Keeping Track of Food Policy Councils:

An Overview of 2018 FPC Census Results

July 24, 2019

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NATIONAL
• FPN listserv with ~1500 members
• Food Policy Council Directory of 300+ councils
• Food Policy Resource Database with 1200+ resources
• Monthly webinars on federal, state and local food policy

TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
• Chesapeake Food Policy Leadership Initiative
• Pre-conference workshops & conference sessions
• One-on-one technical assistance

FoodPolicyNetworks.org
What is a food (policy) council?

An **organized group of stakeholders from various sectors** that may be sanctioned by a government body or may exist independently of government, which works to address **food systems issues** and needs at the local (city/municipality or county), state/provincial, regional or Native American/First Nations levels though **policy**.
Other names for FPCs

- We use “food policy council” to emphasize the effort of these groups to reform policy. It is also the most common term used among North American groups.

- Other names:
  - food council
  - food and farm network
  - food partners alliance
  - food and agriculture coalition
  - healthy food access committee
  - food systems collaborative
  - community food partnership
What is public policy?

- Law
  - Statutes, ordinances
  - Regulations
  - Permits and licenses

- Economic decisions
  - Budgets
  - Trade agreements
  - Funded scholarship

- Statements of Intention
  - Resolutions
  - Executive orders
Food Policy Council Census Objectives

• Capture basic information about food policy councils
• Explore if FPCs take a systems approach in their work
• Understand the relationship between FPCs and policymakers
• Learn about membership diversity
• Learn about FPC sources of funding and how financial resources impact their work
• Learn about the policy priorities of FPCs and what factors influence these priorities
• Understand at what level of government FPCs work on policy issues
• Understand the types of policies and issue areas that FPCs work on
Overview of FPCs in North America
Active FPCs since 2000

Count of FPCs active at the end of the year (n=520)
Year of formation

Count of FPCs by year of formation (n=518)

United States

Canada

Native American or First Nations Councils

Count of FPCs by year of formation (n=518)
Count of FPCs in United States and Canada and First Nations or Native American Councils by status as of August 2019 (n=524)
Census counts fluctuate slightly each year

- Difficulty in defining when an FPC “starts” (disagreement between FPC members about year formed)
- Counts are based on our best available knowledge about status of FPCs from survey responses, state conveners, direct contact with FPCs, word of mouth, online activity
- Each year we learn about:
  - FPCs that have existed for several years but are new to us
  - FPCs that have been inactive but were being counted in previous years’ counts
FPCs by US state

Count of active FPCs per US state (n=315)
Count of FPCs per Canadian province (n=55)
Percent of FPCs by age as of April 2018 (n = 337)
Percent of FPCs by geographic level of focus (n= 278)
Organizational structure

Percent of FPCs by organization structure (n=277)
Approximate annual budget

Percent of FPCs by approximate annual budget (n=269)
Funding sources

Percent of FPCs that receive funding from each source (n=179)
Government employees participate in FPC
Government supports FPC
Government seeks advice from FPC
Members are appointed by government
FPC created by legislation
No formal connection

Percent of FPCs with each relationship to government (n=276)
Membership representation

Percent of FPCs with members representing each sector (n=274)
Organizational priorities

Percent of FPC indicating each organizational priority (n=274)
Community engagement activities

Percent of FPCs by indicated community engagement activities (n=271)
Policy priorities

Percent of FPCs indicating each policy priority (n=269)
Advocacy activities

Percent of FPC indicated each advocacy activity (n=243)
Deeper dive: relationships between FPC age and structure and budgets and priorities
General trends with age of FPC

- Younger FPCs are more likely to:
  - Focus on member recruitment, strategic planning, research and data collection, developing governance structure
  - Prioritize economic development
  - Work at the county level
  - Have smaller budgets and/or no funding
General trends with age of FPC

- Older FPCs are more likely to:
  - Focus on building capacity for advocacy and policy, networking, fundraising, diversity and inclusion
  - Train community members, host community forums
  - Include more complex issues in their policy priorities (e.g., land use planning, food labor)
  - Engage in advocacy activities
  - Have larger budgets
Approximate annual budget by age of FPC

Percent of FPCs approximate annual budget by age of council
(n = 269; ages 1-2 n=50, ages 3-5 n=74, ages 6-10 n=107, over 10 n=38)
Advocacy activities by age of FPC

Percent of FPCs advocacy activities by age of council
(n=243; n=34 over 10, n=104 ages 6-10, n=73 ages 3-5, n=32 ages 1-2)
General trends with organizational structure

- FPCs **embedded in government**: stronger connections to government, more likely to prioritize strategic planning and research and data collection

- **Non-profit** FPCs or those **housed in non-profits**: more likely to have higher budgets, host educational events, prioritize local food processing

- FPCs that are **embedded in a university**: smaller budgets, focus more on education, least likely to focus on advocacy

- **Grassroots coalition** FPCs: smaller budgets, more likely to prioritize membership recruitment and retention and advocacy and policy capacity building
Approximate annual budget by organizational structure (n=269)
Trends in policy work
Topics around which FPCs did not work on policy change

Percent of FPCs that did not work on any policy changes by issue area (n=246)
Factors that influence FPC policy priorities

Percent of FPCs that identify factor as an influence on policy priorities (n=207)
### Importance of relationships to policy work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>A great extent</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-profit leaders</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local elected officials</td>
<td>52%</td>
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<td>24%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community members</td>
<td>48%</td>
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<td>33%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local government employees</td>
<td>43%</td>
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<td>31%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extension</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>University/college researchers</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<td>29%</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>State legislators</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>23%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>State government employees</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<td>19%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Federal legislators</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal government employees</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Percentage of FPCs important relationships to accomplish policy priorities (n=207)
To what degree does the membership of the council reflect the racial, economic and gender diversity of the community?

- To a great extent: 43%
- A lot: 28%
- Somewhat: 17%
- A little: 7%
- Not at all: 5%

Percent of FPCs who answered the survey question (n=271)
Greatest achievements

- Advocacy to policymaker (28% of FPCs)
- Implementing programs to address food insecurity (20%)
- Strategic planning (19%)
- Securing funding (18%)
- Partnering to host outreach event (17%)

Top 5 of FPCs’ self-identified greatest achievement thematized (n=238)
Greatest challenges

- Funding (sustaining funding, inability to compensate staff) (34% of FPCs)
- Recruitment and engagement (23%)
- Membership and leadership retention (17%)
- Lacking strategic plan (14%)
- Coordinating time to meet and build consensus (13%)

Top 5 of FPCs’ self-identified greatest challenges thematized (n=234)
How do we use the data?

• Update **online directory** and **map**
• Create summary report
• Inform annual work plan
• Share with other researchers
Resource Development

- Stories from the Field (3)
- Get it Toolgether: Assessing Your Food Council's Ability to Do Policy Work
- Advocacy and Lobbying 101 for Food Policy Councils (Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic)
- Shining a Light on Labor: How Food Policy Councils Can Support Food Chain Workers
- Framing the Future: A Planning Resource for Food Policy Councils
- Understanding the SNAP Program for Food Policy Councils
- Health Care Sector Support for Healthy Food Initiatives
- Food Policy for All: Inclusion of Diverse Community Residents on Food Policy Councils