STATE OF THE RESEARCH:
AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON EXISTING, EMERGING, AND NEEDED RESEARCH ON FOOD POLICY GROUPS

Introduction

As food policy groups (FPGs)—such as food (policy) councils, food partnerships, coalitions, committees, boards, and other similar groups—become increasingly popular mechanisms to reform the food system, there has been growing interest among students, academics, and journalists to document and study their efforts. Food policy groups (FPGs) are groups that assemble stakeholders from across the food system to reform food policies and programs to be healthier and more socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable. The Food Policy Networks (FPN) project recognizes the opportunity to advance the field through raised awareness, evaluation, and learning from others. This current report—compiled with the insights gained from our advisory committee, the FPN listserv, and personal connections—aims to highlight the existing and emerging research on FPGs.

The annotated bibliography includes non-peer-reviewed reports, unpublished doctoral dissertations and Masters theses, and additional research projects that are (to our knowledge) underway on FPGs. While peer-reviewed literature represents the gold standard of academic research, FPGs are still being interviewed for such research, and it is worth identifying what work has already been or is currently being done to avoid duplicative interview requests of groups. Given the rise of FPGs globally, we include research of FPGs and similar efforts from other industrialized countries to provide additional insights. We also recognize the inaccessibility of many of these publications to those without institutional connections, and hence highlight open-access research whenever available.

If you know of completed or ongoing research that has not been included in this list, or have additions to the research gaps section, please email contactus@foodpolicynetworks.org.

**Table of Contents**

Introduction ........................................................................................................................................1
Annotated bibliography of research on FPGs .....................................................................................3
Research on individual FPGs .............................................................................................................4
  North America ................................................................................................................................4
  Europe ........................................................................................................................................7
  Other and/or multiple continents .................................................................................................8
Research on evaluating the impacts of individual FPGs .................................................................10
  Evaluation tools for FPGs .............................................................................................................11
Research comparing *multiple* FPGs ............................................................................................12
  North America .........................................................................................................................12
  Europe .....................................................................................................................................15
Research on FPG movement and/or how FPGs *connect* with one another ....................................17
  State or regional level ...............................................................................................................17
  National level ..........................................................................................................................18
  Multiple countries ..................................................................................................................20
Research on activities/outcomes of work by FPGs .....................................................................21
  Food policy changes ..............................................................................................................21
  Meaningful inclusion of diverse community members ............................................................23
  Food strategies and plans .......................................................................................................24
  Economic development ..........................................................................................................25
  FPG engagement at the federal level .......................................................................................26
  Funding FPGs ..........................................................................................................................26
  Relationships with other institutions (e.g. cooperative extension, universities) .......................26
Research gaps ..................................................................................................................................27
  Research on individual FPGs .....................................................................................................27
  Research comparing multiple FPGs .........................................................................................27
  Research on the FPG movement and/or how FPGs connect with one another ....................28
Annotated bibliography of research on FPGs

Key

**research in progress/underway**

Open-access: no subscription required/available online for free
Research on individual FPGs

The following case studies have documented the creation, structure, actions, and evolution of individual FPGs. Case studies focusing on one specific policy initiative or activity of an individual FPG are listed under the “Research on activities/outcomes of work by FPGs” on page 21.

North America


Details the foundational history and present dynamics of Toronto Food Policy Council as an example of successful food planning and policy in motion. Notable contributions include: seminal food policy reports and processes; the celebration of local food communities and their champions; the on-going integration of rural and urban issues; shifting the discussion from food security to food sovereignty; and the launch of the Toronto Food Strategy.


This case study details the journey and evolution of the Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition, with particular attention paid to participants’ motivations for involvement and the process required to form the council.


Explores how an FPC in a rural community facilitates collaboration across sectors, what activities that members do to further their council’s mission, and what impacts such councils could have on their community’s food system and health.


Explores the dissolution of the Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council. Offers insight into how particular obstacles might have been avoided or overcome, along with recommendations for citizens and government agencies hoping to foster productive public engagement and to advance local food systems policy.

Explores the current state of development in Dayton’s local food system, including the floundering of the Montgomery County Food Policy Coalition. Discusses some of the struggles faced—including administrative and political barriers, lack of funding, unequal education about the benefits of healthy foods, and varying consumer preferences—in affecting positive change in the area’s food system.


