and non-federal agencies in federal Enterprise Zones and Empowerment Communities may apply.

**Contact:** US Department of Energy, Center for Excellence in Sustainable Development, 1617 Cole Blvd, Golden, CO, 80401. Fax (303) 275-4830

## **1.8 PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

Many community garden organizations have gained the support of their Parks and Recreation Departments. Making the case that gardens are a vital part of open space and therefore within the department's purpose has helped gardeners tap staff resources and equipment, and in some cases led to development of longer-term land arrangements.

### **PARKS AND FOOD PRODUCTION**

#### **MANAGING COMMUNITY GARDENS**

Some parks departments manage community gardens, contract with a non-profit group to run them, or designate park land for them. Parks and Rec may have land available for gardens.

- ◆ *Explore with administrators the possibility of Parks and Rec taking a larger role in community garden development.*

#### **PARKS AND SOIL REMEDIATION**

Some park lands may have barren or contaminated soils.

- ◆ *Investigate land use history and test soil early before siting community gardens. Contact parks staff for help with tests and remediation; see also Cooperative Extension and Environmental Services.*

#### **STAFF AND EQUIPMENT**

Parks and Rec employs horticultural staff and owns landscaping equipment.

- ◆ *Ask department contacts to share skills and tools with community gardeners.*

#### **OPEN SPACE PLANNING**

Park planners or an appointed Parks Commission advise municipal or county planners and policy makers on open space use.

- ◆ *Target these advisors to advocate for prioritizing urban agriculture as a public land use.*

#### **SUCCESS STORY**

*In Boulder, CO, Parks and Rec contracts with a non-profit agency called Growing Gardens of Boulder County to operate the community gardens. The Department's support has provided the gardens with land and funding.*

## RECREATION AND FOOD

Parks and Rec often operates activity programs for youth, the elderly, or the general public.

- ◆ *Work with coordinators to add food-related activities, such as summer food programs and nutrition education.*

### FUNDING: URBAN RESOURCES PARTNERSHIP (URP)

*Cities receive seed grants and technical assistance to create programs to better respond to communities' environmental needs.*

**Funds available:** Four cities/year receive \$500,000 each.

**Funding stream:** National competition among applicant cities; RFPs for grassroots environmental projects within cities.

**Contact:** National URP Office, USDA/USFS/URP, PO Box 96090  
Washington, DC 20290

### FUNDING: COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS

Awards go to non-profit entities for comprehensive local food system projects.

**Funds available:** \$2.5 million/year; awards range from \$10,000 to \$250,000.

**Funding stream:** National competition.

**Contact:** Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension  
Service, Department of Agriculture, Stop 2201,  
Washington, DC 20250-2201, (202) 401-5048.

## 1.9 CONSERVATION COMMISSION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Conservation Commissions (CC), Environmental Review Boards (ERB), and Environmental Services (ES) perform functions related to protecting farmland and other natural resources. In areas that don't have these entities, these functions may come under Cooperative Extension, Planning, and Public Health.

### CONSERVATION COMMISSION

#### NATURAL RESOURCE LEGISLATION AND INITIATIVES

The CC or ERB consults local government agencies and policy makers on developing legislation and programs that affect natural resources.

- ◆ *Target these entities to advocate for the protection of land for food production.*

#### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REVIEWS (EIRs)

EIRs are required for new developments and businesses.

- ◆ *Advocate for the addition of land for food production to review criteria.*

### ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

ES conducts site assessments and mitigation of contaminated resources.

- ◆ *Use these services for brownfield remediation for community gardens and urban agriculture.*

#### FUNDING: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE GRANTS

Funds local projects that promote sustainable development.

**Funds available:** \$5-9 million/year; up to \$250,000/award

**Funding stream:** National competition.

**Contact:** Office of Air and Radiation, EPA, (202) 260-2441.

#### FUNDING: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE GRANTS

Funds both community-based organizations and community-university partnerships (CUPs).

**Funds available:** \$2 million/year each for community-based groups & CUPs.

**Funding stream:** National competition.

**Contact:** Regional EPA office or Office of Environmental Justice, EPA, 401 M St. SW, Washington, DC 20460, (202) 564-2515.

## **1.10 COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM**

The Cooperative Extension system's mission is to build community skills in agriculture, nutrition, and in some cases, natural resource conservation through education programs based on land-grant university research. Some Extension offices also promote local food economies. County agencies' agendas vary in the degree to which they emphasize sustainability and/or integrated food systems.

### **AGRICULTURE AND CONSERVATION**

#### **FARMER EDUCATION**

Agriculture agents train and advise farmers on topics ranging from financing to soil conservation to Integrated Pest Management.

- ◆ *Contact ag agents to gain their assistance in involving the farming community in food security projects. Encourage Extension to offer organic or sustainable agriculture programs.*

#### **FARMLAND PROTECTION AND LOCAL MARKETING**

Extension offices may administer farmland protection strategies, operate farmers' markets, and promote CSA's and local buying by consumers and retailers.

- ◆ *Work with the Extension office to develop and implement such projects.*

#### **MASTER GARDENERS AND COMPOSTERS**

Master Gardeners and Composters offer workshops and consultation. They can be a valuable resource for starting and maintaining projects.

- ◆ *Enlist these educators' help in implementing gardening and/or composting projects.*

#### **SOIL TESTING AND REMEDIATION**

Extension soil science agents offer consultation services.

- ◆ *Contact these agents for help in testing and remediating land for food production.*

### **NUTRITION AND CONSUMER EDUCATION**

Also called the Family Nutrition Program, the Expanded Food and



Nutrition Program (EFNEP) delivers nutrition, food preparation, and consumer education to low-income families and individuals.

- ◆ *Enlist agents' help in developing outreach plans, giving workshops, and preparing materials for groups such as WIC clients. Encourage them to make connections and referrals to other parts of the food system, such as farmers' markets.*

## **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

### **4-H CLUBS**

Youth agents coordinate 4-H clubs, farms, and community service projects.

- ◆ *Work with agents to engage youth in food projects.*

### **CURRICULUM RESOURCES**

Youth agents develop educational materials and presentations about nutrition and agriculture.

- ◆ *Tap these resources to help teachers and others in delivering food education.*

### **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

Some Extension offices help environmental centers design public education programs.

- ◆ *Contact agents to collaborate on developing education projects for organic farms and gardens.*

### **FUNDING: FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Funds broadly-defined education programs to help food stamp recipients maximize the value of their benefits.

**Funds available:** \$8 million+ /year

**Funding stream:** Funds allotted to state Cooperative Extension and then distributed to local offices.

**Contact:** Local Cooperative Extension or regional USDA office.

## 1.11 LAND USE PLANNING

Land use planning has a major impact on a community's access to food and its ability to support viable local food production. An understanding of the policymaking and planning process can help advocates successfully advance food policy initiatives.

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN/GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan, also called the Comprehensive Plan, lays out the policies that will guide the long-term development of a city or county. The policies that comprise the general plan are often organized into specific chapters or elements such as land use, transportation, natural resources, public services, and housing. The land use element is perhaps the most critical; it identifies land use designations such as commercial, industrial, residential, agricultural, public facilities, and parks and recreation. The transportation element addresses roadways, public transportation, and bikeways, all of which impact access to housing, jobs, and public services.

General plans are updated periodically (annually in California); specific elements of the plan may be updated more frequently. These amendments usually change a land use designation for a specific piece of property. Similar in purpose to a general plan, specific plans address a certain area of town that has particular community development needs.

For food system advocates, a general plan update is an opportunity to promote the inclusion of food access-related policies. For example, the creation of a sustainable local food system could be a stated goal; community gardens could be included in the parks and recreation land use designation; or agricultural land use designations could include provisions for protection from development.

- ◆ *Contact your city/county planning division to request public information on the planning process.*
- ◆ *Attend public meetings to bring food security issues to the attention of elected officials.*
- ◆ *Participate in citizen advisory groups for the development or amendment of specific plans and general plan updates.*

### ZONING ORDINANCE

As an implementation mechanism for the general plan, the zoning ordinance addresses the specific uses for all property in a city or county.

*Use districts* restrict the type of development that can occur. They include residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural categories, among others. Within these categories, there are different zones (such as those that concern density). An agricultural use district may have more than one zone governing the type of non-agricultural development that can be undertaken. For example, a community that wants to restrict the development of farmland may require that residential development be clustered in a certain area. The zoning ordinance also regulates the scale of a development and its effects on the surrounding area. Examples include landscaping requirements and the distance that a building is set back from the roadway.

For food system advocates, the zoning ordinance is important to understand because it will dictate the location of food-related enterprises, including supermarkets, farmers' markets, and community gardens. Moreover, the zoning ordinance can be used to argue against a project that might adversely affect food access - such as an application to rezone a piece of property from neighborhood commercial (which could allow a supermarket) to office commercial.

- ◆ *Request that your local agency assess the viability of local food systems in terms of the zoning ordinance.*
- ◆ *Request that the local planning agency "map" food system coordinates such as the location of grocery stores, parks, community gardens, farmers markets, etc.*
- ◆ *Develop a proposal to amend the zoning ordinance to include community gardens or other local food system related activities.*

## **EXACTIONS**

Exactions are concessions developers may be required to make in order to offset the impacts of a project. In California, exactions are used to enhance community welfare or to offset the cost of additional public services required by new development. Exactions can range from street improvements to the provision of parks or open space. In some cases, developers offer public benefits to gain acceptance for their project.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The planning process allows for citizen participation on a number of levels. Staff planners provide the most direct access to community planning initiatives and play a significant role in explaining planning mechanisms to the general public. Elected officials are primarily accessible through their

executive assistants.

Citizen advisory committees are required by law as part of the planning process for master plans, redevelopment plans, and others. A city council or board of supervisors may appoint an advisory group to help it address an important community issue.

Public hearings and meetings with planning commissioners and elected officials provide citizens the opportunity to provide input on community planning concerns, ranging from a specific development to a planning document.

- ◆ *Ask to make a presentation at these meetings, and propose that officials address community issues such as food access.*

## **FARMLAND PRESERVATION**

Farmland protection is important for ensuring a local food supply, but only a few states and counties have adopted successful protection plans. Lack of funds, and the broad jurisdictional area that impinges on land use, limit the capacity of local agencies to take on this function. States are more typically the agents of farmland protection measures. The American Farmland Trust's Farmland Information Library, cited in Section 3 of the Resource Guide, is a source of further information regarding farmland protection tools. The next section discusses local planning tools that can be applied to farmland protection.

### **FUNDING: FARMLAND PROTECTION PROGRAM**

Provides funds for state and local government to purchase agricultural conservation easements.

**Funds available:** \$17.3 million/year

**Funding stream:** National competition

**Contact:** Community Assistance and Rural Development Division,  
Natural Resources Conservation Service, (202) 720-2847.

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# CASE STUDIES

This chapter profiles nine established organizations that are actively advancing local food policy. Their diverse experiences demonstrate that no single blueprint exists for food policy advocacy. Some groups are organized through a formal structure, while others are looser coalitions. Some have encountered significant obstacles. Many have enjoyed the support of policymakers and the community. What these case studies share is the experience of identifying gaps in the local food system and working toward solutions that involve diverse partners, including local government. Their experiences offer valuable ideas and guidance for others.

## 2.1 THE CITY OF HARTFORD ADVISORY COMMISSION ON FOOD POLICY

### BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE

In 1990, the Hispanic Health Council conducted the Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project (CCHIP) in Hartford, Connecticut. The findings were grim: 41 percent of low-income Hartford families with children under the age of 12 were experiencing a hunger problem, and another 35 percent of families were at risk of hunger.

In response to these findings, Hartford's mayor convened a Hunger Task Force. After several months of investigation, the Task Force recommended the establishment of a municipal food policy and a food policy advisory committee. The city council approved the founding ordinance in 1991, and in 1992 the City of Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy began meeting. The Commission's purpose is "to integrate all agencies of the city in a common effort to improve the availability of safe and nutritious food at reasonable prices for all residents, particularly those in need."

The mayor and city council appoint Commission members to serve for staggered, three-year terms. A total of 15 volunteer members serve on the Commission. Ten members work directly with food-related entities, for example, community gardens, food banks, and food retailers, and five represent the general public. Two ex-officio members represent the directors of the Department of Health and the Department of Social



*The Commission's purpose is "to integrate all agencies of the city in a common effort to improve the availability of safe and nutritious food at reasonable prices for all residents, particularly those in need."*

Services. A chairperson is nominated by Commission members and confirmed by the mayor and city council for a two-year term.

The Commission is empowered to advise government and works with non-profit organizations, businesses, and city agencies to monitor, coordinate, and advocate for food system programs and functions. Thus, the Commission has the strength of both an independent coalition and a city government entity. Since 1995, the Commission has been allocated a small budget through the city Health Department, most of which is used to maintain a staff position and office. Organizations with staff on the Commission provide in-kind support in the form of their employees' time. The Commission secures in-kind donations from other private agencies and businesses in Hartford to support specific projects.

The Commission's lead organization is the Hartford Food System (HFS), a private non-profit established by the City of Hartford and citizens' advocacy groups in 1977. Under Executive Director Mark Winne, HFS has operated programs to create a more equitable and just food system for all Hartford residents, including farmers' markets and Community Supported Agriculture. A major player in the Hunger Task Force and a member of the Commission since its inception, Winne now provides direction and leadership to the Commission as well. HFS also provides office space for the Commission's staff, typically an intern who works 30 to 35 hours per week.

