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Rural Grocery Summit

Food Policy Council

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Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

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- **Resources: “Doing Food Policy Councils Right,” “Good Law, Good Food: Guide to Local Food Policy,” “Good Law...State Food Policy,” and North American Directory of FPCs. See www.markwinne.com/resource-material/**

Why Have a Food Policy Council?

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

Amartya Sen, Nobel Laureate Economist

Purposes of FPCs

- Influence government food policies, especially ones that promote justice, equity, and sustainability
- Coordinate efforts of food system stakeholders within a specified geography and jurisdiction
- Tend to favor policies over projects, but...
- Tend not to take on the oligopolistic forces of multi-national agribusiness, but...
- Conduct food assessments and prepare food plans

Food Policy Councils

- **Specific geographic and jurisdictional focus**
- **Considers all elements of the food system**
- **Multi-stakeholder orientation**
- **Coordinates food system players**
- **Influences local and state food policy**
- **Food democracy in action**
- **2010 – 111 FPCs North America**
- **2012 – 193 FPCs “ “**
- **2013 – 211 FPCs “ “**

FPCs: What They Do

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

Organizational Structure

- **FPCs can be created by state statute (Connecticut) or local ordinance (Portland, OR), an executive order (Michigan), or may be independently organized – government agencies participate but FPC is not a part of government (New Mexico, Cleveland); can also be organized as non-profits (Iowa).**
- **Kansas City, MO – Regional, multi-county and bi-state.**



Food Policies and Action

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

Local & State Food Policy

- **Farmland Preservation (Connecticut and Montana)**
- **Nutrition Rules in Schools and “rural food gap” (New Mexico)**
- **Improved farm economy (Michigan)**
- **Developing a local and sustainable food economy (Illinois)**
- **Farm to School (New Mexico)**
- **Farm to Food Bank (Washington)**
- **Comprehensive Food System Planning and Development (Food Works NYC)**

FPC Actions and Accomplishments

- **Cleveland/Cuyahoga County FPC:**
- **Secured zoning changes to promote urban agriculture and raising of chickens and bees**
- **Expanding food businesses with city economic development funds and using city/county purchasing funds for locally grown food**
- **Healthy Cleveland Initiative – Banning trans-fat; clash between public and private interests.**
- **Boulder, CO – Rejection of GMOs on public land**

Lessons Learned

- **Relationships count; cultivate them**
- **Be inclusive of a wide range of interests**
- **On conflict: work for consensus; foster climate of healthy debate**
- **Educate yourselves, the general public, and policy makers constantly**
- **Community food assessment is an on-going enterprise, not a one-time act**
- **Look for synergy between – and be aware of – relationships between all levels of government**
- **Cultivate good leadership and champions**