Examines the challenges and opportunities experienced by the Iowa Food Policy Council from its beginning to its collapse. Demonstrates the significance of establishing a legacy of convening that may continue without a formal structure. Also explores why stakeholders become involved and, just as importantly, why they stay involved.


Looks at food policy councils and their potential to provide an accessible forum for the creation of food policy on local scales by soliciting input from stakeholders all across the food system, and to foster a sense of “food democracy.” Empirical evidence concentrates on Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council.


A series of briefs that discuss innovative food systems planning and policy work from urban and rural communities across the U.S., including the City of Lawrence and Douglas County, KA; Baltimore City, MD; Marquette County, MI; Minneapolis, MN; Region 5, Minnesota; Cabarrus County, NC; Cleveland, OH; Lancaster County, PA; Philadelphia, PA; Seattle, WA; City of Burlington and Chittenden County, VT. The work of food policy councils is included in some of the briefs but is not the central foci.


Contrasts different forms of representation observed in a collaborative governance arrangement and identifies factors contributing to observed patterns in representation therein. Empirical evidence concentrates on a regional food policy council in the Western United States.

Based upon the archives of Knoxville Food Policy Council. It focuses on the conditions that fostered the emergence of an official epidemiology framing obesity as a question of access to “healthy products.”


Analyzes specific case of food policy implementation by a municipal government, while also advancing research on how similar cross-cutting social and environmental issues are implemented by local governments elsewhere.


Drawing primarily from civic engagement and community organizing scholarship, this paper explores the Rhode Island Food Policy Council’s capacity to achieve food justice in light of its participatory, democratic potential.


Demonstrates that incremental, persistent food systems practice and advocacy by nonstate actors, a group called the “rustbelt radicals,” followed by their collective engagement with municipal planning, can lead to transformations in municipal policy and planning for strengthening food systems.


A series of case studies exploring how communities of opportunity—places with significant potential to strengthen ties between small and medium-sized farms and residents with limited food access—are overcoming barriers to strengthen their food systems through planning, policy, and partnerships. Written briefs are completed for Chautauqua County, NY and Wyandotte County, KA.

Highlights how one midsized city successfully developed a collaborative infrastructure to understand and address inequity in healthy food access. Traces the genesis and evolution of Baltimore’s Food Policy Task Force; the hiring of a food policy director; and the establishment of Baltimore Food Policy Initiative, an intergovernmental partnership to increase access to healthy, affordable foods in urban food deserts.


Investigates the political, cultural and historical contexts of Lane County, Oregon’s food system and assesses how food security is re-framed at the local level as community food security.


Results of a national planning survey are reported that, at first glance, show rural local governments not involved in food systems planning. A case of a food policy council in Cass County, Iowa, counteracts these findings and suggests a rethinking of rural local government’s role in food systems governance.

**Europe**


Documents the founding of Gödöllő Local Food Council in Hungary, discussing various specificities and challenges of new types of emerging urban civic food networks. Personal communication with author indicated that this council has since become inactive.


Discusses the actors and processes involved in the development of an integrated food governance system in Turin, Italy.

Draws on urban political ecology scholarship as a critical lens to analyze governance-beyond-the-state processes and associated post-political configurations. Documents the founding and evolution of the Bristol Food Policy Council in England as one of its case studies.


Highlights two case studies of innovative and multifunctional initiatives in Bristol, England, analyzing how grass-roots networks have attempted to influence food policy in the city.


Provides a case study of the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership in England, offering it as an example of how food policy councils offer a viable possibility to recover the local level in food policy.

**P: Walthall, B. (In progress). Stirring the pot: Civic actions for a more sustainable food system in contemporary Berlin.** [Summary](#).

Develops a conceptual framework for assessing the role and contribution of civil society actors in shaping more sustainable urban food systems. Theorizes the emergence of a food council (Ernährungsrat) in Berlin.

**Other and/or multiple continents**


Provides eight case studies on the governance of city food systems in Milan, Belo Horizonte, Vancouver, Edinburgh, Bristol, Bangkok, Jakarta and Singapore. A number of these cities employ stakeholder coalition/council models in their food governance schemes.