City of Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy 1997 Budget Funding Sources:	
City of Hartford Health Department	\$5,000
Hartford Food System (in-kind)	\$5,000
Other Local Government Support	\$5,000
Private (mostly in-kind)	\$10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>

## **NOTABLE ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

*Childhood nutrition and meal programs.* While more than 90 percent of Hartford Public School students were eligible for free or reduced-price school meals in 1991, fewer than 20 percent participated in the School Breakfast Program (SBP). The Hunger Task Force examined the factors influencing low participation and the Commission made improving participation a top priority. The Commission conducted workshops for teachers and administrators to introduce practices such as in-class breakfasts that have boosted participation in other school systems. In 1993 the Commission created the annual Golden Muffin Awards, which recognize the schools achieving the greatest improvement in breakfast participation. Following the workshops and during the first three years the awards were given, SBP participation increased by 35 percent district-wide.

The Commission has also monitored meal quality and participation rates in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). It initiated the enactment of quality standards by the city council in response to meal site visits and a survey of participants and staff. The Commission also helped SFSP administrators in the Hartford Parks and Recreation Department arrange a contract with a local vendor to provide meals. This step created local jobs and ensured fresher meals. The Commission's regular meetings with local program administrators and other relevant city officials have yielded increases in meal sites and program duration.

**Supermarkets.** The Commission conducts a quarterly survey of seven area supermarkets to determine which have the best prices. This information can save shoppers up to 18 percent on their grocery bills. As a government watchdog, the Commission stays alert to supermarket closings and mergers that might affect food access and prices, and it advocates for residents who express concerns about supermarket cleanliness.

The Commission also actively encourages supermarket development. While the mayor is committed to bringing more supermarkets into Hartford, it is in large part the Commission's legwork that keeps this effort in motion by identifying viable sites and contacting supermarket executives.

**Hunger and food system monitoring and advocacy.** The Commission monitors several local hunger indicators, including participation in public and private assistance programs such as WIC, school meals, and emergency food agencies. The Commission reports on these figures each quarter to city department heads, community organizations, and church leaders.

In 1997, the Commission surveyed low-income residents regarding transportation problems hindering them from obtaining quality, affordable food and used the results to recommend specific changes to Hartford's public transportation system. The data has also helped Connecticut's statewide Food Policy Council develop transportation and food access objectives.

## **CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES**

The Commission's status as a somewhat independent entity that carries the name and authority of a city commission allows it a measure of flexibility in

*In 1996, two of the leading supermarket chains in Connecticut announced their impending merger, which would have nearly eliminated supermarket competition in the Hartford area. The Commission, working with other local organizations, convinced the Connecticut Attorney General to require some stores to be divested to other chains before the merger would be permitted.*



its functions and the perspectives that inform its work. Assembling a coalition of individuals with years of experience at the frontlines of hunger and food security in one room each month – under the aegis of city government – fosters a productive interplay of ideas that leads to creative new projects and actions.

The Commission's relationship with HFS has infused it with Mark Winne's expertise and dynamic leadership, and provided it with a stable base of technical support. This relationship has also helped turn members' ideas into successful undertakings.

Gathering and analyzing food system information has been a considerable factor in these successes. The Commission bases many of its projects on research such as the Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project, the Task Force's investigation, the Summer Food Service Program survey and the transportation survey, all of which have examined food system gaps and proposed ways of addressing them. This research has solidly backed up the Commission's policy recommendations.

Limited funding has prevented the Commission from creating a full-time, permanent staff position that might increase its engagement with some of the city departments that have the greatest influence on food – for example, the Planning and Economic Development Departments, and the mayor's office. Also, while city officials express support for and interest in the Commission, the deeply entrenched isolation of government departments often frustrates the advancement of more comprehensive policies.

## 2.2 THE AUSTIN-TRAVIS COUNTY FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

### BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE

Over the past decade, as supermarkets and smaller food stores have closed, food access became a significant problem for the mostly poor residents on the east side of Austin, Texas. Public transportation options for reaching one of the two remaining full-service stores in the area were limited and inconvenient. Nearby convenience stores offered little relief, charging high prices and featuring few healthful items.

In 1995, the Sustainable Food Center (SFC), a private non-profit organization working to improve Austin's food system since 1993, documented these problems in its study, Access Denied. Through interviews with residents and from data about food access and health, SFC illustrated the inadequacy of community food resources and the high incidence of diet-related disease. Residents stated that supermarkets in their neighborhoods are dirtier, more expensive, and offer fewer healthful items than those in other parts of town. Federal assistance programs are not sufficient to combat food insecurity in East Austin — while 30 percent of families receive assistance under the WIC program, they only benefit if they can reach stores that carry the items they need. The study recommended improved food retail and transportation options, and explored the possibilities for community gardens, farmers' markets, and nutrition education. Access Denied advanced the idea that ensuring the availability of food through a variety of channels is a community and governmental responsibility.

The powerful evidence and arguments presented in Access Denied helped convince city officials of the need for a food policy council. The Austin-Travis County Food Policy Council (FPC) was officially established by unanimous votes of the city council and county legislature in early 1995. While this resolution gave the FPC secretarial services, a meeting space, and official government sanction, it did not provide a budget.

The FPC is responsible for developing policy initiatives, including one to establish a special bus route for food shopping and another to promote community gardening. Meanwhile, the Sustainable Food Center, which serves as the FPC's lead organization, carries out much of the legwork. Kate Fitzgerald, Executive Director of SFC, has provided the FPC's primary

*Access Denied* demonstrates the failure of East Austin's food system to meet the community's needs, and advances the idea that ensuring the availability of food through a variety of channels is a community and governmental responsibility.

leadership.

Among the organizations represented on the FPC are grocery store chains, community clinics, restaurants, a private think tank, the county legislature, the Transportation Authority, religious groups, the Parks Department, and community organizations. The Austin City Council and the Travis County Legislature appoint the FPC's 20 volunteer members. Soon after its establishment, the FPC formed committees to execute a number of project ideas. The new FPC received valuable outside assistance in 1995 when it was chosen as one of four places to receive training as part of the Local Food System Project (please see the Resource Guide).

## **NOTABLE ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

*Supermarket transportation.* The FPC conducted a feasibility study to assess the demand for a special direct bus route from east Austin to area supermarkets. Based on the overwhelming and positive response from residents, a route was designed to circulate from public housing units and eastside neighborhoods to supermarkets and other important community services. The FPC conducted a trial run of the route and coordinated outreach, including a kick-off event, radio public service announcements, and advertisements in community newspapers. The route, called the Eastside Circulator, is still in service and very successful. Indeed, the Transit Authority has asked the FPC to identify other communities in need of improved transit services.

*Community garden facilitation and fee waivers.* While improving Eastside residents' capacity to grow their own food was a major goal of the FPC, several local and state policies deterred the development of more community gardens in low-income neighborhoods. The most significant obstacle was gaining access to water – tap fees, capital recovery fees, and hook-up fees for one lot would total over \$5,000.

In addition, many eastside lots that might otherwise be suitable for gardening had not been legally sub-divided and were thus ineligible for water hook-up. (Four existing eastside gardens obtained their water illegally from nearby sites.) The process of sub-division would cost an additional \$1,000 and take a year to complete. The FPC drew the city council's attention to these problems and the city council appointed a task force to investigate.

*Based on the overwhelming and positive response from residents, a route was designed to circulate from public housing units and eastside neighborhoods to supermarkets and other important community services*

In March 1996, the city council passed an ordinance defining community gardens for the purpose of making such gardens eligible for water access and exempt from high fees. In collaboration with the Parks and Recreation Department, the Water and Wastewater Office of the Department of Public Works, and a non-profit organization called Austin Community Gardens, the FPC devised a simplified process that addressed most of the policy barriers. Based on the need exhibited by east Austin residents, the FPC convinced the city council to waive the capital recovery and tap fees for approved gardens. The legislative language of the ordinance is found in Appendix B.

## **CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES**

The FPC's early successes show the value of conducting thorough research. Access Denied provided compelling evidence to support its recommendations; this helped convince policymakers and other key stakeholders to address the issues rapidly and effectively. The research also identified clear targets for food advocacy – transportation for food access and community garden roadblocks – and described the issues thoroughly enough to suggest solutions. These first two projects resulted in immediate, tangible successes that secured continued commitment from FPC members and caused a burst of visibility in the community. These projects also exemplify the capacity of a food policy council to develop effective and comprehensive policy.

The FPC has been unable to sustain a staff position, but SFC provides staffing when possible. When funding is available, SFC employs a graduate student as an intern. Kate Fitzgerald, in addition to leading the FPC, allocates some of her own time to executing the projects the FPC develops. Additional financial and technical support come from FPC members, each of whom is required to commit \$200 or an in-kind equivalent annually to support FPC activities.

The FPC's dependence on SFC for staff support can be a mixed blessing. The availability of staff during the FPC's first two years helped support two well-planned and successful initiatives. However, when other projects demand SFC's resources, the FPC's activities can fall into a lull. This dependence is a common pitfall among food policy groups lacking a securely funded staff position. Fortunately, Austin's volunteer FPC

members have remained very engaged during slow periods. Kate Fitzgerald's leadership and experience have been important to keeping up the FPC's energy and momentum.

Competition for members' time is another common hazard of food policy groups. Austin FPC members are highly involved in the community – a potential source of competition – but their awareness of and dedication to food system issues has carried over to their other commitments. They have used their connections to advance community food security ideas, and extended the reach of the FPC by bringing a food system perspective to the many other committees on which they serve, such as Community Action and Healthy Austin.

## 2.3 THE TAHOMA FOOD SYSTEM

### BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE

In 1997, concerned citizens, farmers, and representatives of various government agencies in Tacoma, Washington and surrounding Pierce County formed a coalition to address gaps in the local food system. Of particular concern was limited food access for low-income residents and the loss of farmland and farming. Using the local Native American name for nearby Mt. Rainier, they called themselves the Tahoma Food System (TFS). TFS's successes demonstrate that formal council status is not the only avenue for food policy action. Many local government channels have been important for achieving TFS's goals.

TFS is now incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit housed within Washington State University's Pierce County Cooperative Extension. It has received a number of grants that have helped jumpstart its work. Many of TFS's programs build on previous Cooperative Extension initiatives, but TFS has its own staff, projects, and partners. TFS's major program areas include community gardening, urban farming, youth employment, and gleaning. This case study focuses on TFS's community gardens project and the role that advocacy, targeting local government, has played in promoting gardens in Tacoma. TFS runs some of Tacoma's gardens itself, and provides coordination to Bridging Urban Gardeners (BUGS), a countywide community gardening coalition.

### NOTABLE ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

*Targeting local government to obtain garden resources.* TFS has pursued close relationships with city departments and other governmental agencies, working with them as partners to foster successful community gardens. Metro Parks Tacoma operates six of the gardens. The City of Tacoma Solid Waste program provides soil amendments for the gardens. The Tacoma Housing Authority supplies plumbing and water to one large community garden. The City of Tacoma Public Works Department assists by clearing debris and trash from vacant lots. These department resources have been key to supplying the in-kind match required by several grants.

*Promoting gardens through visibility and contact with policymakers.* It is common practice in many cities to treat community gardening as a transitional land use; garden land is frequently lost to housing or business development. Through a number of creative and highly visible strategies,

*TFS and BUGS greatly increased their visibility by contributing to Tacoma's winning entry in the All-American City Contest. At no cost to the coalition, TFS used city resources to produce an 11-minute video about the gardens, which was used as supporting material for Tacoma's entry. The local newspaper counted the community gardens as an important ingredient in Tacoma's success in the contest, and TFS proved the gardens to be a great asset to the city.*

*"As a gardening coalition ... BUGS has built relationships with City Council members. To do this we have asked them to attend and be part of community greening and gardening events and garden tours. We have also sent them letters just to inform them of our successes. The relationships we have built have been key to our survival as a coalition and to the survival of the neighborhood gardens." — Tahoma Food System Executive Director Steven Garrett*

TFS has made the gardens more visible to city council members and the public, and has sown the seeds for community garden support among influential leaders. City officials and state legislators were invited to events, most notably a grand tour of the gardens that included food prepared by low-income gardeners from garden-grown produce. Extension agents and BUGS members gave mini-presentations on the benefits of community gardens. Follow-up visits and correspondence about garden successes helped maintain the relationships with these leaders.

These strategies were critical in securing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for the gardens. In Tacoma, 90 percent of CDBG money goes to previously funded projects. However, because of TFS's letters, visits, and the "citizen lobby" of staff, supporters, and the low-income people served by the gardens, the city council took notice and made TFS one of only two new projects to receive funds.

*Utilizing Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities.* TFS has received a federal grant that will help it work with city government to examine the federally designated Enterprise Community within Tacoma to determine the amount of food garden space needed within this economically distressed area. TFS Executive Director Steven Garrett was also able to get community gardening included as an initiative within Pierce County's recent bid for a \$100 million Enterprise Zone grant.

## **CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES**

Garrett describes the relationships between TFS and Tacoma policymakers and departments as critical to the success of TFS's advocacy strategies and the gardening program itself. A foundation of support within key city departments has provided the gardens with essential resources. "Positive and constant communication" with leaders has helped TFS overcome barriers to securing both CDBG funding and a more visible status for gardens. TFS has also made savvy use of local media, employing the gardens to their full potential as an attractive venue for news stories. TFS routinely invites local officials to garden events, providing an opportunity for all involved to gain positive exposure.

As is the case in many cities, land tenure continues to challenge TFS and Tacoma's community gardeners. It is hoped that TFS's strong connections with policymakers will enhance its chances for obtaining permanent status for the gardens and its 4.5-acre urban farm.

