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FOOD POLICY FOR A HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE, AND EQUITABLE LOCAL FOOD  
SYSTEM: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MISSOULA

By

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Professional Paper

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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## Abstract

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Environmental Studies

Food Policy for a Healthy, Sustainable, and Equitable Local Food System: Recommendations for Missoula

Chairperson: Neva Hassanein

Over the last several decades, food policy councils (FPCs) have led the effort to place food on local government policy agendas. While FPCs continue to make progress in supporting local food systems, they also face institutional and organizational challenges. In recent years, a handful of cities and counties have endeavored to further food system reform with the establishment of full-time food policy staff positions. Currently, there are 19 confirmed food policy positions housed in local governments across the U.S. While there is considerable literature on FPCs, little research has been published regarding governmental food policy staff positions. This study uses a review of existing scholarship about FPCs and original in-depth interviews with eleven governmental food policy coordinators to inform recommendations for one specific community: Missoula, MT. The Missoula community has a vibrant local food economy and has long been a leader in food system reform. In early 2020, the Missoula City Council and Board of County Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution to create the Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board. As the Board begins the vital work of coordinating the local food system, strengthening existing and developing new programs, and providing innovative policy recommendations, it has the opportunity to learn from and apply the experiences of communities across the U.S. engaged in food policy work. This report serves as a resource to the Board and offers unique recommendations for food systems stakeholders for advancing food policy on behalf of a healthy, sustainable, and equitable local food system.

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## **Executive Summary**

Local governments have a profound opportunity to realize food democracy and reform food systems on behalf of the communities that they serve through local food policy. Since the 1980's, a growing number of communities across the United States have been strategically addressing food system gaps and promoting community well-being through food policy groups and governmental food policy professionals. In the interest of elevating the local food system, Missoula City Council and Board of County Commissioners recently passed a resolution to create the Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board. As the Board begins its work, it has the potential to draw upon the rich knowledge and experiences of the many other communities engaged in food policy work. This study provides unique recommendations for Missoula for building a healthy, sustainable, and equitable local food system based on a review of existing scholarship and key policy documents and interviews with eleven governmental food policy coordinators.

### **Key Findings**

#### ***Food Policy Councils***

Food Policy Councils (FPCs) are a popular model for advancing local food policy. As of 2018, there are 339 active councils across the U.S. and Canada. While each council is unique to its community in terms of organizational structure, geographic focus, and policy priorities, a robust body of scholarship has identified several common trends among FPCs.

#### **Organization and Focus**

- 71% of FPCs operate at a local level (either city or county)
- The vast majority of councils are non-profits or grassroots coalitions
- Regardless of structure, 79% include government staff in some capacity
- The most common policy priorities among councils are healthy food access, economic development, and anti-hunger
- 68% operate on an annual budget of \$10,000 or less

#### **Keys to Success**

- Diverse membership that is representative of the community and local food system
- Strong and dynamic leadership
- Strong relationships with government, community leaders, organizations, and among membership
- Staff support
- Clear goals and expectations
- Community engagement

#### **Challenges**

- Lack of funding
- Lack of capacity—most rely primarily on volunteer membership
- Lack of training and policymaking expertise
- Changing political climate and leadership support



### ***Missoula's Food System***

Agriculture is a vital economic and cultural industry in Missoula. Furthermore, the Missoula community values local food for its contribution to sustainability, resilience, and public health. Over the last few decades, several non-profit organizations and University of Montana faculty and students have made important contributions to both understanding and strengthening the local food system. Additionally, in recent years, several key City and County policy documents have established important food- and agriculture-related goals. Together, these resources contribute to a strong food policy foundation for the new Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board to operate from.

#### **Missoula's Food Economy**

- As of 2017, Missoula has 576 total farms and 989 total producers
- A total of 260,117 acres are in farmland and the average farm size is 452 acres
- Total market value of agricultural products in the County was over \$9.8 million in 2017
- Direct to consumer sales are gradually increasing; between 2012 and 2017, the rate of increase was 12%
- Western Montana Growers Cooperative, a marketing cooperative of local growers, was established in 2003 and now grosses over \$3 million annually
- Missoula has three thriving farmers markets

#### **Strengthening the Local Food System**

In 2003, Missoula was one of 15 U.S. communities to conduct a comprehensive community food assessment; findings from the assessment were published in two reports and a resource guide in 2004. The reports identified food insecurity, lack of healthy food access, and the loss of viable farmland as prominent food-related issues in the County. Two subsequent reports—*Food Insecurity in Missoula County* (2007) and *Losing Ground* (2010)—further explored the issues of food insecurity and loss of farmland. Non-profits such as The Poverello Center, Missoula Food Bank and Community Center, Garden City Harvest, and Community Food and Agriculture Coalition continue to strengthen the local food system through education, emergency food services, and hands-on programs.

#### **Food Policy Foundation**

- *Climate Ready Missoula* (2020), the city-county climate resiliency draft plan, includes 5 food-related goals and 11 objectives
- *Zero by Fifty* (2018) and the city-county *Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan* (2017) also include food- or agriculture-related mitigation strategies
- *Missoula County Growth Policy* (2016) includes 5 food-related goals, 7 objectives, and 10 actions
- *Our Missoula: City Growth Policy* (2015) includes 8 food-related goals, 16 objectives, and 6 actions

### ***Food Policy Coordinators***

In recent years, a handful of cities and counties have developed food policy coordinator positions within local government in order to bolster the work of existing food policy groups and

coordinate government and community programs and policies under a holistic food system vision. Currently, there are nineteen confirmed positions in existence across the U.S. In an effort to better understand the context and outcomes of coordinator positions, in-depth interviews were conducted with eleven individuals in municipal or county food policy coordinator positions. Comparisons among participant responses revealed several commonalities in regards to the purpose and responsibilities of the positions as well as the perceived benefits, challenges, and lessons of the participants.