Collects a number of best practices from signatory cities of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact that have been successfully working on strategic goals, such as healthy nutrition for all and a careful management of resources in order to avoid food waste. Includes case studies of food policy councils in Ghent, Belgium and Toronto, Canada as well as food policy committees and similar groups in other countries.


Describes the 10-year evolution of a local intersectoral project, Penrith Food Project in Australia, aimed at improving components of a community’s food system as an approach to improving nutrition. Aspects of innovation and good contemporary practice in collaborating for health promotion are illustrated.
Research on evaluating the impacts of individual FPGs


This study describes the development, testing, and findings from the Food Policy Council Self-Assessment Tool (FPC-SAT). FPCs and those who work with them can use the assessment tool to determine strengths and areas for improvement related to FPCs’ internal function. Additionally, the assessment tool could also be used to measure change in internal council function before and after a capacity-building or technical assistance intervention.


This study tested a mechanism, the food Food Policy Council (FPC) Framework, to explain how councils function to influence their food system. The mechanism was adapted from a parsimonious community collaborative model empirically tested by Allen and colleagues (Allen, Javdani, Lehrner, & Walden, 2012). Using data collected from the Food Policy Council Self-Assessment Tool, the FPC Framework was tested using structural equation modeling. Results indicate that the FPC Framework can be used to explain FPC function and guide FPCs as they work toward their communities’ specific food system goals.


Using the case of the Franklin County Food Policy Council in Ohio, this chapter presents the local food policy audit as a coalition building process to be used by food policy councils that can take a civically-oriented group and transition them and their collaborators to an advocacy coalition. The audit, as a technical document, provides the basis of strategy development for policy change and is the “glue” that holds coalition efforts together.

**A: Clark, J. (In review). From civic group to advocacy coalition: How a food policy audit became the tool for change. Local Government Studies.

Uses the case of a local food policy council to illustrate how a coalition increased local governance capacity via translating their commonly held beliefs into a concrete policy agenda while building their coalition along the way. A policy audit was used as a tool to develop technical knowledge (and skills) to increase policy readiness.

Many tools exist to assess various aspects of local food systems, but few are able to provide such a comprehensive snapshot of gaps and opportunities as the Food Policy Audit.


This review of both academic and “grey” literature identifies the approaches currently used to assess sustainable food systems and urban spaces as well as the range of indicators used to measure the environmental, social and economic sustainability of urban food strategies.


Although a number of pioneer coalitions have been formed in North America, Europe, and Australia with the goal of improving community food security and promoting sustainable local food systems, there has been little systematic evaluation of these models. This qualitative study was conducted to identify factors that may hinder evaluation efforts.

**Evaluation tools for FPGs


This toolbox for action aims to 1) provide local authorities and policy makers with a clear, robust and comprehensive collation of relevant evidence and indicators of success of a place-based approach to food; and 2) help both existing and interested ‘practitioners’ to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate the impact of local cross-sector food partnerships.


Adapted from the Alliance for Justice’s Bolder Advocacy Toolkit, this toolkit helps food councils to evaluate their current performance and learn more about the process of working on food policy using a stakeholder model. It also provides recommendations for resources that can hasten progress in a particular area.
Research comparing multiple FPGs

The following articles compare the structures, issues, and activities of multiple FPGs.

**North America**


This guidebook is designed to support local efforts to promote community food security by helping others to understand the breadth of policies affecting local food systems, evaluate policy barriers and opportunities, develop innovative solutions, and identify useful resources.


Explores five county/city food policy councils (FPCs) in the U.S. through the lens of deliberative democracy. In particular, it examines the questions of representation, inclusivity, and diversity of FPCs.

**D:** Boden, S., and Hoover, B. (In progress). Food policy councils in the Mid-Atlantic: Working towards justice.

Researchers from Messiah College conducting a research project looking at three different food policy councils in the Mid-Atlantic region to understand the relationship between the structure of food policy councils and their emphasis on food justice.


Details food policy council basics and profiles some early food policy councils.


Reviews the history and performance of government-sanctioned food policy councils (FPCs) with a minimum three-year history of operation in North America. Cases examined include a range of FPCs—enduring, foundering and failed. Lessons around what has worked and what has not, as well as to unintended and unintended outcomes are explored.

Part of a speech titled “Local Food Councils: A New Tool for Community Health.” Compiles key elements that contribute to the success of food system councils: official sanction, staff, funding, external legitimacy, knowledge base, power-sharing, vision, and leadership.