## 2.4 THE LOS ANGELES FOOD SECURITY AND HUNGER PARTNERSHIP

### BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE

In recent decades, many voices have urged the City of Los Angeles to adopt a unified policy addressing food security and hunger. In 1989, the city council authorized the formation of a group to address hunger issues, but the group was not established for several years. Then in 1993 the UCLA Department of Urban Planning released its study, *Seeds of Change*, in which Professor Robert Gottlieb and a group of graduate students examined food insecurity in one LA neighborhood. The study revealed that more than one-quarter of the families ran out of money to buy food an average of five days per month. *Seeds of Change*, and a related article in the *Los Angeles Times*, increased the pressure to create a food policy, and in 1994 a Voluntary Advisory Commission on Hunger (VACH) finally convened. The Community Development Department (CDD), the Mayor, and the President of the City Council appointed VACH's members. VACH's responsibilities centered on the evaluation of hunger in the city and the creation and coordination of a food security and hunger policy.

One of VACH's most important activities was conducting a series of public hearings on hunger and food security in the spring of 1995. These hearings, along with food insecurity data, pointed to inadequacies in government anti-hunger safety nets and the inability of the private emergency food system to meet the growing problems of food security, including those faced by the working poor. This led to VACH's conviction that the City of Los Angeles needed to take an active role in the formation of a comprehensive food policy. VACH recommended to the city council the creation of a broad-based partnership to address the underlying causes of hunger and food insecurity through the development of community resources such as urban gardens and food retailers/outlets, along with general community economic development. The recommendations also included a series of food-related policy statements to be adopted by the City of Los Angeles.

In June 1996, the city council passed a resolution creating the Los Angeles Food Security and Hunger Partnership (LAFSHP). As its name suggests, LAFSHP incorporates both food security and hunger approaches. VACH built specific membership stakeholder slots into the structure it



recommended for LAFSHP to ensure that it would reflect LA's diversity and the breadth of food system players. The mayor, CDD, and the president of the city council each appoint six voting members. Ten local or state departments may appoint one ex-officio member.

LAFSHP is an advisory body within city government, but has developed 501(c)(3) status to allow it to raise outside funds and move independently of the city bureaucracy that has so delayed its formation and development. LAFSHP was granted the power to review, evaluate, and recommend policies and community development programs. It received seed funds of \$280,000 from the city's general fund for its first four years. Part of this money is for hiring an executive director and one staff person.

*In recent decades, many voices have urged the City of Los Angeles to adopt a unified policy addressing food security and hunger.*

#### **Los Angeles Food Security and Hunger Partnership Stakeholder Slots**

One representative each from:

- ◆ the private food retail industry
- ◆ an organization working with small grocery stores or a small grocery owner
- ◆ a community gardening organization
- ◆ labor involved in food retailing or processing
- ◆ an anti-hunger organization
- ◆ a farmers' market association
- ◆ a food bank or other emergency food system provider
- ◆ a nutrition-based organization
- ◆ the academic community

Two representatives each from:

- ◆ the religious community, reflecting the religious diversity of Los Angeles
- ◆ organizations working on economic and community development in low-income neighborhoods
- ◆ the community at-large

Three Los Angeles residents who represent clients of agencies that participate in the anti-hunger and food security system

## **NOTABLE ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

LAFSHP first began meeting in September 1997, but has yet to complete any major projects, due in part to the lack of staff. It has secured CDBG funds to begin a program, similar to Community Supported Agriculture, which will regularly provide low-income residents with fresh produce from farmers' markets and community gardens. Part of the original seed funding is earmarked for other community economic development projects. Increasing the amount of food available through the LA regional food bank will be another major focus.

## **CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES**

LAFSHP is a very young organization, but its unique public/non-profit status is an attempt to identify creative solutions to many of the problems other FPCs have faced. A permanent executive director and staff person will hopefully cushion it from changing city administrations. The amount of public funding it has received is unusual for a U.S. food policy group. As initial seed funding expires, LAFSHP will be dependent upon successful fundraising efforts, and not necessarily city budget allocations, to sustain its activities. However, some LAFSHP members, including its chair, hope to increase city funding as a way to elevate its role within city government.

The success organizers had in establishing LAFSHP can be attributed to several factors. Advocates leveraged their political contacts to gain support in City Hall. Support from council members was key to unblocking the bureaucracy. They also emphasized hunger issues, knowing that it would be politically unpopular for elected officials to oppose a body whose goal was to deal with such a charged issue. Advocates made good use of the media, including writing op-eds for the *LA Times*. Finally, they built a diverse local coalition, the LA Community Food Security Network, that played an important role as a constituency for LAFSHP.

Inaction on the part of its administering government agencies has been a considerable challenge for VACH and LAFSHP. Whether it is because food is considered a low priority or because political difficulties can stymie decisions, such lags sap the energies of even the most dedicated advocates while leaving food security gaps to widen.

## **2.5 KNOXVILLE FOOD POLICY COUNCIL**

### **BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE**

In 1977, University of Tennessee Planning Professor Robert Wilson led a group of graduate students in a study to assess the need for comprehensive food planning in Knoxville, Tennessee. The Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC), a local government-created agency that had coordinated emergency food functions since 1965, noted the study, which confirmed the nutritional needs and hunger risks CAC workers had observed for some time. The study also attracted the attention of the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) by pointing to problems such as the loss of farmland and the fragmentation of the food system.

The CAC successfully applied for a federal Community Food and Nutrition grant to develop programs such as food gardens and food assistance outreach. The CAC interpreted the grant objectives to include the formation of an organization to look at problems of the food system as a whole. At the close of the grant period in 1981, the CAC approached the mayor about creating a municipal body to oversee the food system. Their advocacy was well timed, as preparations for hosting the 1982 World's Fair were raising questions about Knoxville's capacity to supply, transport, and dispose of food for the expected crowds. In 1982, Knoxville became the first U.S. city to create a municipal food policy council. The council was granted the power to make and recommend proposals and to advise local government, but not to enforce or control local policies.

The Knoxville Food Policy Council (FPC) has nine volunteer members appointed by the mayor on the basis of their knowledge of city government and the food system. Historically, the membership has included a member of the city council. Unlike other FPCs, Knoxville's members are not intended to represent particular parts of the food system but rather to bring experience and commitment to the group. The FPC has used advisory committees to involve additional experts in policy creation and advocacy, and has recently created the Associate Member category to include more individuals from relevant agencies. Both strategies also address some of the limitations of the group's small number of members.

Staff members of four to five agencies involved in servicing the FPC — usually the CAC, the MPC, Knoxville Community Development

*The 1982 Knoxville World's Fair raised questions about food availability and disposal capacity, and demonstrated the need for a larger evaluation of the city's food system.*

Corporation (KCDC), and the mayor's office — allocate part of their time to staff the FPC. Currently, however, one employee from the CAC is responsible for most of the FPC's staffing requirements; her salary is paid through a portion of a federal Community Services Block Grant. The City of Knoxville allocates \$4,000 per year for the FPC; these funds pay for a consultant to provide ideas and direction and to write reports.

## **NOTABLE ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

*School nutrition education.* At the FPC's recommendation, the Knoxville Public School District hired a nutrition educator to prepare and deliver educational programs, and to coordinate all other nutrition education programs.

*School breakfast.* The FPC convinced the Knoxville Board of Education to enact a district-wide policy of offering the School Breakfast Program, making free and reduced-price breakfasts available to all of Knoxville's low-income school children.

*Consumer nutrition education.* The FPC created the "Calorie Conscious Consumer" awards to honor and draw attention to food businesses that use displays or written material to help consumers make healthy food choices.

*Advising planning agencies.* The FPC's relationship with the MPC made food a consideration in the MPC's planning reports. The FPC also is working with KCDC to situate a supermarket near a new mixed-income public housing development. Although one of the FPC's first projects, a grocery bus, was discontinued due to administrative difficulties, the regional transit authority still requests a food access review from the FPC when altering its bus routes.

*Raising awareness.* The FPC conducts occasional workshops, hearings, or forums at which interested persons or agencies are invited to call attention to issues and problems within the local food system. These have received media coverage, thus increasing public awareness of food issues.

## **CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES**

The Knoxville Food Policy Council was the first of its kind in the U.S. and broke considerable ground for the many municipal food initiatives that followed. Both the U.S. Conference of Mayors Food Policy Project and the

*The Knoxville Food Policy Council was the first of its kind in the U.S. and broke considerable ground for the many municipal food initiatives that followed.*

City of Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy worked from Knoxville's model. In addition, the FPC has been recognized internationally by the World Health Organization as an innovative approach to creating a healthy city.

The FPC's organizational structure does carry some drawbacks, particularly its fluctuating staff support. While shared staffing helps maintain a connection to many important city agencies, none of these positions are full-time or permanent. The current staff person has insufficient time to keep the FPC as active as members would like. A permanent staff person would bring more continuity.

The FPC has drawn outside expertise and ideas in ways that provide valuable lessons for other groups. As an outside consultant with a background in planning, Professor Robert Wilson has brought to the FPC a great deal of continuity and a long-term vision. The annual retreat helps members review the group's progress, clarify its broader goals for an integrated food system, and gain inspiration and ideas from invited outside speakers. Finally, the inclusion of advisory committees and associate members has broadened the network of community members engaged in the FPC and its activities.

## 2.6 THE TORONTO FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

### BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE

The Toronto Department of Public Health has a history of involvement in progressive health initiatives. In 1984 Toronto hosted a multinational conference that helped establish the World Health Organization's Healthy Cities Project along with Canada's Healthy Communities Project. In 1990, Toronto's Board of Health launched a public health plan for the decade called "Healthy Toronto 2000" that synthesized economic, environmental, and health concerns. The project incorporated considerable community input, as well as lessons from international discussions and examples. To help implement Healthy Toronto 2000, a Healthy City Office was established along with the Food Policy Council.

The FPC has 21 volunteer members appointed by the city council. It is officially a subcommittee of the Board of Health with a yearly budget of \$200,000 provided by the city. Members are selected on the basis of knowledge of the food system and expertise in some food issue; diversity is an important aim in the nominations. A City Councilor and a community member serve as co-chairs. Three full-time staff members implement the FPC's initiatives, develop policy, and conduct food system research.

### NOTABLE ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

*Program and policy development.* The FPC has acted as a program broker by drawing together various players to develop initiatives that address food system problems. Once they become operational, the FPC passes these programs to partner agencies. For example, the FPC created Field to Table, a program that makes affordable, nourishing food available to low-income communities using innovative "non-market" distribution systems. A local non-profit organization called Food Share has assumed its operation.

*Discussion paper series.* The FPC staff has generated a wealth of innovative policy development ideas through a series of discussion papers, including one that outlines a broad-based definition of public health based on a healthy food system. This paper presents a compelling argument for municipal Departments of Health to take responsibility for a wide range of food-related programs that enhance and support public health. As part of a healthy cities agenda, this approach could reduce the need for medical treatment of many diseases and develop resources to prevent hunger and

*The FPC presents a compelling argument for municipal Departments of Health to take responsibility for a wide range of food-related programs that enhance and support public health.*

*Rod MacRae, the FPC's lead staff person, calls food "the next public health challenge" and compares it to issues like tobacco.*

malnutrition. In Toronto, the Department of Public Health has indeed come to support a number of community food projects, and the provincial government of Ontario is increasingly interested in this "healthy city" approach. Unfortunately, conservative forces at this level of government have made it difficult to implement some of these ideas.

## **CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES**

Toronto's FPC is better supported by, and more closely affiliated with, its city government than any in the U.S., and the Canadian government's tradition of providing for its citizens is an important factor in the FPC's status. Toronto's FPC is also more deeply involved in program and policy development than any in the U.S.

However, Toronto's FPC still provides valuable lessons for U.S. food advocates. American frustration with the healthcare system, the costs of treating diet-related disease, and increasing calls for a more preventative focus for public health, make the innovative arguments in the FPC's discussion papers, if not their approach, viable for the U.S.

The FPC's adaptation to a potentially difficult situation provides another valuable lesson. When Toronto recently was amalgamated with outlying areas, the FPC's jurisdiction grew three-fold without an increase in city resources. The FPC accommodated this growth by becoming more oriented toward multiple networks of food system collaborators; it is the only city entity that has successfully included rural members. The co-chairs have brought strong leadership and facilitation skills to this large and diverse group.

Through its status as an arm of city government the FPC has earned the budget and staff resources critical to its success. A stable staff allows FPC members to develop mid- and long-term plans and projects. In addition, FPC staff have led the development of food policy ideas through the discussion papers series, laying a framework not just for their own initiatives but for food policy in general. Beyond city limits, the provincial Health Ministry has taken notice of the FPC and may replicate Toronto's comprehensive food-related approaches to urban health in other Ontario cities. The FPC has made exemplary and unique progress as a policy broker despite resistance from conservative elements within government.

## **2.7 ST. PAUL-RAMSEY COUNTY FOOD AND NUTRITION COMMISSION**

### **BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE**

In 1984, the impending loss of St. Paul's farmers' market spotlighted local food issues and spurred the creation of the Minnesota Food Association. Concurrently, St. Paul's mayor became involved in the U.S. Conference of Mayors Food Policy Project and introduced a "home-grown economy" initiative. He also formed the St. Paul Ad Hoc Task Force on Municipal Food Policy, chaired by City Council member and future Mayor Jim Scheibel.

In 1985, the Task Force recommended that the city council create a Food and Nutrition Commission (FNC) to act on the city's behalf "to protect and strengthen the capacity of the region to supply safe, nutritious, and affordable food to its citizens." Since its establishment, the FNC has evolved considerably. Notably, in 1992-94, its jurisdiction was expanded to include surrounding Ramsey County, and it was granted the authority to review city and county policies and programs, and parts of departmental budgets.