### **Organization**

- Positions are housed in a variety of departments or offices such as: Sustainability, Public Health, Mayor's Office, Economic Development and Planning, and County Extension
- Top policy priorities include: economic development, healthy food access, food waste reduction and recovery, and food procurement
- The primary responsibilities of coordinators fall into the following categories:
  - Communication, coordination, and public relations;
  - Policy development and implementation;
  - Project development, support, and management;
  - Food systems analysis.
- 10 out of the 11 positions are tasked with staffing the local food policy council or board

### **Benefits of the Position**

- Provides food systems point-person for community and government departments
- Bridges gaps and coordinates food-related programs according to a common vision
- Establishes a leader for food policy and food systems work; someone is thinking about the food system every day
- Builds capacity for community organizations and food policy council to gather resources and implement programs
- Applies holistic and systems-level problem solving to government programs

### **Challenges**

- Lack of funding for operations
- Limited capacity— most positions operate as sole government staff person working on food system
- Limited authority of position—can't act unilaterally
- Development of appropriately holistic and effective solutions
- Political nature of the work; dynamic leadership and political willpower

### **Lessons Learned**

- Food systems work takes time
- Food solutions are not one-size-fits-all; models need to be tailored to each specific community
- Relationship- and coalition-building are key to getting things done
- It's good to pursue multiple options at once
- Community and leadership buy-in are instrumental to position's success
- Having a strategic plan is valuable for determining priorities and goals

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are offered to the future Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board, Missoula City and County officials, and food system stakeholders for realizing Missoula's food-related goals and engendering a healthy, sustainable, and equitable local food system.

### ***Recommendation 1: Develop a Strategic Work Plan for the Food Policy Advisory Board***

To ensure that their work is meaningful, relevant, and strategic, the Board should create a work plan to direct their work. The plan should establish short-, medium-, and long-term strategies and include the following elements:

1. Gap Analysis and Asset Assessment
2. Policy Priorities, Goals, and Objectives
3. Action Plan

### ***Recommendation 2: Establish working groups***

The Food Policy Advisory Board should also establish working groups according to the priorities identified in their work plan. Members of the community should be encouraged to participate in working groups, thus, strengthening the seven-member Board's capacity.

### ***Recommendation 3: Develop Training Opportunities for Food Policy Advisory Board Membership***

In order to strengthen Advisory Board policy and program recommendations, Missoula City and County should work to provide training opportunities for Board membership, in addition to the general training provided to Boards, Councils, and Commissions. Trainings will also serve to support capacity-building and member recruitment and retention.

### ***Recommendation 4: Develop the Missoula County Food Action Plan***

In order to create a community-based vision for Missoula's food system and direct all future food-related programs and policy, Missoula City and County should develop a Food Action Plan. The plan should include:

1. Overview of Missoula's Food System
2. Community-generated Vision and Goals
3. Action and Implementation Plan

### ***Recommendation 5: Establish a Full-time Governmental Food Policy Staff Position***

Missoula City and County should establish a full-time food policy staff position to both support the Food Policy Advisory Board and coordinate food system programs and policy across the community and government departments. A staff position could take several different forms, for example:

- A. Food Systems Analyst/Planner within Missoula Community and Planning Service Department.
- B. Food Systems Coordinator within Missoula Community and Planning Service or Missoula City-County Health Department

## **Chapter One: A History of Local Food Policy**

### **Introduction**

Food is not only an essential human need, but it is also inextricably tied to public and environmental health, economic development, social justice, and community resilience. As a result, the ways in which food is produced, distributed, consumed, and disposed of have profound implications for the health and wellbeing of communities today and in the future. Yet, despite its fundamental role in all our lives, and unlike other essential needs, food has historically been absent from local government policy agendas in North America and relegated to the state and federal policy level (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000; Hatfield, 2012). This top-down approach to food policy continues to prop up a food system defined by industrialized practices, dominated by corporate power, and managed on a global scale. Local and regional policy action provide a vital opportunity to advance social change where federal policies may be lacking, particularly in the context of dynamic and ever-changing political climates (Reece, 2018). Furthermore, “rethinking food policy presents a major opportunity to improve nutrition and health, protect the planet and contribute to economic and social prosperity, equitably” (Hawkes & Parsons, 2019, p.2)

Recognizing both a need and desire for local participation in decision making regarding the food systems which so intimately impact their constituencies, communities across the U.S. and Canada began giving food and agriculture much needed institutional attention in the 1980’s, through food policy groups (Santo et al., 2014). Since then, the number of communities engaged in local food policy has steadily grown, and new models for local food system governance have emerged. This study seeks to describe viable models for local food policy and food systems planning with the purpose of informing and inspiring the Missoula, MT community, in particular, as well as scholars and practitioners, in general.

### ***Food Policy Councils***

In one of the first scholarly articles published regarding the paucity of local food policy, Pothukuchi and Kaufman (1999) outlined three primary ways in which local governments could address food systems in a holistic manner: (1) food policy councils, (2) a municipal department of food, or (3) a partnership with the municipal planning agency. Food policy councils (FPCs) are loosely defined as multi-stakeholder groups that discuss food-related issues in their community, create innovative solutions, and bolster food policy and planning initiatives (Halliday et al., 2019). Furthermore, FPCs seek to develop a holistic framework for addressing food systems, whereas communities without a food policy entity, typically tackle food-related issues through isolated departments and organizations (Calancie et al., 2017). The first FPC was established in 1982 in Knoxville, TN, and over the last several decades, the number of food policy councils across the U.S. and Canada has soared to 339 in 2018 (Bassarab et al., 2019<sub>a</sub>). All but three states—Arkansas, South Dakota, and Wyoming—had established at least one food policy council.

### ***Food Policy Coordinators***

Though FPCs continue to be the leading model for local food policy work, what was true in 1999 remains true today: “while food policy councils are exceptional in their efforts to put food on the community agenda, they are often project-oriented, resource poor, dependent on charismatic personalities for visibility, and vulnerable to political winds” (Pothukuchi & Kaufman 1999, p. 220). In an effort to expand upon the work of FPCs, and perhaps on the path to creating municipal departments of food, a handful of U.S. cities and counties have endeavored to create professional food policy positions within their local governments. According to Karen Bassarab of Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, there are at least 19 active municipal and

county food policy positions across the U.S. (Personal Communication, January 28, 2020).

While each of these municipalities or counties has established the position in a manner unique to their government, these positions serve to bolster the work of FPCs and other local food policy groups while coordinating local food policy programs and policies under a strategic community food system vision (Hatfield, 2012).

### ***Missoula, Montana***

Over the last several decades, the Missoula community has established itself as a leader in local food system reform, giving way to a burgeoning local food economy. As the City and County of Missoula plan for the community's future and work toward achieving commitments to climate resilience, sustainability, affordability, and livability, a vital opportunity exists to expand upon this leadership through holistic food policy initiatives. Governmental support is an instrumental step in advancing a vibrant local food system that nourishes all Missoulians.