Investigates the role of partnerships in food systems policy change through interviews with 12 purposefully selected food policy councils in the U.S. and 6 additional food policy experts.

**A:** Clark, J.K. (In review). Social equity and public participation design. *Public Administration Review.*

Using data drawn from eight county government food policy steering committees, this research finds that designers of public participation opportunities—who determine who participates, how and to what end—are not neutral parties. Their political efficacy and ability to be reflexive affect the strategies they adopt to engage community members. Recommendations are offered.

**P:** Dahlberg, K. (1994, June). Food Policy Councils: The experience of five cities and one county. In *Joint Meeting of the Agriculture Food and Human Values Society and the Association for the Study of Food and Society, Tucson, AZ.* [Open-access](#).

Analyzes the various factors that have influenced the successes or failures of food policy councils in five cities and one county, and provides a brief overall comparison of their effectiveness.

**R:** Hatfield, M.M. (2012). *City food policy and programs: Lessons harvested from an emerging field.* City of Portland, Oregon Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. [Open-access](#).

Few resources are available to local governments interested in developing a food policy program: best practices for organizing, funding, and supporting food systems work have been neither established nor publicized. Drawing on interviews with municipal food policy professionals, this report identifies common challenges for municipal food programs as well as avenues for addressing them.

Utilizing organizational theory and literature dealing with evaluation of collaborative, inter-agency organizations, this dissertation studies the organizational role of food policy councils, and proposes methods for effective structure and operation.


Analyzes the role of 13 food policy councils in the U.S. and Canada in relation to government, policy change, facilitation, networking, and education. It also explores the tension between policy and programmatic work.


Analyzes survey responses of 56 food policy council (FPC) leaders to learn how FPCs engage in policy processes, the scope of their activities, and the impacts of their work.


Highlights a range of state and multi-state food system initiatives across the country and explores six cross-cutting themes. Key strategies, indicators and lessons learned are shared for each initiative.


Explores how policies structure the stakeholder composition and goals of food policy councils (FPCs) and how FPCs’ stakeholder composition facilitates and/or impedes their performance.


Looks at how local governments and community groups in Baltimore, Louisville, Memphis, Minneapolis and Oakland are working to make affordable, healthy food available to more people and empower them to build better food systems.
Europe


Assesses how institutional norms, values and practices affect the capacity of food policy groups in England to pursue their aims. Case studies explored in depth include the London Food Programme; the Islington Food Strategy; the Bristol Food Policy Council; Manchester Food Futures; and the County Durham Sustainable Local Food Strategy.


The case for creating a food policy council in the UK is reviewed, as are possible organizational options, functions and remit.


Collects visions and goals from urban food strategies (UFS) across Europe, and shows how they are translated into practices, instruments and actions. Compiles measures and highlights some good practices from cities that are already implementing their UFS in order to inspire other cities.


Reflects on how municipalities can support food systems change and food sovereignty through the creation of new spaces for deliberation and participation. Includes specific examples of the Bristol Food Policy Council and Brighton & Hove Food Partnership.

This chapter draws attention to the value of building new alliances between local authorities and the public in the United Kingdom while also pointing out the challenges to developing a truly inclusive food system. It mobilizes political ecology approaches, the post-political scholarship and participative justice debates to examine key tensions arising in these food policy alliances to achieve food sovereignty.


Guide to food policy councils in Spanish.
Research on FPG movement and/or how FPGs connect with one another

**State or regional level**

**Clark, J. et al. (In progress). Ohio Food Policy Network: Mapping the vision for the future of Ohio’s food system.** [Website](#).

A broad project aimed to create a shared agenda for Ohio’s food system while establishing a resilient network. Seeks to 1) evaluate existing network relationships via a network analysis; 2) identify and map shared areas of research and practice illustrating linkages; 3) facilitate a robust dialogue around the shared values to reinforce linkages; and 4) provide a platform for collective action and roadmap to identify opportunities to leverage additional resources.


Explores opportunities and challenges faced by 13 statewide and two multi-state food networks in order to foster and grow the emerging statewide network of local food networks/councils in Minnesota.


Highlights feedback from a convention aimed to support, connect, and build capacity of food networks to contribute to the implementation of the Minnesota Food Charter. An example of how different scales of food policy groups are interacting with each other in one state.