Fifteen volunteer members, including representatives from anti-hunger, nutrition, food retail, and other food system sectors, comprise the county FNC. At its establishment, no government agency was designated to house or staff the FNC; the County Nutrition Program "adopted" it only reluctantly. The FNC received a boost when a public health nutritionist with a strong interest in the FNC's goals joined the staff. Graduate students and interns also have provided staffing. The city ordinance that expanded the FNC's powers in 1992 also allowed for but did not specify the source of a budget and office space. When city and county budgets were set later, the FNC was overlooked. Consequently, the FNC has been unable to take advantage of its considerable legal authority.

### **NOTABLE ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

*Food system information and public dialogue.* Each year the FNC publishes a directory of food-related agencies called "Looking for Food." It has also developed flyers targeted to needy groups such as the elderly. The FNC has promoted community gardens by publicizing information about available land, water and soil testing. The FNC organizes an annual Hunger Forum



to stimulate public discussion about food and hunger issues in St. Paul. Members give presentations to the mayor, city council, and relevant city departments to raise awareness of the food system.

*Annual food and nutrition honor roll.* Each year since 1988, the FNC has recognized individuals and organizations for their contributions to good nutrition and the local food economy. The mayor's involvement in this event raises the profile of local food issues as well as that of the FNC.

## **CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES**

The FNC has assumed an active role in increasing community awareness of the food system and available food programs, an extremely valuable function for a food policy group.

The expansion of the FNC's jurisdiction to the county level opens up possibilities for bridging functions in the region's food system. While a larger jurisdiction may complicate the FNC's priorities, it may also make more sense as a sphere of action.

Despite the dedication of its members and the powers granted it, the FNC has experienced lulls in activity due to the lack of a stable staff and budget, demonstrating that strong legislation alone does not guarantee support and success for food policy groups. The sources of budget and staff must be clearly designated and implemented. The good news is that St. Paul's FNC has sustained its food system education activities through the lulls. Also, even when the current administration fails to support it fiscally, the FNC has engaged the mayor through his involvement in the Honor Roll. The FNC, like LAFSHP, serves as a reminder that local food policy is still a young field, and that patience and persistence are often required through the group's development and fluctuations in government support.

*The FNC has assumed an active role in increasing community awareness of the food system and available food programs.*

## **2.8 NORTH COUNTRY COMMUNITY FOOD & ECONOMIC SECURITY PROJECT**

### **BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE**

In early 1997, Cornell University researchers in the Division of Nutritional Sciences began assisting six community action agencies (CAA) and Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) in the northern Adirondack region in the initiation of a dialogue regarding community food security. The partners aimed to involve community members in identifying actions to promote food and economic security in a primarily rural area of New York State. The project is part of a Cornell study on community values and planning and seeks to catalyze a broad network of community stakeholders around local concerns such as strengthening the economic viability of agriculture, improving access to healthful and locally-produced foods, and bolstering anti-hunger efforts.

The project used a search conference model of community planning (which involves identifying community stakeholders and bringing them together to "search" for common goals and objectives for the future) to engage a broad network of food system stakeholders in a participatory learning and planning process to design action plans. The North Country Community Food Security Network, formed through a partnership with Cornell University, the New York State Department of Agriculture, and the six CAAs and CCE, organized 2.5-day search conferences in each of the six participating counties. Participants included farmers, retailers, educators, anti-hunger advocates, and consumers who self-selected into 34 working groups during the conferences, to refine and implement specific goals and objectives after the search conference. Several of the working groups defined policy advocacy as an important channel for carrying out their objectives.

### **NOTABLE ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

*Promoting regional agriculture through policy ties.* The North Country Project's first phase culminated in a multi-county conference in 1998, where participants raised awareness of regional food and economic security issues among local and state policymakers. Notably, the policy-oriented working groups supported pending food security legislation in the state assembly; unfortunately, this has not yet come up for a vote. Developing more effective county farmland protection plans was another target of their

advocacy. While tangible outcomes are still pending, the formation of structures for unified action in itself is a notable accomplishment. Other working groups have successfully investigated the feasibility of promoting regional food processing and developed better links between farmers, retailers, hunters, and emergency food providers.

## **CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES**

The North Country Community Food and Economic Security Project, initiated through partnerships between a university and local practitioners and stakeholders, sought to create genuine community-driven action plans to address food system concerns. The search conference process that mobilized many stakeholders may provide a model for other communities developing food system coalitions. It succeeded in introducing participants to diverse perspectives and creating a number of multi-sector working groups, 11 of which remain active at this writing.

The conferences also created an atmosphere in which community members could have productive contact with policymakers. Post-conference challenges have included: maintaining working group momentum; balancing differential power relations among search conference participants that may alter action agendas; gaining support from local and state organizations for whom these plans might be germane; and arriving at an appropriate role for the university.

*The Project sought to create genuine community-driven action plans to address food system concerns.*

## **2.9 BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT FOOD POLICY COLLABORATIVE**

### **BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE**

In early 1997, a parent visited the office of the Berkeley superintendent of schools to express concern over a lack of healthful and varied menu options. Within a few months a long list of stakeholders, from parents to school administrators to local politicians, had formed the Berkeley Unified School District Food Policy Collaborative, an effort to fully integrate the school food system. The Collaborative's goals are to support the local food system by using local, organically grown food in the school cafeteria, and to demonstrate to students environmental concepts taught in the classroom. Its long-term vision is to develop self-sustaining networks between the school food service program, school gardens, and local growers.

The Collaborative is not the first notable attempt to involve Berkeley students and the community in food, nutrition, and agriculture education. The Edible Schoolyard Project operates gardens at the King Middle School in Berkeley and brings important experience and resources to the Collaborative.

### **NOTABLE ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

*Integrating the school food system.* Through the implementation of an 11-point plan, the Collaborative aims to integrate food, nutrition, and gardening in schools. The group has received a grant to begin a garden at every school in Berkeley, and has hired consultants to identify community resources that will help achieve this and other goals. Local, organically grown foods will be added to school menus for all of the district's students. School gardens will supply 25 percent of the food for these meals, and federal school meal and after-school snack funds will be used to purchase the remaining food.

An educational component including natural science, nutrition, and food preparation lessons will work in tandem with the gardens and food service. Healthy Start, a state-funded program that allows schools to provide community services such as medical and dental check-ups on campus, will also be integrated with the nutrition education component of the project. The Collaborative's work also has led to the development of a broader

*The Collaborative's long-term vision is to develop self-sustaining networks between the school food service program, school gardens, and local growers.*

effort to implement a citywide food policy.

## **CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES**

Berkeley's unusually progressive political atmosphere has facilitated the implementation of the Collaborative's vision, but groups in less-supportive situations can learn from their well-planned initiative to integrate the food system. The 11-point plan carefully considers how many aspects of the food system will be affected under this new approach to education, nutrition, and food sources. The Collaborative's work on the school district's small-scale food system will likely be good preparation for a new city-wide food policy group.

## **BUILD STRONG AND DIVERSE COLLABORATIONS**

Gaining broad support for your work is key to its success. Such support will provide you with a better understanding of the community's needs and assets, valuable political contacts, and the constituency to leverage your goals. While individual organizations took the lead in many of these case studies, they were careful to gain the input and support of community members and other organizations. In Austin, the Sustainable Food Center's excellent relations with the community were key to gaining and successfully implementing the Grocery Bus.

## **DEVELOP STRONG LEADERSHIP**

Leadership is important at all stages of food policy action: articulating a vision, building a coalition, formulating a proposal, and gaining political support. Effective leadership requires a balancing act. While strong leadership is often necessary to keep a process-oriented effort moving forward, care should be taken to ensure that strong personalities (individual or organizational) respect the collaborative process. Leadership often comes from an agency or organization with the staff and fundraising resources to carry out a vision. Leadership from individuals may be very important, but should be linked to an organizational framework whenever possible.

## **USE RESEARCH**

In many of the case studies, organizations utilized recent studies to gain press and legitimize their proposals and concerns with policymakers. Food system assessments in Knoxville, Los Angeles, Austin, and Hartford provided impetus for city government to take action. As in the examples from Los Angeles and New York State, the research process also has the potential to assist in building the constituency necessary to implement a proposal. More information on food system assessments can be found in Chapter 3.

It can be very helpful to build partnerships with academics and students to consult on research methodology, tailor its scope, or even conduct the research. University generated studies can also provide an air of legitimacy, objectivity, and authority that advocacy groups often lack. In Knoxville and Los Angeles, urban planning classes took on food system assessments as group projects. Other departments with which to consider forging relationships include nutrition, public health, rural sociology, urban studies, geography, environmental studies, and policy studies.

## **BUILD PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Personal relationships with elected officials and government staff can prove invaluable, especially during the implementation phase of policy work. Gaining a policy victory does not have to be an adversarial process — at its best it is a partnership between advocates and city officials. In Tacoma, personal connections proved key in gaining block grant funds for gardening projects.

## **COMBINE CREATIVITY WITH SENSITIVITY TO THE LOCAL SITUATION**

Local strengths and challenges should be central considerations in deciding goals, tactics, players, and messages. Activists should dedicate special attention to analysis of the politics of their jurisdiction before attempting to replicate any of the initiatives described here. Particular care should be taken in framing the policy proposal so as to neutralize opposition and build upon support for existing issues or programs. The Toronto Food Policy Council has been very innovative in building a case for its work and developing its structure.

# FOOD POLICY ORGANIZING

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter links analysis with action. It provides tools and information to help food policy advocates implement the lessons learned in Chapters 1 and 2. This chapter is written for people with varied levels of experience and expertise in organizing within the food policy arena. For more detailed information on specific topics, please see the Resource Guide.

The chapter begins with an overview of food policy-related organizing basics, including tips on coalition building, food system assessments, developing goals and visions, and advocacy strategies. It then analyzes the pros and cons of organizational structures for food policy efforts. The chapter closes with a look at organizing and operating food policy councils.

## 3.1 BASIC ORGANIZING FOR FOOD POLICY ACTION

Taking action on local food issues through policy channels begins with similar elements and strategies whether one is establishing a comprehensive food policy council or focusing on a specific endeavor such as community economic development or community gardening.

### 3.1.1 COALITION-BUILDING FOR FOOD POLICY ADVOCACY

Coalitions can provide a powerful foundation for food policy advocacy. Although they can be very difficult to put together and even harder to maintain, investing this effort can lead to greater accomplishments. This section suggests some ways to begin the process of building a coalition. See the Resource Guide for additional information.





## STAKEHOLDERS FOR FOOD POLICY COLLABORATION

- ◆ Anti-hunger advocates
- ◆ Emergency food providers
- ◆ Health professionals, advocates, and educators
- ◆ Religious organizations
- ◆ Neighborhood or community organizations
- ◆ Community development institutions
- ◆ Community gardeners
- ◆ Farmers
- ◆ Farmers' market and farm stand operators
- ◆ Sustainable agriculture interests
- ◆ Environmentalists
- ◆ Food retailers – both large and small
- ◆ Food processing industry representatives
- ◆ Labor organizations
- ◆ Representatives of local government departments listed in Chapter 1
- ◆ Mayor, city manager, city council, or county commissioners
- ◆ General public

***Define the goals.*** Is the aim to develop a comprehensive food policy for your city, or more specific policy victories, such as the use of city lands for community gardens? Based upon the goals, determine who should be at the table.

***Organize a core group.*** Bring together a minimum of four or five colleagues who can form the nucleus of the coalition. This core group should feel a sense of ownership of the budding coalition, constitute the initial steering committee, and conduct outreach.

***Identify and recruit stakeholders.*** Recruit diverse constituencies that broadly represent the community to be served, and especially make an attempt to include community members. Recruitment is a key facet of the process, and can often be time-consuming, requiring personal outreach.

***Convene the group.*** The initial meeting represents an opportunity to get people enthusiastic about the coalition's possibilities. A talented facilitator can help ensure a successful first meeting. Allow plenty of time for

extended introductions and for people to become comfortable with the group. Initial exercises, such as brainstorming the parts of the food system, or a vision for a healthy and just food system, help break the ice and illustrate the breadth of issues related to food security. A proposal prepared beforehand (and distributed before the meeting, ideally) can serve to focus the meeting.

*Commit to moving forward.* At the close of the first meeting, it is important for the group to reach consensus on the need for a coalition and future meetings. At this time, the group may want to take an initial name so that it assumes a more formal identity. Schedule the next meeting (usually within four to eight weeks), and ask individuals to commit to completing specific tasks to ensure that the process keeps moving forward.

Some things to consider as the coalition continues:

*Structure Versus Action.* All coalitions face a fundamental tension of whether to develop their structure first – set up rules of governance, steering committees, membership requirements, etc. – or to jump directly into action. Small victories or accomplishments can be very important in giving the coalition an identity and motivating participants to continue. However, a minimum structure that includes leadership and/or facilitation, a communication system, and an understanding of duties is also helpful. Ideally, there may be energy to undertake both simultaneously through committees, or they may have to be done piecemeal. Check in with coalition members on their priorities. Take care, however, to ensure that one approach doesn't completely override the other.

*Self-education.* As the coalition becomes established, members should share with each other their knowledge of their own programs and food-related policy issues. Examining how other communities have worked to improve food policy can prove very instructive. See Chapter 2.