In 2019, the City of Austin's first Food Policy Manager, Edwin Marty, visited Missoula and presented to a group of elected officials and stakeholders interested in food policy. His visit helped to highlight Missoula's food system successes and areas for improvement, and ultimately, planted a seed that would later sprout into an ad hoc food policy working group, comprised of a diversity of stakeholders representing Missoula government, non-profits, researchers, and businesses. After several months of meetings, and seeing both a need and opportunity for institutional support, the working group drafted a joint city-county resolution to establish the Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board. In February 2020, this resolution was passed unanimously by both the Missoula City Council and Board of County Commissioners. Now in the beginning stages of its establishment, the Board stands to benefit from the knowledge and experience of other U.S. communities engaged in local food policy and food systems reform.

The ultimate goal of this report is to learn from other communities across the U.S. engaged in local food policy in order to provide Missoula City and County government with useful insights and recommendations for local food policy initiatives. This chapter summarizes key findings from existing scholarship regarding food policy councils and governmental food policy coordinators and briefly describes the context for food system and policy work in Missoula.

### **Learning from Food Policy Councils**

In stark contrast to federal policies that largely support the corporate globalism status quo, food policy councils are founded on community engagement and concerns for public health and sustainability (Bassarab et al., 2019<sub>b</sub>). Expectedly, FPCs are unique to their locality and vary widely in terms of their structure, programs, and policy initiatives. Yet, while FPCs are “heterogeneous in structure, membership, and issue priorities, they share a collective desire to reform food system programs and policies” (Palmer & Santo 2020, p.160). Responding to a need for a systems-wide approach to local food policy, food policy councils tackle a broad scope of food- and agriculture-related issues and opportunities (see Figure 1 for a definition of food policy).

Policies championed by FPCs across the country range from progressive urban agriculture ordinances, to farm-to-school programs, to sustainable agriculture programs on public lands, to zoning and land tenure policies, and beyond (Purifoy, 2014). Some recent examples of FPC accomplishments highlighted by the Center for a Livable Future’s Food Policy Networks include: Douglas County Food Policy Council in Kansas hosted a statewide forum on food systems investment and community wealth creation; Blaine County Food Policy Council in Idaho secured a \$65,000 grant with Idaho Department of Health to implement a pilot Farm to

Early Childhood Education program; and Montgomery County Food Policy Council in Maryland led the effort to create and implement the first year of the County's Food Security Plan (Bassarab et al., 2019<sub>a</sub>). The most common policy priority among FPCs is healthy food access, followed by economic development, and anti-hunger (Bassarab et al., 2019<sub>a</sub>). In recent years, food waste reduction and recovery have also emerged as priorities. While there are some commonalities in the types of policies that councils pursue, ultimately, "the strength of food policy councils lies in their ability to be locally relevant" (Harper et al. 2009, p.6). As a result, the work of each FPC is distinct.

Originally, FPC's were intended to have a basis within local government, but over time, many developed an organizational structure unique to their community and the resources available to them (Schiff, 2008). As a result, three main organizational structures for FPCs have emerged: governmental, independent (non-profits or grassroots coalitions), or a hybrid of the two (Coplen & Cuneo, 2015). In 2013, Johns Hopkins University's Center for a Livable Future began conducting comprehensive annual surveys of FPCs across North America (Bassarab et al., 2019<sub>a</sub>). The information gleaned from surveys is used to update the Food Policy Networks's online directory with the mission to share resources, build capacity, and connect interested stakeholders in support of advancing healthy, sustainable, and equitable food systems. According to the 2018 survey results, 26% of FPCs in North America are embedded within local government, 47% are either a non-profit or housed in a parent non-profit, and 20% are grassroots coalitions, as illustrated in Figure 2a. Yet, whether they are embedded in government or not,



79% of U.S. FPCs include government staff in their membership (Palmer & Santo, 2020). The vast majority of FPCs also operate at a local level as shown in Figure 2b (Bassarab et al., 2019<sub>a</sub>).

### **Figure 1: A Note on “Food Policy”**

In the context of complex food systems, the term “food policy” is used to refer to a myriad of policies; ranging from agricultural subsidies to food access programs to subdivision regulations to maternal healthcare. While food policy has not been a term used with the same ubiquity as economic, healthcare, or foreign policy have, the nature of our food system is undeniably determined by policy frameworks. Food policy encompasses policies that influence everything from:

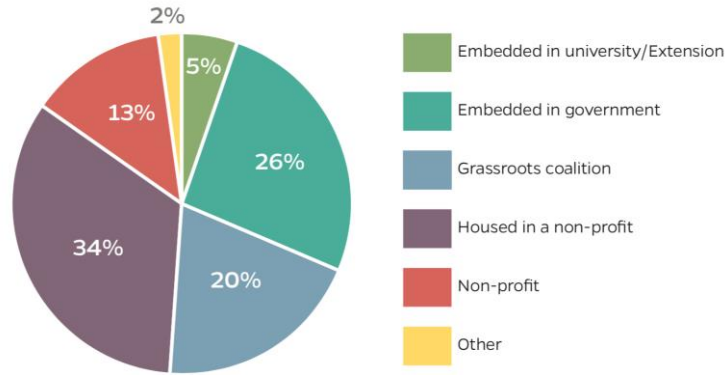
How food is produced and grown, to how it is processed, distributed and consumed; from the structures that shape food supply, to those that determine health and environment; from the sciences and processes that unlock food’s potential, to the formal governance and lobbies that seek to control it from the impact the food system’s dynamics have on society, to the way its demands are factored into policy-making itself. (Lang et al., 2009, p. 21)

Given the vast and interdisciplinary dimensions of food, there is no one-size-fits-all definition, rather, food policy is defined uniquely by the locality it impacts. For the purposes of my paper, I use food policy as a comprehensive term of the above dimensions.