**Palmer, A. (In progress). Social network analysis of Chesapeake region network of food policy leaders.**

Conducting longitudinal assessment of how the Chesapeake Food Policy Leadership Institute has helped to build a network of leaders of local food policy groups in the Chesapeake (MD, PA, DC, VA, DE) region, and the effects or potential effects of those relationships.


Examines the potential for developing a statewide network of local food policy councils and similar groups in Michigan. Also demonstrates ways a local food council network and participating councils can advance Michigan Good Food Charter goals without duplicating the efforts of other local food networks.
**Schroeder, A. (In progress). Coordination and collaboration between groups and programs working toward building healthy food systems in Wisconsin: Interviews among key informants.**

Master’s capstone research on key informants working on creating/promoting a healthy food system in Wisconsin. Seeking to identify the work being done, understand the perceived need for collaboration/coordination, and identify strategies to improve collaboration/communication.

**National level**


The variety of topics that FPCs address makes it challenging to describe the impacts FPCs have on their communities. This article is based on content analysis of a survey conducted with 66 FPCs from across North America. Six broad domains of impacts emerged: increasing access to healthy foods, increasing knowledge of or demand for healthy foods, promoting equity in the food system, supporting economic development, promoting environmental sustainability, and supporting a resilient food system.


Reviews the existing literature on local food systems, examining a variety of strategies and initiatives including early food policy councils.


Using annual survey data of food policy councils (FPCs) over the past four years, provides a theoretical framework for understanding the institutional forces that impact the formation and evolution of FPCs.

**R:** MacRae, R. and Donahue, K. (2013). *Municipal Food Policy Entrepreneurs: A Preliminary Analysis of How Canadian Cities and Regional Districts are Involved in Food System Change.* Toronto, CA: Toronto Food Policy Council, Vancouver Food Policy Council, CAPI. [Open-access](#).

Analyzes the results of a cross-Canada survey that found 64 local and regional municipalities working to improve the food system through a mix of municipal policies, programs and civil-society interventions. Describes six forms of food policy group organization, and includes brief highlights from food policy groups in Central Okanagan, Edmonton, Hamilton, Kaslo, Ottawa, Toronto, and Vancouver.

Explores the diffusion of the food policy council movement in North America, considers its variable linkages between state and civil society, and examines the substantive practices and framings in which the movement has been engaged.


Provides insights into local transition pathways in the European food and nutrition security (FNS) landscape by exploring practices that aim to build self-reliance and alleviate FNS vulnerabilities. Includes case study analysis of the Sustainable Food Cities Network, which connects food partnerships throughout the UK with the goal of scaling urban food strategies up and out in a national context.


Describes the extent to which local, regional, and metropolitan (LRM) governments are planning for stronger community food systems. Although a growing number of LRM are engaged in food work, planning for food systems remains far from mainstream planning practice.


Explores how the unraveling of the federal food/agricultural policy regime, exemplified by the last Farm Bill debacle, has created space for local and regional alternative food governance innovations such as food policy councils.

Summarizes the results of the 2016 Food Policy Council (FPC) survey, conducted annually since 2013 on trends among FPCs across the U.S. and Canada. The report also highlights innovative features of the All Things Food Community Food Network in Canada, Bloomington FPC, Del Norte County and Adjacent Tribal Lands Community Food Council, Florida FPC, Lehigh Valley FPC, and Rhode Island FPC.

**Multiple countries**


Compares the US and UK’s *national* food movements and the policy frameworks they have advanced in relation to local, sustainable food from 1976 (US) or 1991 (UK) to 2013. Provides context on evolution of federal food and farm policies, programs, and advocacy priorities—including key funding sources for FPGs in both countries—but does not specifically describe FPGs.


Explores the rise of the municipal food movement as one of the fastest growing social movements in the Global North. Argues that their multi-scalar and multi-functional perspective helps prevent municipal food movements from becoming inadvertent agents of green parochialism by highlighting the need to be globally engaged as well as locally embedded.