### **3.1.2 FOOD SYSTEM AND FOOD POLICY ASSESSMENTS**

A food system study (or assessment), often utilizing a combination of needs assessment and asset mapping techniques, can prove valuable in educating coalition members and the public. It also provides an important opportunity to mobilize community support for policy recommendations

identified in your report. See the Community Food Security Coalition's guidebook listed in the Resource Guide, section 4 for more information.

This assessment may include analysis of government policies and functions that influence the availability, affordability, and quality of food. The scope of your advocacy should determine the extent and focus of a study. When seeking to establish a food policy council, an extensive review makes sense. A community garden coalition would conduct a more limited topical assessment. Interviews with city officials and analyses of existing activities and budgets can provide the major elements of the study (see Appendix A for a sample inventory survey).

An abbreviated policy assessment can be conducted during a coalition meeting, as a means of emphasizing the breadth of food-related policies in city government, and hence the need for broad-based actions and coalitions.

### **3.1.3 GOALS AND VISION**

Setting goals is an obvious and important element of food policy advocacy. It helps groups build consensus on how to target their energy and resources, and provides benchmarks for success. It often makes sense to start with modest goals and build up to more ambitious ones over time. New coalitions often decide to work together on a fairly small or achievable policy issue that can be handled during a short time frame.

Goals should be clearly stated and fully supported by all participants. Setting and reviewing goals on a regular basis, preferably in the context of a work plan with tasks assigned to specific individuals, can be very valuable. This process helps participants be realistic about the time and resources required to achieve goals. Linking short-term actions to broader goals and visions is also valuable, to address the interests of participants who want quick action, as well as those who want to consider these actions in a larger context.

Visioning is an organizing exercise that can help groups focus on the characteristics of an improved community food system and how to achieve it. Posing questions to community or coalition members that challenge them to picture an ideal or improved local food system three to five years in the future is one approach. Members then brainstorm and discuss elements

of their vision, and identify the concrete steps that will be required to achieve their vision. Community visioning resources are listed in the Resource Guide.

The results of goal-setting and visioning exercises and work plans should be recorded and distributed to all members. These documents should be revisited regularly as a means of evaluating progress and reconsidering goals and objectives.

### **3.1.4 ADVOCACY STRATEGIES AND CHANNELS**

#### **GAINING POLITICAL SUPPORT**

Personal connections, a visible constituency, good timing, and political sense are all valuable for gaining support from elected officials. Here are some general guidelines.

- Educate yourself on the political workings of the jurisdiction by talking with insiders. If you don't have personal knowledge of the politics of this entity, find someone who does and is willing to advise you.
- Assess the key political issues for your city, champion, or decision-making body and market your proposal accordingly. In most cities, no broad constituency for food systems or food security currently exists, but you may be able to constructively link your efforts to "hot button" issues such as hunger or urban sprawl.
- Cultivate a champion for your efforts. Identify an official who is likely to be receptive and holds a position of power (like a council committee chair). Invite them and their staff to coalition events, and meet with them at their office. Meetings with elected officials are most effective when done with constituents or someone who knows the official. Get to know staff members and make sure they know of your coalition's efforts. Offer emerging allies and champions something that can help them – information, analysis, community contacts, visibility.
- Educate city officials. Planning commission and city council meetings and other public hearings can be productive venues to make the coalition's case and to advance discussions with elected officials.
- Build community support for your proposal, and have community members express their support.
- At strategic times, as when legislation is pending, contact targeted

officials. A few well-placed faxes or phone calls from constituents or prominent people can be very helpful.

- Give supportive policymakers credit for their help, and invite them to use their involvement to generate positive publicity.

### **FOOD POLICY ADVOCACY AND THE PRESS**

Getting media coverage of your issue gives it visibility and legitimacy, two key ingredients for favorably shaping policymakers' opinions. Obtaining coverage of food policy matters doesn't have to be difficult. A helpful guide to media relations is cited in the Resource Guide.

- Cultivate relationships with reporters as if they were elected officials. They can be very powerful in shaping public opinion. Remember: you have information that is valuable to the press.
- Don't expect the press to understand food systems or other complex terminology. Instead, the press often latches on to angles that make the story less abstract, especially the human-interest factor. The release of a study can also attract press attention.
- Providing the press with graphics such as maps or photos helps illustrate points, makes for a more eye-catching story, and increases the likelihood of publication.
- Write an article for the local newspaper's opinion-editorial page. If published, it can be instrumental in influencing policymakers.
- Invite knowledgeable spokespeople to press events, including both experts and people who directly benefit from a program or personally experience the effects of a food system problem. Include relevant elected officials and public administrators on the guest list.

### **DEVELOPING LEGISLATION**

Establishing a formal food policy council or enacting specific food policy changes often requires drafting and passing legislation. Sample ordinances are found in Appendices B and C.

- Do your research. Study existing legislation and similar efforts attempted in your area or elsewhere.
- Craft the language carefully. Think about language that would increase the chances of passage, taking care to avoid ambiguities that might raise red flags.

- Test the language with others. Do others understand it to mean the same thing as you? Revise the language to ensure it matches your intent.
- Determine the level of specificity needed. Considering the possible implementation of the legislation, how much “wobble room” should be left to those who administer the law? While details may be omitted in order to keep legislation broad and inoffensive simply to gain passage, beware that legislation will be subject to the interpretation and political needs of the implementing body. Conversely, overly detailed legislation may allow the implementing body insufficient flexibility to implement the law.
- Have the legislation authored by professionals. Your champion in city hall should be able to pass the rough draft to legislative counsel for final crafting. The local law school’s poverty law or environmental law clinic also may be able to volunteer their services to draft legislative language.

### **DEVELOPING PROPOSALS**

Instead of developing new legislation, you may advocate for the implementation of a new program within an agency. In this case, you may be expected to develop a program proposal.

- Begin with thorough research that supports the need for a program, suggests methods for implementation and funding sources, and identifies successful models. Research should help determine details such as budget, staffing, and logistics.
- Seek feedback from the agency early in and throughout the process, including from administrators who will deliver the program. This will help define and address challenges to implementation.
- Work closely with administrators and staff; it will give them greater ownership in the project, perhaps to the degree that they will help write parts of the proposal. Often, the most viable finished proposals reflect input from many contributors.
- Identify volunteers, outreach channels, and other community resources that may aid in project implementation.
- Be careful about committing to too much work. Define your organization’s role in the implementation process, setting clear limits on what you will do.

## **3.2 RELATIVE BENEFITS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS**

As you enter the world of food policy advocacy, consider what organizational structure will best suit your goals. You may choose to create a new entity, or to work through existing institutions. Perhaps the most basic issue you will face is whether it should be a public or private organization. Each sector has its strengths and weaknesses; the decision must be based on your particular situation. The following criteria are important to consider when deciding on an organizational structure.

*Goals.* What structure will best enable the organization to meet its goals? If the group aims to gain specific policy changes, the structure may be different than that of a body whose purpose is to coordinate and monitor all local policies that apply to the food system. In general, the more substantial and longer-term the goals, the more formalized the structure should be. Conversely, modest or short-term policy goals may require a more flexible or loosely-knit entity.

*Funding needs and availability.* What are the group's funding requirements and the likely sources of funding? If the primary sources of funding are in the private sector, then the Council probably shouldn't be structured strictly as a city entity, ineligible for foundation support.

*Political and other external considerations.* How would being part of local government impact the entity's effectiveness? How would such an arrangement affect support from the public and government? Would being part of a certain agency in local government be more favorable than another agency? Would city bureaucracy subsume your entity? If you lose control over it, how would that impact its effectiveness?

### **3.2.1 NON-PROFIT SECTOR**

The strengths of the non-profit sector relative to the public sector include:

*Control.* Advocates can more easily control the direction of a non-profit organization. If it's part of government, it may take on a life of its own.

*Getting things done.* Without the restraints of government bureaucracy, non-profit groups are able to act quickly and with more flexibility.

*Credibility.* Having outsider status may be beneficial, especially if being on the inside would compromise your credibility. It may be more productive to mobilize the community for change from the outside rather than play the insider game.

*Avoiding legislative delays.* You don't need legislative approval to create a non-profit entity. If pursuing the legislative route will take substantial time and resources without much tangible gain, staying outside government could be advantageous.

*Diverse funding streams.* While funding for local food policy work may be elusive, the non-profit sector does allow you to maintain a potentially diverse funding base, including foundations, places of worship, memberships, and individual donations.

*Resources.* Established non-profits may have resources, know-how, contacts, and commitment that city government lacks.

Perhaps the most basic weakness of non-profit sector food policy groups is their **lack of official standing**. Local governments have no formal responsibilities to such groups, and access to department officials or information may be limited.

There are two major models within the private non-profit sector: coalitions and non-profit organizations.

## **COALITIONS**

Food security coalitions bring together a range of stakeholders dedicated to addressing gaps in the food system and to planning for long-term food security. Coalitions can have diverse structures, constituents, and relations to government. In some cases, coalitions may gain local government sanction. For example, the Philadelphia Food and Agriculture Task Force was a large coalition that enjoyed mayoral support but did not seek establishment through official legislation. In some cases, government may provide partial staffing, or office and meeting space, and may send representatives to coalition meetings.



One strength of coalitions is the collective **power** gained by uniting multiple organizations. The diversity of connections and perspectives can also be a significant source of strength.

The weaknesses of coalitions relative to non-profit organizations include:

*Lack of permanence.* Coalitions are often temporary, dissolving after the issues that galvanized them have been addressed.

*Difficulty in decision-making.* Much effort often is dedicated to process and decision-making. Participatory group decision-making can be difficult even in homogeneous groups, and more problematic in heterogeneous food system coalitions.

*Staffing and ownership.* Staffing is key for maintaining the effectiveness of a coalition. Yet if a member organization provides in-kind staffing, the coalition risks becoming too closely affiliated with that group.

#### **NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

Private non-profit organizations often play a considerable role in food policy advocacy, from providing office space, in-kind staff, and technical expertise, to constituting a coalition or food policy council. These organizations often take on the role of policy advocate as part of their ongoing functions.

The strengths of non-profit organizations vis-a-vis coalitions include **control and effectiveness**. The non-profit organizational structure is typically more streamlined than a coalition, with less time devoted to process issues. Working through a non-profit may allow for more control over goals and strategies.

The weaknesses of non-profit organizations relative to coalitions include:

*Lack of collective action.* Acting by themselves, non-profit organizations represent a narrower spectrum of interests and may have less power than a coalition.

*Accountability.* Local government and coalitions can be held accountable to the public to some degree through their democratic decision-making process. Legally, a non-profit is accountable only to its Board of Directors.

### **3.2.2 PUBLIC SECTOR**

The relative strengths of the public sector with respect to the private sector include:

*Power and resources.* Government holds a position to influence the food system, through regulations and statutes, allocation of resources, and some of its most mundane functions. It also provides visibility useful in educating the public, furthering reforms, and making claims on the private sector.

*Accountability.* The public has the explicit right to demand that its government leaders correct injustices.

*Forum for public involvement.* Government appoints committees, commissions, and task forces to tackle important issues. It provides a forum for people with competing positions and interests to work together in pursuit of consensus.

*Potential for coordination.* Local government already makes many decisions about the food system, embedded in the policies of various departments. Bringing attention and coordination to these can help advance food security planning.

The weaknesses of the public sector relative to the private sector:

*Bureaucratic inefficiency and local politics.* The workings and culture of local government often create impediments to the significant changes food advocates wish to implement. This creates a risk that progress may be frustratingly slow, or the cause may be co-opted.

*Small local governments.* The small size and limited resources of some local governments may make it difficult for them to take on the additional functions associated with a food policy entity.

*Changing local administrations.* If unsupportive politicians or administrators take office, food policy entities within local government may lose favor and funding.

Two of the principal public sector food policy entities are **ad hoc committees** and **food policy councils**. Official ad hoc committees enjoy the

sanction of the government but are by definition temporary. Such bodies are typically used to address or make recommendations about specific objectives. Ad hoc efforts can be used to lay the groundwork for a more permanent entity, as in the case of a city council-appointed committee that is given six months to determine what the city should do about food concerns. Food policy councils are discussed below in section 3.3.

There also are many examples of policy or advocacy entities that have both official sanction as a government body and 501(c)(3) non-profit status. The Los Angeles Food Security and Hunger Partnership, profiled in Chapter 2, is one such example. This combines some of the benefits of private non-profit and public food policy bodies.

### **3.3 FOOD POLICY COUNCILS**

In recent years, activists in a number of cities have established food policy councils or commissions, public sector entities with a mission to coordinate food policy and promote solutions to food system deficiencies within a determined jurisdiction. Many of the organizations featured in Chapter 2 have developed some variation of this model to deal comprehensively with local food system issues. Such entities resemble other local government councils or commissions established to examine a specific issue or recommend solutions. Most are created through a local ordinance or resolution and some receive a budget allocation. Executive and/or legislative branches of local government appoint volunteer members who commonly represent different interests within the food system.

The food policy council (FPC) typically serves as an advisor to government agencies, an advocate for specific policies and programs, a forum for information exchange, and an educational resource for the public. Local food policy councils may have the power to recommend policy or program changes and sometimes to review city budgets. They represent a significant initial step toward a more comprehensive local planning process for food security.

This chapter has already addressed many elements that are important in the development of food policy councils, including coalition-building, food system assessments, and advocacy strategies. The following section reviews FPC powers and functions, and operational issues involved in maintaining a FPC.

### **3.3.1 FOOD POLICY COUNCIL POWERS AND FUNCTIONS**

FPC powers are typically limited because governments rarely recognize food as an issue that warrants the same degree of government involvement as planning, housing, or education. While a FPC may have the power to manage a small budget or allocate a modest amount of funds, it is not likely to be granted regulatory authority or take final action on a request in the way that a zoning board might. Limited functions should not, however, be taken as limited power. If one knows the system and the issues, and uses that knowledge effectively, it is possible to use a FPC as a framework for power.