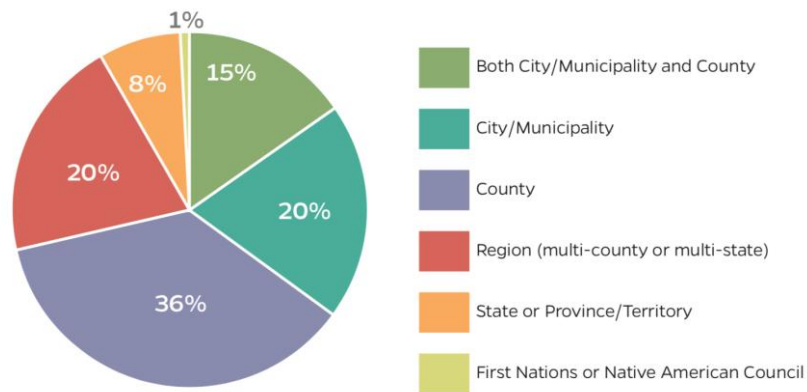
Several early studies of FPCs suggest that they are most successful when established as government entities, as this provides them with the legitimacy and ability to directly influence policy (Schiff, 2008). Similarly, Dahlberg (1994) explains that the more institutionalized a FPC is, the more effective it is, particularly in regards to having a budget, staff, planning authority, and strong relationships with government. Recent research echoes the significance that a strong relationship with government plays in a FPC’s ability to affect policy, not only because this lends legitimacy to the council, but also because government staff and policymakers can provide insight into the policymaking process and valuable feedback on policy recommendations (Gupta et al., 2018; Bassarab et al., 2019<sub>a</sub>). As is expected, FPCs embedded in government report having

stronger ties and relationships with government, as shown in Table 1. Organizational structure, however, is not necessarily a determinant of an FPC’s relationship with government or its policy priorities (Bassarab et al., 2019<sub>b</sub>).

a. Organizational Structure of FPCs (n=277)



b. Geographic Focus of FPCs (n=278)



Figures 2a-b: (a) organizational structure and (b) geographic focus of North American food policy councils (Bassarab et al., 2019<sub>a</sub>)

The Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council in Oregon was convened in 2002 by the local government; yet, to the surprise of its membership, it was dissolved in 2012 because government staff and elected officials felt it no longer served a relevant purpose (Coplen & Cuneo, 2015). Members of the PMFPC attributed the decision to poor communication and a lack

of access to elected officials despite their direct connection to government, which ultimately resulted in an ineffective council. FPCs located outside of government, on the other hand, have the benefit of structural autonomy and may have more opportunities to build diverse partnerships without the constraint of government agendas (Gupta et al., 2018). Sacramento County’s FPC, a non-governmental community collaborative, boasts a long list of policy-related achievements and has a membership that includes representatives from “the county Nutrition Education Obesity Prevention Program, the California Department of Conservation, the Metropolitan Air Quality Management District, several school districts, and the offices of a local city council member and state senator” (Gupta et al. 2018, p.20). Regardless of their organizational structure, FPCs are most successful when they strike a balance between finding governmental legitimacy and maintaining autonomy (Schiff, 2008; Reece, 2018). Establishing and sustaining flexible working relationships with government is therefore vital and requires a clear understanding of expectations, open two-way communication, and shared goals.

Relationships to Government of FPCs based on Organizational Structure		
	<b>Embedded in government</b>	<b>Other structures</b>
Members appointed by government	58%	≤ 6%
Created by legislation	43%	≤ 17%
Received support from the government	61%	34-40%
Offered advice to government	54%	13-39%

Table 1: Relationship to government of FPCs in relation to organizational structure. Other structures include grassroots coalition, non-profit, housed in non-profit, and embedded in university/extension (Bassarab et al., 2019a)

Relationships are often at the heart of what FPCs do. In addition to fostering good rapport with government staff and elected officials, Palmer and Santo (2020) found that the most

effective FPCs are those that dedicate time to building relationships among their membership and creating a space for democratic decision-making. Members of the Adams County Food Policy Council in Pennsylvania credited the council's spirit of resource sharing and egalitarianism for their success in bolstering key food-related programs in their rural county. Perhaps unsurprisingly, membership plays an integral role in determining a FPC's policy priorities.

Most FPCs strive for a diverse membership that is representative of both the community and the many aspects of the food system. Strong relationships within the council, coupled with a highly diverse membership, allow members to learn from varied perspectives and incorporate them into innovative and effective policy recommendations. (Bassarab et al., 2019<sub>a</sub>; Bassarab et al., 2019<sub>b</sub>). Results from self-assessments of 94 FPCs found that higher racial diversity of membership was linked to a greater ability to affect change in public policy (Calancie et al., 2017). Similarly, Feenstra (1997) suggests that diversity within FPCs is instrumental to their success. Despite the clear benefits of a diverse membership, membership recruitment and retention pose a challenge for many FPCs (Fitzgerald, 2014; Coplen & Cuneo, 2015). It is therefore incumbent upon councils to keep members engaged and supported throughout their tenure. Some strategies to ensure that membership is both dedicated and inclusive are: developing a transparent and open membership recruitment process; establishing clear and reasonable expectations of members; and providing leadership and training opportunities for members (Fitzgerald, 2014; Coplen & Cuneo, 2015).

In addition, the majority of FPCs have reported that strong partnerships with non-profit organizations and community leaders are vital in helping them to accomplish their policy priorities (Bassarab et al., 2019<sub>a</sub>). Closely tied to representative membership, strategic

partnerships can increase community buy-in, provide additional expertise, and garner necessary support. Collaborative partnerships, diverse membership and solid internal and external working relationships are not inherent to FPCs, however, but are the result of prioritizing equity, inclusivity, and community engagement (Purifoy, 2014; Palmer & Santo, 2020). Often, these priorities are achieved through guidance of strong and dynamic leadership. Case studies of 10 FPCs in California describe an effective council leader as having the ability to strengthen the FPC's legitimacy as a source for policy recommendation, focus the council's efforts on policy engagement, and maintain a meaningful collaborative structure (Gupta et al., 2018). A dedicated leader can facilitate the many relationships that are integral to effective and sustainable FPCs while striking a balance between fostering creative vision and process-oriented policy development (Feenstra, 1997). Gupta et al. (2018) suggest that having skilled leaders "is perhaps the single most important building block for the success of food policy councils" (p.17).

While FPCs are the dominant model for advancing food policy on behalf of alternative food systems, their work is not without its challenges. One of the most obvious struggles that FPCs experience is securing funding. Approximately 68% of FPCs in the U.S. operate with an annual budget of \$10,000 or less, some with no budget at all (Bassarab et al., 2019<sub>b</sub>). Participants in the Food Policy Networks survey consistently cite a lack of funding as a prominent obstacle for their FPC. Additionally, survey results show a statistical correlation between a higher annual budget and FPC longevity. A small budget, however, does not necessarily diminish a FPCs achievements; rather, additional funding may serve to further enhance and expand their efforts (Santo & Horrigan, 2019). In this light, it seems that "for most FPCs, food systems advocacy is a labor of love" (Bassarab et al., 2019<sub>a</sub>). While traditional funding opportunities have not grown in

recent years, most FPCs seek funding from a diversity of sources in order to support their work, including from grants, income-earning events, and membership dues (Santo & Horrigan, 2019).