Little research has explored how local FPGs are (horizontally) connecting to each other to share knowledge, practices, and resources, nor how they are interacting (vertically) with other scales of food governance. This thesis explores the emerging phenomenon of trans-local networks of FPGs through analyzing the Sustainable Food Cities Network in the UK and Food Policy Networks project in the US.
Research on activities/outcomes of work by FPGs

This literature focuses on specific planning activities of, or policy outcomes achieved by, the work of FPGs (at least in part). While a much broader and expanding literature exists on the rise of local and regional food system planning and governance, the resources documented below were highlighted because they incorporate research on FPGs in some way.

Food policy changes

**R:** Broad Leib, E. (2012). Good laws, good food: Putting local food policy to work for our communities. Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic. [Open-access](#).

**R:** Broad Leib, E. (2012). Good laws, good food: Putting state food policy to work for our communities. Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic. [Open-access](#).

These guides provide a starting place for food policy councils to understand the basic legal concepts surrounding local and state food systems, develop a base of knowledge about the main policy areas, and discover examples and innovations from other cities and states.


Describes and traces the emergence of the agrifood system policy agenda in the U.S. Includes a brief overview of governance innovations at the local and state level driven by food policy councils, networks and coalitions.


Describes state legislation in all 50 states enacted between 2012 and 2014 that aimed to strengthen various components of local food systems. Focuses on six policy areas with the most state legislative action: local food system approaches; farm to school; farmers’ markets; community gardens and urban agriculture; healthy grocery retail; and food policy councils.


Summarizes the results of the first comprehensive national study conducted of local governments’ food-related activities. Demonstrates that local governments are using a diverse range of federal programs to fund food system development, although usage varies among agencies and programs.

Summarizes the results of a comprehensive national study conducted in 2015 of local governments’ food-related activities. Affirms that local food systems provide fertile ground for local government innovation, regardless of community size, geography, or other community characteristics. Local government support for food systems can catalyze and complement actions of community partners.


Details the potential for state and local policies to advance progressive agricultural/food system reform.


Details basic background on FPCs, their functions, potential for success and challenges. Includes examples of organizational structure models, notable successes, and common challenges from a number of FPCs throughout the U.S.


Provides an overview of the activities and impacts of Community Food Projects which received funding from the Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program, including food policy councils and networks.


Documents the efforts of the Oakland Food Policy Council to develop recommendations for urban agriculture (UA) zoning in Oakland, California, as a means of fostering UA’s expansion.

Encourages public health professionals to create unlikely alliances and get involved in policy development outside of their normal expertise such as by joining or supporting the development of food policy councils.


Discusses how community-led interest in urban agriculture, driven in part by food policy council activism, laid the groundwork for city government policy reform in Buffalo, NY and Madison, WI.


Offers practical tools to create and sustain effective food policy councils. Includes numerous examples of specific food policy and programmatic achievements by FPCs throughout the U.S.

**Meaningful inclusion of diverse community members**

**D:** Gazillo, C. (In progress). Passing an urban agricultural zoning ordinance in Bridgeport, CT: A Case Study (Master’s capstone, School for International Training Graduate Institute).

Exploring how the Bridgeport Food Policy Council can address issues of racial and class inequality in the design and implementation of a new zoning ordinance that will regulate and protect urban agriculture within the city.


Provides a background on social equity considerations for public participation and civic engagement as part of local governments and food policy coalition efforts. Using findings from a series of workshops conducted in eight communities across the country by the Growing Food Connections project, recommends steps for how coalitions can create social equity.

Explores how community residents who are most impacted by social inequities or who are most at risk for food insecurity are involved in food policy council (FPC) activities. Examples drawn from interviews with a variety of FPCs shed light on current efforts of inclusion and inspire suggestions for improvement.


Involving those most impacted by our broken food system in meaningful and educational dialogue is essential to creating a more fortified community. This report offers strategies to increase engagement with community members in food policy decisions.


Food policy councils (FPCs) that do not also make social justice central to their mission risk reproducing the same race and class inequalities in their advocacy and policy outcomes. This paper argues that in order to accomplish goals of ecological sustainability, food sustainability, and community food access, FPCs should adopt the principles of the environmental justice and food justice movements.

**Food strategies and plans**


Results of a multiphase research study to identify and evaluate the development, adoption and implementation of food related goals and policies of local comprehensive plans, including sustainability plans, across the U.S. Assesses their impact on local policies, regulations, and standards for the purpose of reducing food access disparities and improving community-based food systems.