#### **INFORMATION AND MONITORING**

One important task of a FPC is to compile information on the local food system. The diversity of the FPC's membership should assist in identifying and obtaining relevant information. See the Community Food Security Coalition's publication listed in Section 4 of the Resource Guide.

#### **ORGANIZED FOOD CONSTITUENCY**

A FPC represents an array of interest groups involved with food issues. When those groups speak with one voice, they can foster greater coordination among themselves. They can also exert a collective influence on policymakers.

#### **ACCESS TO DECISION MAKERS**

A FPC operating within a government jurisdiction is effectively part of government. This should make it easier to gain access to department directors, city council members, and the mayor's staff. FPC members are colleagues with city staff and elected officials and entitled to similar courtesies, access, and consultation. FPC members may request the opportunity to present information to city council committees as a way to educate policymakers and to solicit their support. It is appropriate for city officials to play a ceremonial role at FPC functions, such as presenting awards. (In addition, being part of the government allows FPC members to learn the process of governance and ways to make the system work for their organizations and constituents.)

#### **REVIEW OF BUDGETS, REPORTS, OR PLANS**

This is potentially a crucial role for FPCs, but very few have been granted

this authority. With review power, a FPC may examine budgets, environmental impact statements, city plans, or other municipal or county documents to determine whether impacts on the food system are properly considered.

### **FOOD POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

A FPC may develop food-related policy, for example legislation that specifies a city's intent to support or protect community gardens. This is likely to entail negotiating with multiple departments, along with legislators and planners, to work out acceptable legislative language and the details of implementation.

### **HIGHLIGHT AND TAKE POSITIONS ON FOOD ISSUES**

A FPC can use its position to bring food issues to the attention of the public, policymakers, and government staff. This requires monitoring the food system, gathering and analyzing information, and presenting it in a clear and credible form. If it intends to speak out on particular food issues, a FPC would be well advised to develop a clear process for taking positions.

### **CATALYST FOR PROJECTS**

While it is generally not advisable for a FPC to get deeply involved in projects, it can be the catalyst for new projects or initiatives. The question about how deeply to become involved in new projects is discussed below in this chapter. The FPC can take the role of identifying organizations and institutions that are best suited to develop and manage projects. The FPC can also plant the seed, do research, conduct public education and advocacy, organize a supportive constituency, and even provide resources.

### **3.3.2 OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

Food policy councils can be problematic to operate successfully. Contributing factors include their novelty, coalition-like structure, typically low budget, location within the city political process, and role as policy analyst rather than service provider. The challenges faced by food policy councils and ways to address these challenges are summarized below.

### **MEMBERSHIP COMPOSITION AND RECRUITMENT**

FPC membership should broadly represent the food system's many sectors to assure a balanced and comprehensive approach. Yet broad representation may heighten potential for conflict.

Membership recruitment should be an active and ongoing process. It's helpful to keep a file of potential candidates and stay in touch with them, providing FPC materials and conveying enthusiasm about the council's work. Prospective members can also be invited to attend meetings. Clearly defined criteria for membership selection can prevent concerns about the fairness of the process.

When recruiting potential FPC members, it may be helpful to consider these questions. Are they team players invested in the public good, or are they more interested in their own agenda or escaping the office? Do they have the time and energy to attend meetings and do work outside, or are they already over-committed?

Declining attendance at meetings represents one common pitfall of FPCs. The chair or the staff should consider contacting no-shows to inquire about their absences. There are a number of causes of high absenteeism, including the perceived lack of forward progress, an overly process-oriented agenda, and the feeling that one's concerns aren't being addressed.

### **LEADERSHIP**

The selection of a FPC chair is no small matter. S/he will run meetings, keep the FPC moving in the right direction, and act as the spokesperson. The chair may be selected by city council or the mayor, or elected by FPC members. In choosing a chair, it's helpful to keep in mind the following considerations: Does s/he have a good understanding of the purpose of the FPC and of your local food system assets and deficits? Can s/he commit the time to do the job properly? Does s/he have the necessary group process skills to run a complex organization? Does s/he have the requisite skills to interface with the city council, department heads, and other policymakers? Would s/he make a good spokesperson?

### **STAFFING**

The number and type of staff positions depend on the size of the food policy council's budget and the ambitiousness of its agenda. One of the primary limitations of FPCs has been their lack of funding and staff. It is virtually impossible for a FPC to be effective without at least clerical support to arrange meetings, keep minutes and other records, and send out materials. Competent interns can handle some of this work; VISTA

volunteers may be appropriate as start-up staff.

A budget of \$20,000 (cash and/or in-kind resources) is about the minimum to cover part-time or intern-level staff, phone, printing, and travel. Ideally, the FPC will want to hire a director and other staff to advance its agenda at multiple levels. In some cases, local government departments have assigned FPCs part-time staff. In this case, their time commitment and duties should be clearly understood by all.

### **GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

The location of the FPC within city government is a crucial decision. FPC members should consider the relative merits of each location before developing legislation. Placement within the Office of the Mayor may lend the FPC a high profile and a neutral position within city agencies, but it may also be politically unwise if the FPC will need the support of a hostile city council. Likewise, changes in administration may result in the council being eliminated or de-funded. On the other hand, placing it in one agency may make it dependent upon the support of the agency head, and limit its purview with respect to other departments. In any case, resistant local administrations often frustrate FPC efforts to take action. To prevent this resistance, FPCs should strive to cultivate political support on an on-going basis. If necessary, they can also mobilize constituents to pressure appropriate officials, take their case to the media, or seek support from powerful political allies, such as city council members.

The submission of an annual report may be required of all city commissions. FPCs should treat this as an opportunity to reinforce their place in city government by sending copies to relevant elected officials and agency heads.

### **COMPREHENSIVE MISSION**

Food policy councils typically have the overarching goal of developing a comprehensive strategy to provide quality, affordable food for all members of a community. The isolation of service providers from one another and their lack of coordination underscore the importance of the FPC as a body where they can gather to focus on the big picture and develop comprehensive solutions. However, this mission can be difficult to pursue because of the single-purpose focus of many member organizations. In this case, capable leadership and clarity in the Council's mission and long-term

vision are key. Some tactics include reminding members of the FPC's purpose and restating the mission statement on FPC documents.

To avoid competition with other agencies for funding, recognition, and members' time, the FPC should seek to clearly define its purpose in relation to other food-related organizations. This is likely to involve a good deal of discussion with heads of these other agencies.

### **PROJECTS VERSUS POLICIES**

Whether to act through projects or policies is another choice that confronts FPCs. The inclination of many new groups is to "do something." However, FPCs should resist the temptation to launch an ambitious project that will use most of their limited time and resources. The work of a FPC is primarily to achieve results by shaping policy, not to take on a specific activity that some other organization could do. Projects should be limited to those that are clearly consistent with the FPC's purpose and prescribed areas of interest. They should be selected because they have a community-wide benefit, clear policy implications for city government, and because the FPC is the best, and perhaps only, entity that can conduct the action.

### **REINFORCING GOVERNMENT STATUS**

To reinforce the FPC's place in government and its authority, it should have a permanent office space, letterhead with the city seal, and a dedicated telephone line. This may be within a Committee member's agency or in a public office such as city hall. Holding meetings in public buildings is another way of asserting the Committee's accountability to the public and relationship to city government.

### **VISIBILITY**

Policymakers and the public are rarely well informed about a FPC's work. Regular updates to public officials can raise its profile. Holding regular community meetings, and distributing brochures, reports, and other FPC findings are effective ways of staying in the public eye. Events such as awards ceremonies and ribbon-cuttings are good venues for positive press.

### **EVALUATION AND WORK PLAN**

Evaluation is an important part of the implementation process that often gets overlooked. FPCs should set aside time at least once a year to assess their progress against their stated goals. There are many approaches for conducting a simple evaluation. Options include using a set of evaluative



questions to guide a discussion of the group's progress, and having all FPC members complete a questionnaire.

The evaluation should also help shape development of a one-year work plan that represents the group's understanding of its goals and helps FPC members develop concrete and attainable objectives. This work plan should be developed at roughly the same time each year and reviewed once or twice annually.

### **PLANNING**

Many FPCs have won great policy gains, but few have taken their organizing to the next level: comprehensive food system planning. The planning process can be daunting and confusing for many groups, but it is an integral step for creating community food systems.

One way activists can move in this direction is to advocate for the inclusion of food security issues in the periodic updating of city General Plans. See Chapter 1. The development of a food security element would legitimize the importance of this set of issues and lay the groundwork for further funding. Perhaps most importantly, it would codify food security as a concern of local governments, not just a matter best left to the private sector. Within the larger context of the privatization of city services, the movement to incorporate food security into the agenda of local governments in a coordinated fashion reasserts the place of government in civic life.

# RESOURCE GUIDE

## 1. FOOD POLICY RESEARCH AND LOCAL COUNCIL REPORTS

Dahlberg, Kenneth, et al. Strategies, Policy Approaches, and Resources for Local Food System Planning and Organizing. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota Food Association. 1997. Contact: (612) 872-3298.

*Compilation of comprehensive analyses and discussion of the elements needed for organizing effective local food policy councils. Includes background material and articles defining the role of food in developing sustainable communities, evaluations of six local food policy councils, and sample ordinances and policy statements.*

Fisher, Andrew. "Hunger and Food Insecurity in Los Angeles: Findings of the Volunteer Advisory Council on Hunger." Los Angeles, CA: VACH. 1996. Contact: (310) 822-5410. *A helpful illustration of the process of food policy development. This report describes VACH's examination of hunger and food insecurity in LA, recommends the creation of the Los Angeles Food Security and Hunger Partnership, and outlines food policy statements for the City of Los Angeles.*

City of Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy. "Annual Report." Hartford, CT: The Hartford Food System. Yearly. Contact: (860) 296-9325.

*Highlights the Commission's ongoing food system projects and advocacy and details its progress over the past year. A good example of food policy organization and implementation.*

The Toronto Food Policy Council. "Developing a food system which is just and environmentally sustainable." Toronto, ON: Toronto Food Policy Council. 1994. Contact: (416) 392-1107.

*Explores the economic, social, health, and environmental fronts on which the Toronto Food Policy Council is active, and describes the projects it has developed.*

Kraak, Vivica, et al. "Catalyzing Community-Driven Planning to Promote Community Food Security." Ithaca, NY: Cornell University. 1998. Contact: (607) 255-1703.

*Reports on the first two phases of the North Country Food and Economic Security Project. Illustrates the use of the search conference model of community planning to draw together food system stakeholders and develop working goals for county food systems.*

## **2. FOOD SYSTEM STUDIES AND PUBLICATIONS**

Sustainable Food Center. "Access Denied." Austin, TX: Sustainable Food Center. 1995.  
Contact: (512) 385-0080.

*Uses data and community surveys to characterize the problems that limit East Austin residents' ability to obtain healthy food. Recommends local food projects and a city-county food policy council. A good example of how local food system research can be used to spur change.*

Ashman, Linda, et al. Seeds of Change: Strategies for Food Security in the Inner City. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Department of Urban Planning. 1993. Contact: (310) 822-5410.

*A strong example of formal, in-depth food security research. Presents and analyzes food security survey results, discusses larger strategies for community food security, including local food policy councils, and makes recommendations for developing a more responsive food system in Los Angeles.*

Feenstra, Gail and Dave Campbell. "Community Food Systems in California: Profiles of 13 Collaborations." Davis, CA: University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program. 1998. Contact: (510) 642-2431.

*Outlines structure, history, activities, and lessons learned from 13 California organizations that have taken comprehensive approaches to community food systems, including many with local policy strategies. Also includes a bibliography of food system publications.*

## **3. SPECIFIC FOOD SYSTEM ISSUES**

### *A. Health, Nutrition, and Food*

Toronto Food Policy Council. "If the Health Care System Believed 'You Are What You Eat.'"  
Toronto, ON: Toronto Food Policy Council Discussion Paper Series, #3. 1997. Contact: (416) 392-1107.

*Argues for a reorientation of public health policy toward food and nutrition related prevention strategies and recommends food programs, initiatives, and policies at multiple levels of the public health system.*

Community Nutrition Institute. *Nutrition Week*. Washington, DC. Weekly. Contact: (202) 776-0595.

*Covers developments in food policy and innovative projects and ideas in the realm of community nutrition and food systems.*

### *B. Transportation*

Gottlieb, Robert, et al. "Homeward Bound: Food-Related Transportation Strategies for Low-Income and Transit Dependent Communities." Los Angeles, CA: University of California Transportation Center. 1996. Contact: (310) 822-5410.

*Examines transportation as a barrier to food security for transit-dependent individuals. Profiles special food access transit programs in U.S. cities, and recommends other strategies for change.*

The City of Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy. "The Bus Stops Here: Challenges to Food Security in Hartford." Hartford, CT: The Hartford Food System. 1998. Contact: (860) 296-9325.

*Presents the results of a survey of low-income Hartford residents regarding transportation and food access, and recommends specific bus route changes. A helpful example of informal food system research on a specific issue.*

### *C. Community Gardens*

Dunnigan, Kendall. "Cities Support Community Gardening." *Community Greening Review*. American Community Gardening Association. November, 1996. Contact: (215) 922-1508. *Compiles examples of ways in which local governments support community gardening.*

Herbach, Geoff. "Harvesting the City: Community Gardening in Greater Madison, Wisconsin." Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, Madison, Dept. of Urban and Regional Planning. 1998. Contact: (608) 262-1004.