FPCs that are embedded within or supported by government have both the opportunity to benefit from government financial assistance and the challenge of navigating the complexities of changing politics. As a result, councils within government may seek to diversify their funding sources. Montgomery County Food Policy in Maryland, housed in the County government, is financially supported by the Montgomery County budget as well as private foundations, in-kind donations, and earned income projects. One such project was the creation of the Montgomery County Food and Beverage Guide, which local businesses pay to sponsor. In addition to pursuing a variety of funding options, FPCs involved with government should prepare for administrative transitions and take time to understand the priorities of incoming administrations (Santo & Horrigan, 2019). Members of the Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council suggested that a dynamic political climate was a contributing factor in the council's dissolution; again, underscoring the importance of maintaining communication and mutual understanding of the council's role (Coplen & Cuneo, 2015).

Directly associated with a lack of funding is a lack of staff support. The majority of FPCs primarily rely on volunteer membership and either have no staff or part-time staff support (Harper et al., 2009). Particularly as FPCs grow, they may need added staff support to increase their capacity (Santo & Horrigan, 2019). Paid staff can help increase the efficacy of FPC work and maintain a council's longevity through member recruitment, added capacity, and organization and facilitation skills. FPCs without staff risk dissolution, especially as membership turns over. In regards to staffing, FPCs embedded in government have an advantage, as existing government staff may have the ability to take on some FPC staffing responsibilities.

Organizational structure aside, securing sufficient staff and funding to support their role is an important, and often vital, consideration for FPCs.

Another common challenge that FPCs face is a lack of training and expertise in policymaking and capacity-building (Schiff, 2008; Coplen & Cuneo, 2015; Bassarab et al., 2019a, 2019; Palmer & Santo, 2020). Policy training and guidance is one of the top three technical assistance needs reported by FPCs that participate in the Food Policy Networks surveys. In a 2012 survey of 56 FPCs, Scherb et al. (2012) found that 86% reported working on policy to some extent, but 76% expressed there was a lack of time to dedicate to policymaking, 66% suggested that there was a lack of funding, and 46% noted a lack of training and skills in the policy process. As a result, many councils, especially those that are recently formed, take a more indirect approach to policy work while spending a majority of their time on problem identification, education, and programmatic work (Schiff, 2008; Scherb et al., 2012; Gupta et al., 2018). This trend appears to shift over time as councils become more well-established in the community and form strategic partnerships with policymakers, researchers, and local government staff and officials (Clayton et al., 2015). While community partnerships can often provide insight into the policy process, councils may benefit from policymaking and capacity-building training early on and throughout their development, in addition to relying on policymaking expertise from external partners (Coplen & Cuneo, 2015).

Increased capacity may also support a council's ability to apply systems thinking to their work. Systems thinking recognizes the inherent linkages within and across systems and applies interdisciplinary analysis and problem-solving in order to "improve the capability of identifying and understanding systems, predicting their behaviors, and devising modifications to them" (Arnold & Wade, 2015, p. 675). Given the complexity of food systems, using systems thinking

approaches proves essential in both understanding a community's food-related issues and pursuing meaningful food policy changes (Muller et al., 2019). Particularly in regards to FPCs,

building the capacity of community members for food systems work is an important activity to raise awareness about the complexity of the food system, create a groundswell of support for policy change, and ensure that policy solutions are appropriate for the community. (Bassarab et al., 2019 a, p.18)

Findings from the 2018 Food Policy Networks Report, however, suggest that FPCs are often limited in their potential to employ systems thinking and address the broad arena of food policy in its entirety (Bassarab et al., 2019 a). Of the 278 respondents representing food policy councils, only nine responded that they significantly utilize systems thinking approaches to address food policy issues. Palmer and Santo (2020) suggest that, in addition to equity and inclusion, systems thinking should be integral to the work of all FPCs.

While food policy councils grapple with various challenges, they continue to move the needle on food- and agriculture-related issues across the U.S. and Canada. Academic scholarship, surveys, and case studies suggest that FPCs are pioneers for sustainable and equitable food policy initiatives in their communities. FPCs are the “embodiment of food democracy” (Bassarab et al., 2019 b, p.32). They have the opportunity to not only develop a more sustainable and vibrant local food system, but also one that challenges the social inequities inherent in the dominant food system while empowering those that it serves (Purifoy, 2014). As the number of councils continues to grow, so do the opportunities for resource sharing, networking, and coordination among them, furthering their potential to affect meaningful change. Collectively, FPCs are reshaping local and regional food systems to respond to the needs and desires of their respective communities, from the ground up.



## **Beyond FPCs: Food Policy Coordinators**

Over the last decade and half, a handful of U.S. cities and counties have sought to further food policy and program initiatives at a governmental level, in many cases providing additional support to food policy councils, through the establishment of full-time professional food policy or food systems positions (hereafter generally referred to as food policy coordinators). Local governments may be particularly well poised to tackle food-related issues and implement food policy reforms in their community, as they have the opportunity to work directly with constituents to identify and respond to unique community needs (Leib, 2013). Like FPCs, the priorities, responsibilities, and organization of food policy coordinators are specific to the communities they serve. Over the years, the number of city and county food policy coordinators in the U.S. has fluctuated, in part, because food policy and food systems planning are novel additions to local government agendas; therefore, there is little precedent for best practices (Hatfield, 2012). The overall trend in food policy positions within local governments, however, continues to grow. Currently, there are nineteen confirmed positions across the nation, described in Table 2. Common priorities among coordinators include food security and access, economic development, environmental sustainability, food education, procurement, nutrition and public health, urban agriculture, and waste management (Hatfield, 2012).

Food policy coordinator positions within government are an emergent concept and little academic scholarship has been published about them. One case study of Baltimore's progress on food policy initiatives highlights the essential step of conducting a community food assessment to identify gaps in food programs and policies prior to pursuing the establishment of a coordinator position. After completing a food assessment in 2007, the city developed the Baltimore Food Policy Task Force, a group of community members who ultimately recommended that the city create a Food Policy Director position to address the community's

most pressing food-related needs. Working closely with Johns Hopkins University's Center for a Livable Future, Baltimore's Food Policy Director, Holly Freishtat, has led significant progress on food policy goals since the position was established in 2010. Based on the experiences of the Baltimore Food Policy Initiative and Food Policy Director, Santo et al. (2014) offer the following recommendations to cities interested in pursuing Baltimore's path: (1) identify the community's needs and priorities; (2) strike a balance between finding evidence and taking action; (3) ensure the position is financially sustained; and (4) maintain dexterity.