Analyzes British and North American urban food strategy narratives, considering what these narratives tell us about the potential of sustainable food systems, the social movements that propel them, and the “deliberative spaces” (e.g., food councils) they create, to offer a powerful new pathway to urban sustainability.


Synthesizes recent best practices of local government policy and planning designed to strengthen community food systems.


Examines existing or potential city institutions that could offer a more comprehensive look at the urban food system, include city departments of food, food policy councils, and city-planning departments.


This documentary analysis of 15 urban food strategies from Canada, the USA and the UK explores the motivations behind cities’ perceived need to rescale food governance; the key concepts and ideas deployed to construct the underlying narrative of the strategies; and the role attributed to re-localisation in relation to food security and sustainability concerns.

**Economic development**


There have been calls to ‘scale-up’ local food production to regionally distribute food and to sell into more mainstream grocery and retail venues. This research highlights the role a state-wide food policy council can have in facilitating market development and their unique position to provide public sector and institutional support to facilitate meaningful connections in the food system.
**FPG engagement at the federal level**

**R:** Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future (2015). *Stories from the field: The role of local and state food policy councils in federal policy making and implementation.* Baltimore, MD. [Open-access](#).

Highlights the ways, using examples from throughout the U.S., in which local and state food policy councils can increase their understanding of the larger federal policy making process, bring local issues to the attention of Congress and federal agencies, increase the flow of federal resources to local communities, and educate and mobilize local communities about how federal policies and regulations affect them.

**Funding FPGs**

**R:** Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future (2015). *Funding food policy councils: Stories from the field.* Baltimore, MD. [Open-access](#). [Associated webinar](#).

Obtaining adequate and consistent funding remains a continuous challenge for food policy councils (FPCs). Since FPCs exist at a variety of jurisdictional levels, and with a variety of organizational structures and priorities, there is no single model for successfully funding an FPC. This report describes the stories of how six city, county, and state FPCs across the U.S. have funded their efforts over their years of existence.

**Relationships with other institutions (e.g. cooperative extension, universities)**


Extension professionals can serve as “change agents,” bring a wealth of experience and knowledge, form cross-sectoral collaborations, take leadership roles, and build community capacity through food policy councils. Based on expert interviews and experiences in establishing a council, the authors present practice recommendations to serve as a concise how to guide for Extension professionals.

**Kluson, R. (UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County)(In progress).** Conducting survey of FPGs involved with Local Cooperative Extension and/or Farm Bureau.
Research gaps

**Research on individual FPGs**

- More case studies of FPGs that have dissolved or failed to successfully organize around issues
- More in-depth investigations of contentious dynamics within groups (e.g. restaurants vs. labor unions, conventional vs. sustainable or small farmers, hunger alleviation vs. food access)
- Internal evaluations of FPG operations/projects
- Impact assessments of FPG activities on health, environmental, economic development, and/or social justice indicators
- Explorative studies of how FPGs have worked across political boundaries and/or scales
- Research on connections and/or comparative analyses with other social justice movements (e.g., climate justice, Black Lives Matter, anti-fracking, pipeline opposition, etc.)
- More research/guidance on how FPGs determine how to prioritize local vs. state vs. federal advocacy
- Research on how an FPG applies systems thinking to its work (e.g., employs knowledge of what's happening beyond local scale for its issues; incorporates systems tools into strategic and project planning as well as communications with politicians, media, and public)

**Research comparing multiple FPGs**

- Deeper analysis of funding sources and implications for the scope of work that FPGs pursue and the relative attention they devote to different issue areas
- Studies assessing how FPGs employ/embody theories of change
- Research on how FPGs are utilizing available educational resources (e.g., community colleges, universities, etc.)
- Comparative evaluations of internal FPG operations/projects
- Comparative impact assessments of FPG activities on health, environmental, economic development, and/or social justice indicators
- Comparative research on the how an FPG’s origin of establishment (e.g., founded by civic initiative, local government, or research institute) or organizational structure influence its policy and programmatic priorities, content, impact, or transformative quality
**Research on the FPG movement and/or how FPGs connect with one another**

- More research on how state and regional networks of FPGs operate and how local groups engage with them
- Further investigation into how national movement of FPGs is (or could be) influencing national and international level policy realm
- Assessment of how FPGs interact with international initiatives (e.g. Milan Food Policy Pact, C40 Food Systems Network)