*Reports on the successes of Madison's community gardens in securing local legislative support for gardens.*

### *D. Farmland Protection*

American Farmland Trust. AFT Web site: <http://www.farmland.org>

*Identifies policy tools for farmland protection, including a state-by-state directory, and posts notices of new publications and funding opportunities. Contains the report "Farming On the Edge," which examines the threat that urban sprawl poses to American farmland.*

### *E. Schools, Gardens, and Food*

Mascarenhas, Michelle. "Resource Guide to School Food Programs." *Community Food Security News*. Los Angeles, CA. Fall 1998. Contact: (310) 822-5410.

*Profiles a number of model school garden and food programs, discusses challenges to promoting healthy food and local purchasing for school meals, and includes a resource guide.*

Sanchez, Lucia, et al. "Healthy Farms, Healthy Kids: Report on the Pilot Farmers' Market Fruit and Salad Bar Program for Schools." Los Angeles, CA: Occidental College. 1998. Contact: (323)259-2633.

*Describes the process and results of the first year of this successful local food program at McKinley Elementary School in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District.*

Hartford Food System. "Farm Fresh Start: A Guide to Increasing the Consumption of Local Produce in the School Lunch Program." Hartford, CT: Hartford Food System. 1997. Contact: (860) 296-9325.

*Details the elements of Hartford Food System's successful Farm Fresh Start program, which introduces locally-grown food into public school cafeterias in tandem with in-class food education.*

#### F. Microenterprise and Community Economic Development

Toronto Food Policy Council. "Stories of Food Microenterprise and Implications for Economic Development." Toronto Food Policy Council Discussion Paper Series, #5. Toronto, ON. 1995. Contact: (416) 392-1107.

*Presents 14 case studies of small-scale food production and processing business. Examines public and private infrastructure that might be tapped for expanding this sector, and offers recommendations for relevant policies and practices.*

#### G. Food Retailing

Public Voice for Food and Health Policy. "No Place to Shop: Challenges and Opportunities Facing the Development of Supermarkets in Urban America." Washington, DC: Public Voice. 1996. Contact: (202) 347-6200.

*Examines all aspects of supermarket development in inner cities, and makes recommendations for increasing inner-city supermarket development in five areas.*

Cotterill, Ronald and Andrew Franklin. "The Urban Grocery Store Gap." Storrs, CT: University of Connecticut Food Marketing Policy Center. Food Marketing Policy Issue Paper. April, 1995. Contact: (202) 347-6200.

*Reports on a study of supermarket distribution with respect to income in several metropolitan areas.*

Toronto Food Policy Council. "Food Retail Access and Food Security for Toronto's Low-Income Citizens." Toronto Food Policy Council Discussion Paper Series, #7. Toronto, ON. 1996. Contact: (416) 392-1107.

*Explores how the existing food retail system in Toronto and throughout Canada marginalizes low-income communities. Recommends planning strategies for removing food access barriers and developing alternatives for equitable food distribution.*

#### *H. Farmers' Markets*

Southland Farmers' Market Association. "Organizing a Certified Farmers' Market." Los Angeles, CA: Southland Farmers' Market Association. Contact: (213) 244-9190.

*Details tested strategies for organizing a certified farmers' market. Includes regulatory requirements for markets.*

*Certified Farmers' Market News.* Quarterly. Los Angeles, CA. Contact: (213) 244-9190.

*Provides regulatory news, industry trends, and promotional ideas. Largely specific to California certified markets.*

Fisher, Andy. "Hot Peppers and Parking Lot Peaches: Evaluating Farmers' Markets in Low Income Communities." Community Food Security Coalition. Los Angeles, CA. January, 1999. Contact: 310-822-5410.

*Provides case studies of successful and less-than-successful farmers' markets, guidelines for operating low income markets, as well as policy barriers and recommendations.*

#### *I. Food Waste and Composting*

*Biocycle Magazine.* Emmaus, PA: The JG Press. Monthly. Contact: (610) 967-4135.

*Includes innovative practices, policies, and technologies that can help communities and institutions develop composting programs.*

#### *J. Hunger and Food Insecurity*

Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). FRAC Web Site: <http://www.frac.org/index.html>  
*Describes FRAC's advocacy campaigns and identifies model local nutrition and anti-hunger programs, particularly children's meal programs. Also provides information on the Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project (CCHIP), a food insecurity study that was conducted in a number of local areas.*

World Hunger Year. Reinvesting in America Project

Web Site: <http://grassroots.org/index.html>

*Searchable web site includes model local programs that combat hunger and poverty through community empowerment.*

Toronto Food Policy Council. "Reducing Urban Hunger in Ontario: Policy Responses to Support the Transition from Food Charity to Local Food Security." Toronto Food Policy Council Discussion Paper Series, #1. Toronto, ON 1993. Contact: (416) 392-1107. *Outlines strategies for replacing charitable approaches to hunger with comprehensive policy and community-based initiatives.*

#### **4. GENERAL RESOURCES FOR ORGANIZING**

Joseph, Hugh, ed. Community Food Security: A Guide to Concept, Design, and Implementation. Los Angeles, CA: Community Food Security Coalition. 1997. Contact: (310) 822-5410.

*Defines the concept of community food security. Outlines strategies and methods including coalition-building, policy, planning, microenterprise and others. Highlights successful examples of local food system organizing.*

Feenstra, Gail, et al. "Community Food Systems: Sustaining Farms and People in the Emerging Economy." Conference Proceedings. Davis, CA. 1996. Contact: (916) 752-7556.

*Includes proceedings from workshops and panels concerning community food systems, including a number emphasizing food policy tools. Also features discussions of creative multi-sectoral community food system projects.*

Kaye, Gillian and Tom Wolff, eds. From the Ground Up: A Workbook on Coalition-Building and Community Development. 2nd edition. Amherst, MA: AHEC/Community Partners. 1997. Contact: (413) 253-4283.

*A helpful source of questions and discussion to guide community coalitions.*

Martin, Ann and Robert Rich. "Searching and Search Conferences." Ithaca, NY: Cornell University. 1996. Contact: (607) 255-1703.

*Outlines the process and design of the search conference model of community planning. This model was used to organize the North Country Food and Economic Security Project.*

Ames, Steven, ed. "A Guide To Community Visioning: Hands-On Information for Local Communities." Portland, OR: Oregon Visions Project, American Planning Association. 1993. Contact: (503) 235-3000.

*Details the steps of the Oregon Model of community visioning. A resource for citizen activists and planners to develop a more community-oriented planning process.*

World Hunger Year. "World Hunger Year Media Guide." New York, NY: World Hunger Year. 1996. Contact: (212) 629-8850.

*Presents in-depth instructions and helpful examples for conducting media relations for advocacy organizations and campaigns.*



# APPENDIX A: SAMPLE FOOD POLICY INVENTORY

Source: Report of Mayor's Task Force on Hunger, City of Hartford, Connecticut, 1991

## Municipal Food Policy Questionnaire

The major factors that cause the food problems in the city of Hartford are cost, accessibility, availability and quality.

Based on these factors, please answer the following questions. Your answers to these questions will assist us in putting together a Municipal Food Policy for the City of Hartford.

1. What type of activities is your department involved in that assist in meeting the food needs of the City of Hartford?
2. How do you think the City's policies and programs in your department affect the above factors?
- 2a. How do you think these policies and programs can be changed to bring about a positive impact on these factors?
3. In looking over the activities in your department for the past two years, have you had any input in the production or distribution of food in the City of Hartford?
4. Based on the attached recommendations, what can you do in your department to have a positive impact on the City's food problems?
5. Looking at other areas of City government of which you are familiar, what other suggestions can make that would be helpful in developing a food policy?
6. What initiatives do you think this task force should be taking to establish future policies and programs to address the food problems in Hartford?
7. What problems do you see in this task force trying to implement your recommended policy changes?
8. What recommendations can you make to help us alleviate such problems?

Should the task force need additional information, please provide the following on the appropriate contact persons:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for you input in this worthwhile endeavor.

## **APPENDIX B: SAMPLE ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A FOOD POLICY COUNCIL**

Source: Report of Mayor's Task Force on Hunger, City of Hartford, Connecticut, 1991

Be it ordained by the Court of Common Council of the City of Hartford:

There is hereby created the Advisory Commission on Food Policy.

Purpose:

1. There shall be a policy to improve the availability of food to persons in need within the city and there shall be a food policy advisory commission.
2. The purpose of the policy shall be to integrate all agencies of the city in a common effort to improve the availability of safe and nutritious food at reasonable prices for all residents, particularly those in need. The goals to be accomplished by the policy are: a) to insure that a wide variety of safe and nutritious food is available to city residents; b) to insure that access to safe and nutritious food is not limited by economic status, location, or other factors beyond a resident's control; and c) to insure that the price of food in the city remains reasonably close to the average price existing in the balance of the state.
3. The policy shall be implemented by the city as follows:
  - a. Transportation. In planning, providing, coordinating, and regulating transportation within the city, city agencies shall make the facilitation of transportation of food to distribution points and ready access to reasonable food supply a principal part of any action.
  - b. Land use. City agencies and employees in determining the use to be made of city parks, school yards, rights of way, surplus properties, and redevelopment parcels shall give special consideration to the benefit of using such sites, at least in part, for food production, processing and distribution. The city, on a regional level, shall act to preserve farmland for truck farming, which will serve as a nearby source of fresh fruit, vegetables, eggs, and milk.
  - c. Lobbying and advocacy. The city in its presentations before state and federal legislatures, state and regional agencies and anti-hunger organizations shall address the need for programs and actions which will improve the opportunities of city residents to obtain adequate diets. Such programs and actions shall include maintenance of the state and regional agricultural infrastructure.
  - d. Referrals to social services. City social service workers shall be especially diligent in referring persons in need to available sources of food best suited to their needs.
  - e. Education. The city in providing a wide range of educational opportunities for adults shall emphasize the importance of a sound diet for the family and provide courses in the production, selection, purchase, preparation and preservation of food.
  - f. Business development. The city in its work of developing new businesses and expanding existing businesses shall give priority to those food-related businesses improving access to affordable, nutritional food.
  - g. Operational and health inspections. The city in its role of maintaining the quality and healthfulness of the food supply shall take into account that licensing and inspection can seriously

burden small businesses and a policy shall be followed providing a reasonable balance between protection of the food supply and negative financial impact upon needed food-related small businesses.

h. Direct and indirect purchase of food. The city government, in its role as a major food purchaser from local outlets, and administrator of food assistance programs, shall consider that its purchasing decisions can affect the viability of producers and vendors, and shall consider such impact in making purchasing decisions.

i. Support of private efforts. The city in providing funding for private efforts to assist people in obtaining food and in communicating with organizations engaged in such private efforts shall encourage, promote, and maximize such efforts.

j. Monitoring and communicating data. The city shall continuously collect data on the extent and nature of public food programs and hunger in the city and shall report on such data regularly.

k. Emergency food supplies. The city in its emergency planning function shall provide for an adequate reserve supply of food to be available at reasonable prices if the city's and region's supply of food were to be interrupted and shall periodically reassess its ability to provide such special supply.

l. Administration. The city manager in administering the affairs of the city shall seek ways of improving the means of providing person in need with wholesome food and diets and shall work with the commission to combat hunger in attaining its goals.

m. Intergovernmental cooperation. The food policy advisory commission shall have the cooperation of all departments in the city in the performance of its duties. All department shall supply the commission with all information and reports requested in order that the goals of the city and the commission may be realized. The city shall provide clerical services to the commission as needed.

### Membership

The food policy advisory commission shall consist of fifteen members who shall serve for three-year terms without compensation and be appointed by the mayor, with the approval of the council. Of the fifteen members first appointed five shall be appointed for terms of one year, five for terms of two years and five for terms of three years. Of the fifteen members, one shall be the city manager or his/her designee, nine of such members shall be persons actively engaged in programs for combating hunger and improving the production, processing and distribution of food o persons in need and shall include representatives from the food industry, consumers, dietitians, the city administration and public and private non-profit food providers, and five of such members shall be persons chosen from the public atlarge. City employees and persons not residing in the city shall annually designate one member to act as chairperson. The commission shall meet at least once per month. A quorum shall consist of eight members. The mayor, and a member of the city council shall be ex-officio members of the commission with the right to vote. The director of social services and the director of health or their designees shall attend commission meetings. Members and officers shall serve until their successors are appointed.

### Goals of the Commission

The goals of the food policy advisory commission shall be as follows:

1. To eliminate hunger as an obstacle to a healthy, happy and productive life in the city;
2. To ensure that a wide variety of safe and nutritious food is available for city residents.

Powers and duties of the commission.

The powers and duties of the food policy advisory commission shall be as follows:

1. Explore new means for the city government to improve food economy and the availability, accessibility and quality of food and to assist the city government in the coordination of its efforts;
2. Collect and monitor data pertaining to the nutrition status of city residents;
3. Seek and obtain community input on food economy and the availability, accessibility and quality of food to persons in need within the city;
4. Obtain updated statistical information and other data from city agencies relating to hunger in the city and programs in existence and being planned to reduce hunger and improve the obtaining of nutritious by residents in need;
5. Observe and analyze the existing administration of city food distribution programs;
6. Recommend to the city administration adoption of new programs and improvements to (or elimination of) existing programs as appropriate.
7. Submit and annual report on or before October 1 to the Common Council with copies to the mayor and city manager summarizing the process made in achieving each of the goals set forth in the above sections.