Similarly, a 2012 study of 13 food policy programs in cities across the U.S. and Canada, identified common challenges among food policy coordinators and offers several recommendations for overcoming them, specifically in the areas of funding, organization, priorities and metrics, interdepartmental coordination, and community involvement and (Hatfield, 2012). Recommendations include: (1) pursue a diversity of funding sources; (2) be intentional about where a position is housed within the bureaucracy; (3) understand what resources already exist to support policy or projects; (4) establish support from high-ranking elected officials; and (5) understand the community engagement needs of each program. Findings also highlighted a lack of resource sharing and collaboration among various food policy positions. Despite regularly scheduled conference calls, coordinators did not appear to be fully benefiting from a network of municipal food policy programs. As a result, Hatfield also provides recommendations to expand networking opportunities and develop a platform through which members can problem solve, provide project updates, coordinate efforts, discuss best practices, share resources, and strengthen professional development opportunities. Former Food Policy and Program Manager for the City of Indianapolis, Shellye Suttles (2019) suggests that food policy practitioners lack an economic perspective in their work to reform food systems and may benefit

from utilizing macroeconomic principles. Food policy practitioners must be realistic about the society we live in; “genuine structural change will require working across disciplines, across geopolitics, across cultures, and across time” (Suttles, 2019, p.32).

Although there is a lack of academic research on food policy coordinators, online resources provide some insight into the purpose and responsibilities of these positions. An analysis of fifteen job descriptions from current food policy coordinator positions revealed several commonalities, shown in Figure 3. The complete job descriptions can be found in Appendix I. Twelve of the fifteen positions are charged with identifying food systems goals and coordinating programs across the community; eleven are tasked with tracking and reporting progress on food-related goals; and a majority are also responsible for supporting the work of their local food policy council and establishing and maintaining working relationships with civic leaders and staff. All positions are expected to have expertise in local, regional, and national food systems issues and policy.

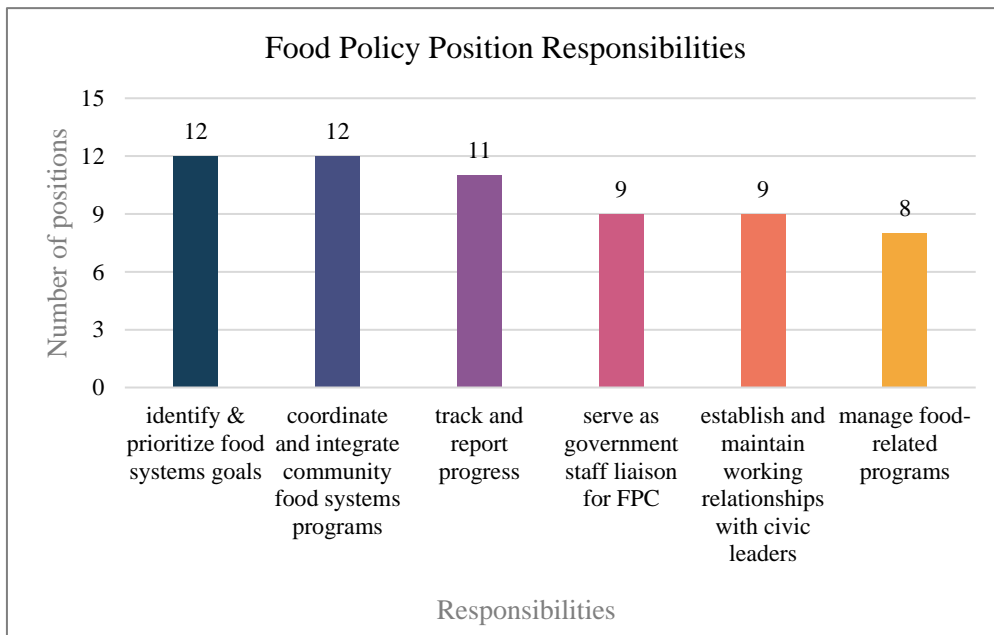


Figure 3: common job responsibilities among food policy positions within local governments, based on an analysis of 15 of 19 job descriptions found through municipal and county websites.

While the specific policies and projects championed by coordinators are unique to their communities, in general, coordinators are dedicated to developing and implementing policies, strategic plans, and programs to address food-related issues while coordinating among existing programs and collaborating across government departments and with community partners. As individuals specifically charged with evaluating community food systems and advancing food policy and programs, coordinators “allow local governments to take a more process-oriented, strategic, long-term approach to food policy development” (Leib, 2013, p.332). Dedicating government staff to specifically focus on and address complex issues surrounding food systems is one way to approach food system reform. More research on the benefits, challenges, and outcomes of governmental food policy coordinator positions is necessary to understand the potential for local governments to support vibrant, resilient, and equitable community food systems.

### **Food Policy in Missoula**

While not the primary economic driver, local food and agriculture have long played a vital role in the Missoula community. Today, Missoula boasts several bustling farmers markets, numerous active food- and agriculture-related non-profits, and many successful local food businesses. Furthermore, a series of recent planning documents—such as the “Our Missoula” City Growth Policy (2015), Missoula County Growth Policy (2016), the County’s Land Use Element (2019), and the Climate Ready Missoula Plan (2020)—identified goals and set benchmarks for creating a more sustainable, resilient, and livable community, which include local food and agriculture dimensions. Given a growing local food economy and significant community interest in local food initiatives, Missoula has considerable opportunities to bolster

its local food system and address persistent food-related issues. A description and brief history of Missoula's food system is described in greater detail in Chapter Three.

While there are several important food and agriculture programs in place within local government, the programs lack comprehensive coordination, and are often not “linked to each other around a common food system vision or set of goals” (Harper et al., 2009, p.1). Thus, there may be considerable opportunity to magnify the impacts of these programs, once addressed at a systemic and collaborative scale. Here, the Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board may fill a much-needed role.

## **Conclusion**

The central purpose of this paper is to provide a resource for Missoula's local government and the new Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board in their efforts to expand food policy initiatives and realize community goals for a healthy, sustainable, and equitable local food system. The Board need not reinvent the wheel for food systems reform; rather, it has a wealth of local food policy knowledge and experience to draw upon from food policy councils and governmental food policy positions across the United States. Missoula undoubtedly faces immense challenges in the face of climate uncertainty, population growth, and persistent issues of gentrification, poverty, inequity, and public health threats. At the same time, the community has immense opportunity to not only meet challenges head-on, but also create systemic and lasting change for a thriving community. A vibrant local food system is a key ingredient to such change.