# **APPENDIX C: LEGISLATION SUPPORTING COMMUNITY GARDENS**

From the Sustainable Food Center and City of Austin, Texas

Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Austin:

Part 1. That 13-2-402.2 of the Austin City Code of 1992 is added to read as follows:

13-2-402.2 Temporary exemption from platting requirements

A parcel of land may be temporarily exempted from the requirement to plat if the Director finds that a community garden as defined in Section 13-2-5 is the sole use of the parcel. The burden to show that the parcel is a qualified community garden and exempted from the requirement to plat rests with the applicant. The applicant must provide all documentation necessary to establish the exemption. Such exemption shall expire at the time the community garden use ceases to be a qualified community garden pursuant to section 13-2-5. Any future development of the parcel may require the parcel to be platted.

Part 2. That 13-2-5, relating to "Civic Uses Defined," of the Austin City Code of 1992 is amended to add the following definition as follows:

Qualified community gardens means a parcel of land used as a cooperative garden in a legal lot(s) or in a lot which has been exempted from the legal lot requirements under the provisions of section 13-2-402.2, and which is used by a group of people associated with a qualified organization which has received the designation of a qualified community garden from the Parks and Recreation Department.

To be a qualified community garden, the following must be found:

- (1) that the community garden is being run by an IRS certified non-profit organization;
- (2) that the non-profit organization is incorporated in the State of Texas;
- (3) that the garden is going to be used for at least four unrelated individuals or families;
- (4) that there are no habitable or permanent structures on the lot;
- (5) that the non-profit organization has been in operation at least one year and have a history with community gardening;
- (6) that the non-profit organization's purpose includes agriculture, gardening, and/or economic development;
- (7) that the non-profit organization has a garden manager and an organized plan for the use of the garden, including membership; and
- (8) the garden must be located in a Target Area which has been selected by the City Council for concentration of Community Development Block Grant Programs.

The Parks and Recreation Department shall review the information to determine if the community garden is qualified. The non-profit organization must submit to the Parks and Recreation Department information sufficient to prove the above qualifications, and shall also include the following information with their application to be a qualified community garden:

- (1) articles of incorporation and bylaws;
- (2) IRS letter certifying the non-profit status of the organization
- (3) the lease covering at least the next 12 months with the property owner, if applicable;
- (4) the organization's financial statement, audit, or most recent 990 form;
- (5) the proposed or current plan of the community garden, including a map showing the location of the garden and any structures on a lot, membership requirements, including fees, hours of operation;
- (6) the name, address, and phone number of the garden manager; and
- (7) the names and addresses of the community garden's participants.

To maintain the status of a qualified community garden, the non-profit organization must annually submit the information identified in items (3) through (7) above to the Parks and Recreation Department so it can determine whether the garden remains a qualified community garden.

Additionally, a qualified community garden must notify the Parks and Recreation Department thirty (30) days before it ceases to use the site as a community garden under the qualifications identified above. The Parks and Recreation Department shall notify the Water and Wastewater Utility and the Planning and Development Department of the loss of the community garden's designation as a qualified community garden.

**Part 3.** The 13-3-6 relating to "Connection Without Tap Permit Prohibited; Issuance of Water and Wastewater Tap Permit; and Payment of Fees," of the Austin City Code of 1992 is amended by adding a new subsection (L) to read as follows:

(L) *Temporary Taps for Community Gardens.* In addition to the limitations in this section, taps permits for qualified community gardens as described in Section 13-3A-10(n) shall be considered temporary permits. After a qualified community garden has connected to the water system, the tap is only good while the community garden remains qualified. Once the community garden is no longer qualified and if the lot was exempt under Section 13-2-402.2 as a community garden, the tap will be removed by the Water and Wastewater Utility. If the community garden is no longer qualified and the lot is a legal lot, the tap will be removed or the current owner or user must apply for a tap and be responsible for the payment of all fees associated with the tap, including capital recovery fees.

**Part 4.** That 13-3A-1(f) relating to "General Provisions of Capital Recovery Fees," of the Austin City Code of 1992 is amended to add a new definition of community garden as subsection (f)(4) and renumbering the following definitions, to read as follows:

(f) *Definitions.* As utilized in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meaning ascribed to them herein below:

(4) *Qualified community gardens* means a parcel of land used as a cooperative garden in a legal lot(s) or in a lot which has been exempted from the legal lot requirements under the provisions of Section 13-2-402.2, and which is used by a group of people associated with a qualified organization which has received the designation of a qualified community garden from the Parks and Recreation Department.

**Part 5.** That 13-3A-9 relating to the "Collection of Capital Recovery Fees," of the Austin City Code of 1992 is amended to read as follows:

(a) Except as otherwise provided in Section 13-3A-10(n) or by contracts with wholesale customers or other political subdivisions, no water or wastewater tap shall be issued until all capital recovery fees have been paid to the city.

(b) For a development which is submitted for approval pursuant to the city's subdivision regulations subsequent to the effective date of this chapter, capital recovery fees shall be collected at the time of tap purchase.

(c) For a development which has received final plat approval prior to the effective date of this chapter and for which a re-platting is necessary prior to the purchase of a water or wastewater tap, capital recovery fees shall be collected at the time of the tap purchase.

(d) Notwithstanding the above, the Director may permit a property owner meeting the eligibility criteria set forth below to make installment payments of water or wastewater capital recovery fees:

(1) The applicant must make written application for approval to make payment of capital recovery fees on an installment basis on a form promulgated for this purpose by the Director;

(2) The applicant must be the owner of a single family residence occupied by said applicant as a homestead or a community garden which has not been designated as a qualified community garden as defined in Section 13-3A-1 which is not located in a Target Zone;

(3) The property for which connection is sought is not utilized for a commercial or industrial purpose;

(4) The property for which connection is sought is within the city's impact fee service area;

(5) The property for which connection is sought is a legal lot in compliance with applicable state law and local subdivision requirements; and

(6) The applicant demonstrates the payment of the full amount of the capital recovery fee at the time of tap purchase will cause the applicant undue financial hardship in accordance with standards promulgated by the Director.

(B) Such terms and conditions as a the City Attorney shall deem favorable, necessary or required to enforce the terms thereof in the event of default, including, without limitation, the right to accelerate the balance due under contract and require immediate payment of the full remaining balance, to disconnect service upon default, to file a utility lien against the property and enforce the terms thereof according to law, to file suit to collect the remaining balance together with interest and reasonable attorney's fees; and

Part 6. That 13-3A-10 relating to "Exceptions and Exemptions," of the Austin City Code of 1992 is amended by adding a new subsection (n) to read as follows:

(n) *Qualified Community Gardens.*

(1) A capital recovery fee shall not be assessed on a qualified community garden. The Parks and Recreation Department shall determine if the community garden is qualified. This exemption applies only in the following cases:

- a. during the period when the community garden is qualified under this section;
- b. for a single 5/8 inch simple meter for one service unit; and
- c. when no other plumbing other than irrigation is to be installed.

(2) To be a qualified community garden, the organization applying for a tap must submit the following information to the Parks and Recreation Department to demonstrate the following:

- a. that the community garden is being run by an IRS certified non-profit organization;
- b. that the non-profit organization is incorporated in the State of Texas;
- c. that the garden is going to be used for at least four unrelated individuals or families;
- d. that there are no habitable or permanent structures on the lot;
- e. that the non-profit organization has been in operation at least one year and have a history with community gardening;
- f. that the non-profit organization's purpose includes agriculture, gardening, and/or economic development;
- g. that the non-profit organization has a garden manager and an organized plan for the use of the garden, including membership; and
- h. the garden must be located in a Target Area which has been selected by the City Council for concentration of Community Development Block Grant Programs.

(3) The non-profit organization must submit to the Parks and Recreation Department information sufficient to prove the above qualifications, and shall also include the following information with their application to be a qualified community garden:

- a. articles of incorporation and bylaws;
- b. IRS letter certifying the non-profit status of the organization;
- c. the lease covering at least the next 12 months with the property owner, if applicable;
- d. the organization's financial statement, audit or most recent 990 form;
- e. the proposed or current plan of the community garden, including a map showing the location of the garden and any structures on the lot, membership requirements, including fees, hours of operation;
- f. the name, address and phone number of the garden manager; and
- g. the names and addresses of the community garden's participants.

(4) A qualified community garden must notify the Parks and Recreation Department thirty (30) days before it ceases to use the site as a community garden under the qualifications identified above. The Parks and Recreation Department shall notify that Water and Wastewater Utility and the Planning and Development Department of the loss of the community garden's designation as a qualified community garden.

(5) To maintain the status of a qualified community garden, the non-profit organization must annually submit the information identified in items c through h above, and any other information requested by the Parks and Recreation Department, to the Parks and Recreation Department so it can determine whether the garden remains a qualified community garden. The Parks and Recreation Department shall review the information to determine if the community garden remains qualified. If the community garden is no longer qualified, the Parks and Recreation Department shall notify the Water and Wastewater Utility and the Planning and Development Department of the loss of the community gardens designation as a qualified community garden.

(6) Once the entity is no longer a qualified community garden, whether through subsections (4) or (5) above, the community garden and any subsequent use of the property will no longer have a capital recovery exemption nor, if applicable, the temporary exemption from the platting requirements in Section 13-2-202.2. The Water and Wastewater Utility may notify the current user that to secure water service, for a lot which had a temporary exemption from the platting requirements, the lot will need to be platted before service can be continued, and that the capital recovery fee is due. The notice shall also indicate that the user's failure to secure legal lot status or to pay the capital recovery fee is grounds for terminating water service.

(7) Once the exemption no longer applies, capital recovery fees on the property shall be paid by any subsequent user.

**Part 7.** That 13-3A-11 relating to "Discount," of the Austin City Code of 1992 is amended to read as follows:

A 25% discount from the capital recovery fee shall apply to all commercial, industrial, and residential construction and all non-qualified community gardens within the corporate limits.

**Part 8.** That the requirement imposed by Section 2-2-2, 2-2-5, and 2-2-7 of the Austin City Code of 1992, as amended, regarding the presentation and adoption of ordinances are hereby waived by the affirmative vote of at least five (5) members of the City Council.

**Part 9.** This ordinance shall become effective ten (10) days following the date of its passage as provided by the Charter of the City of Austin.



## APPENDIX D: FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES

The following funding sources are available through the federal government or state or local affiliates of federal agencies. The AmeriCorps\*VISTA program is included as a source of staffing for developing projects.

Program	Purpose	Funds Available	Funding Stream	Contact
Building a Sustainable Future	Supports sustainable community development projects.	\$250,000/year, no more than \$50,000 per award	Agencies in Enterprise Zones and Empowerment Communities may compete	US Dept. of Energy, Center for Excellence in Sustainable Development, 1617 Cole Blvd., Golden, CO 80401. Fax (303) 275-4830.
Community Development Block Grants	Funds local development projects for low-to-moderate income communities.	\$2.9-3.1 billion/year	Annual RFPs at local level; awards range from \$500 to over \$100,000	Local Housing and Development Department or HUD affiliate.
Community Food and Nutrition Grants	Supports nutrition programs operated by states and local non-profits.	\$6 million/year; average award \$27,000-\$33,000	60% goes to state agencies; 40% distributed through national competition	Office of Community Services, US Dept. of Health and Human Services, State grants (202) 401-9342; Direct grants (202) 401-9345.
Community Food Projects	Funds comprehensive local food system projects operated by non-profits.	\$2.5 million/year; awards range from \$10,000 to \$250,000	National competition	Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, USDA, Stop 2201, Washington, DC 20250-2201; (202) 720-4423.
Community Service Block Grants	Funds local anti-poverty projects.	\$525 million/year; state awards range from \$2.1-\$34.6 million.	States apply for funds to be distributed to local agencies	Office of Community Services, Dept. of Health and Human Services, (202) 401-9343.
Environmental Education Grants	Supports local education agencies and non-profits in the development of novel curricula.	\$3 million/year; 25% of awards less than \$5,000	National and regional competitions	Regional EPA office or Environmental Education Grant Program, EPA, 401 M St, SW, Washington DC 20460; (202) 260-8619.
Environmental Justice Grants	Funds both community-based organizations and community-university partnerships (CUPs).	\$2 million/year each for community-based groups and CUPs.	National competition	Regional EPA office or Office of Environmental Justice, EPA, 401 M St, SW, Washington, DC 20460; (202) 564-2515.
Farmland Protection Program	Provides funds for state and local governments to purchase agricultural conservation easements.	\$17.3 million/year	National competition	Community Assistance and Rural Development Division, Natural Resources Conservation Service, (202) 720-2847.
Food and Nutrition Education	Funds education programs to help food stamp recipients maximize the value of their benefits.	\$8+ million/year	Funds allotted to state Cooperative Extension and then distributed to county offices	Local Cooperative Extension or regional USDA office.
Job Training Partnership Act	Funds both youth and adult job training.	\$2 billion/year	Federal funds are distributed through state and local departments of labor	Regional Dept. of Labor office or Employment and Training Administration, Dept. of Labor, (202) 219-5303 x169.
Sustainable Development Challenge Grants	Funds local projects that promote sustainable development.	\$5-9 million/year; up to \$250,000/award	National competition	Office of Air and Radiation, EPA, (202) 260-2441.
Urban Resources Partnership	Seed grants and assistance for cities to create better responses to community environmental needs.	Four cities/year receive \$500,000 each	National competition among applicant cities; RFPs for grassroots projects within cities.	National Urban Resources Program office, USDA, (202) 205-1007.
AmeriCorps-Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA)	Places full-time volunteers at community agencies to provide program development services for one year.	4000 volunteers/year	Agencies with qualified community empowerment projects apply to state office	State office of Corporation for National Service.