Through a review of existing academic scholarship, key policy documents, and in-depth interviews with individuals in governmental food policy positions across the country, this research endeavors to shed light on the opportunities, challenges, and lessons learned from other

communities engaged in innovative food policy initiatives and food systems reform so as to inform Missoula. Based on my findings, I provide conclusions and recommendations for the newly established Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board, City and County government officials, and food system stakeholders. While this paper is specific to the Missoula community, it is also intended to inform other communities interested in advancing local food policy initiatives on behalf of their community food system.

## Chapter Two: Methodology

### Introduction

The idea for this project was first planted by a visit from the City of Austin’s Food Policy Manager, Edwin Marty, to Missoula in the Spring of 2019. In a discussion with various food system leaders and stakeholders from the Missoula area, Marty described his position and reflected on the potential of food systems planning and food policy efforts by local governments. Inspired by his perspective, I found myself wanting to learn more from those in similar positions to his across the country. At the same time, other individuals attending the meeting saw an opportunity to translate Marty’s experience into action for Missoula’s local food system through food policy efforts. My interest in Marty’s work and the building momentum around food policy in Missoula ultimately precipitated the central question for my research. That is, based on the experiences of other U.S. communities, what opportunities does Missoula’s local government have to advance food policy initiatives in support of a healthy, sustainable, and equitable local food system?

The specific concepts of “healthy” and “sustainable” were selected and defined according to “Principles of a Healthy, Sustainable Food System” developed by The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, American Nurses Association, American Planning Association, and American Public Health Association (American Planning Association 2020). In an effort to nurture a shared vision and foundation for “systems-wide food policy change,” this list of principles defines a healthy, sustainable food system based on a variety of social, economic, and ecological concepts. While this collaborative list of principles mentions fairness and cultural diversity, I chose to elevate “equitable” to the commensurate level of “healthy” and “sustainable” in order to appropriately encompass principles of food democracy and the intersection of food systems and social justice and equity. As Palmer and Santo (2020) suggest, in addition to systems thinking,

equity and inclusion should be integral themes to food policy work. “Healthy, sustainable, and equitable”, therefore, emphasizes the key components that policy-driven change should seek to address within food systems.

I used multiple approaches to unearth answers to my research question, including a review of academic scholarship, a review of key Missoula City and County policy documents, and the collection and analysis of in-depth interviews with eleven individuals in local government food policy or food systems positions throughout the U.S. Detailed descriptions of the methods employed for this study are described in this chapter.

### **Review of Scholarship and Key Documents**

In order to understand the broader context of food policy efforts at the local level, I began consulting Google Scholar, OneSearch through the University of Montana library, and the Food Policy Networks website (a project of Johns Hopkins University Center for a Livable Future). In particular, these search tools revealed extensive resources and scholarship related to food policy councils throughout history and across North America. Of this body of scholarship, I systematically selected articles that yielded information regarding organizational structure, policy priorities, achievements, challenges, and experiences from a diversity of FPCs in the U.S. and Canada. While not exhaustive, my review of FPC scholarship was extensive, and it revealed notable trends in the benefits reaped, challenges faced, and lessons learned from a significant number of the active 339 FPCs in existence today, as well as a handful of councils that have since dissolved. Publications related to governmental food policy positions, however, proved difficult to find, highlighting both the nascence of such positions and the gap in research regarding them. Findings from this review are described in Chapter One.



Similarly, in order to understand the foundation of Missoula's food system and the context for food policy in this particular community, I reviewed key research reports and policy documents pertaining to food systems work and food- and agriculture-related policy for both the City and County of Missoula. Through my involvement with the ad hoc food policy group, as well as guidance from Professor Neva Hassanein and online searches, I honed in on relevant data, reports, and policy documents. Findings from my review of key food systems and policy documents for Missoula are detailed in Chapter Three.

### **Interviews with Food Policy Coordinators**

In an effort to both address the gap in scholarship and provide insight for the Missoula community regarding food policy coordinators (or similar positions) within local governments across the U.S., I conducted a series of semi-structured, in-depth interviews. I employed interpretive qualitative research methods (Hesse-Biber, 2017) in order to gain a clear and detailed understanding of the professional experiences of individuals in governmental food policy coordinator positions throughout the U.S.

The participants for this project were not selected randomly nor as a representative sample but, rather, purposively based on a comprehensive list of active food policy coordinator positions. In order to select participants, a preliminary list of positions was compiled via online searches, published reports, and resources shared by Edwin Marty from the City of Austin, such as the U.S. Conference of Mayors Food Policy Advisers Network. This list was later reviewed and updated by Karen Bassarab from the Center for a Livable Future. A total of nineteen individuals were included in the final version of the list, shown in Table 2. Certain facts about these nineteen positions were collected by searches of relevant municipal or county department websites, posted job descriptions, and USDA Census data. Examples of facts gathered include:

population size of the position’s jurisdiction, the department or office the position is housed in, the date the position was established, and the name of the local food policy council. Job descriptions from fifteen of the nineteen positions were also analyzed and coded topically to get a sense of the different responsibilities of the various positions as well as allow for comparison between them.

### Active Food Policy Coordinators in U.S.

Location	Name of Entity	Individual in position	Year Est.	City/County size	Department
Austin, TX	Food Policy Manager	Edwin Marty	2014	964,254	Office of Sustainability
Baltimore MD	Food Policy Director	Holly Freishtat	2010	602,495	Department of Planning
Boston, MA	Director of Food Initiatives; Director of Food Access	Catalina Lopez-Ospina	2010	694,583	Mayor's Office of Food Access
Columbus, OH	Local Food Systems Strategies Coordinator	Cheryl L. Graffagnino	2015	892,533	Public Health Department
Denver, CO	Food Systems Administrator	Laine Cidlowski	2015	716,492	Department of Public Health and Environment
Indianapolis, IN	Food Policy and Program Coordinator	Milele Kennedy	2016	867,125	Office of Public Health and Safety
Lexington, KY	Director of Local Food and Agricultural Development	Ashton Potter-Wright	2014	323,780	Mayor's Office
Madison, WI	Food Policy Director	George Reistad	2012; 2016 (food only)	258,054	Mayor's Office
Minneapolis, MN	Local Food Policy Coordinator (Homegrown Minneapolis)	Tamara Downs Schwei	2014	425,403	City Coordinator's Office, Sustainability Division
New Haven, CT	Food Systems Policy Director	Latha Swamy	2016	130,418	Food Systems and Policy Division
New York City, NY	Food Policy Director	Kate MacKenzie	2007	8,398,748	Mayor's Office of Food Policy
Philadelphia, PA	Food Policy Advisory Coordinator (Interim) Manager*	Kristin Schwab	2010	1,584,138	Office of Sustainability
Salt Lake City, UT	Food and Equity Program Manager	Supreet Gill	2019	200,591	Sustainability Department
San Francisco, CA	Director of Food Systems	Paula Jones	2002	883,305	Department of Public Health
Seattle, WA	Food Policy Advisor	Sharon Lerman	2012	744,955	Office of Sustainability and Environment
Washington D.C.	Food Policy Director	Ona Balkus	2014	702,455	Office of Planning
Dane County, WI	Community Food Systems Coordinator	Jess Guffey Calkins	2019	542,364	Dane County Extension
Douglas County, KS	Sustainability and food systems analyst	Kim Criner Ritchie	2014	121,436	Sustainability Department
Franklin County, OH	Food Systems Planner	Brian Estabrook	2016	1,310,300	Economic Development and Planning Department

Table 2: Active governmental food policy or food systems coordinator positions in the U.S.

\*currently, temporary position

In order to develop a deeper understanding of these positions and the experiences of those in them, all nineteen individuals were contacted and invited to participate in an in-depth interview. Of the nineteen positions, thirteen agreed to participate, however, only eleven interviews were completed; two participants cancelled their scheduled interviews because they were overwhelmed with responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Two individuals declined to

participate due to a lack of time and capacity, and three individuals simply did not respond to my emails and calls. One individual, Kate Mackenzie, the Director of the Mayor’s Office of Food Policy for New York City was unable to participate in an interview but allowed me to observe a lecture, via video, that she delivered regarding her work at Columbia University. Overall, I had a participation rate of 58%, as shown in Figure 4.

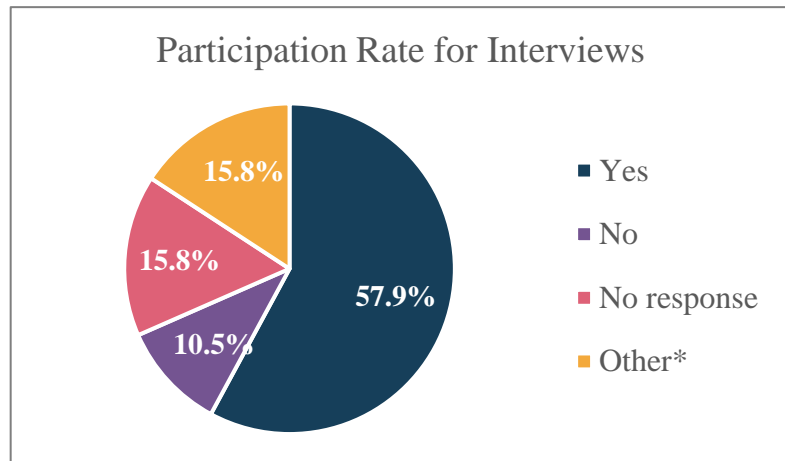


Figure 4: Various responses to interview requests. 10 individuals, or 57.9%, of the 19 positions participated in interviews.  
\*other includes an observed lecture in lieu of an interview and two interview cancellations

Interviews were conducted remotely via video or phone and lasted for a duration ranging from 45 to 70 minutes. Audio from each interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim using the online transcription service, Trint. Interviews were semi-structured, meaning they each were conducted using the same set of predetermined, open-ended interview questions for the purposes of analysis and comparison. The interview guide was structured in such a way as to first build rapport with participants and then ease them into more challenging or personal questions (Hesse-Biber, 2017; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). In general, the questions centered on the participant’s professional background, the responsibilities and history of their position, and their experiences working in that position. A full interview guide can be found in Appendix II. Although efforts

were made to ensure that all the participants provided answers to each question, participants were also encouraged to interpret questions freely and direct the conversation as they saw fit.

Once interviews were completed and transcribed, I verified the accuracy of the transcriptions and edited where necessary. In order to make comparisons among the responses provided by participants, the edited transcriptions (the data) were analyzed using content analysis. This method entailed interpreting the meaning of each thought within the data and assigning a specific code, or topic, to it. A preliminary list of codes was generated from the interview guide, while secondary topics emerged through the analysis process. I did not wait until all the data were collected to code, rather, I coded in an ongoing basis, following a back-and-forth iterative process, by which I amended or combined codes where appropriate. Additionally, I analyzed the coded data for emergent patterns and metaphors and paid special attention to the frequency with which certain codes were mentioned across the participants. Throughout the analysis process, I also wrote brief memos in order to organize thoughts, suggest tentative linkages among the data, and generate preliminary recommendations.

Findings from the data collection and analysis, presented in Chapter Four, are not a definitive or exhaustive representation of governmental food policy coordinator positions, but instead, illustrate the personal experiences and perspectives of eleven individuals in such positions. Within the context of local food policy in Missoula and across the U.S., these data serve to highlight shared experiences, present both known and novel ideas, and strengthen recommendations for a particular community. Direct quotes from the participants are frequently used to both verify the accuracy of my data interpretation and provide rich depictions of participant responses. In presenting quotes, awkward or unnecessary words or phrases, such as

“you know”, “I mean”, and “like,” were omitted for the purposes of clarity. Any deletions of text within the quotes are noted with ellipses.

## **Limitations**

One notable limitation in this research is that, given the many municipalities and counties within the U.S., I may have failed to include every active food policy coordinator position in existence. Although steps were taken to verify the list of positions I compiled, there is a strong possibility that positions were missed because they are not known to the resources and networks that I consulted, such as the Center for a Livable Future or the U.S. Conference of Mayors Food Policy Advisers Network. Furthermore, I was unable to connect with or secure interviews from a number of the individuals that were on my list, although their reasons for not participating suggest that it was primarily because it was inconvenient for some potential respondents. Another limitation is the narrow scope of my questions, which may have precluded certain insights from coming to light. Again, this research is not intended to provide definitive or representative conclusions about U.S. food policy coordinators, but a resource to inform other communities, particularly Missoula, about potential opportunities for advancing their local food system.

## **Conclusion**

The various methods used for this report included a review of relevant academic scholarship and key Missoula documents as well as original in-depth interviews with eleven individuals in governmental food policy coordinator positions. These methods were used to describe the greater context of food policy work across the country and the relevance of that work to Missoula City and County. Overall, findings describe the breadth of local food policy

governance and a rich representation of the perspectives of eleven food policy coordinators. These findings begin to address the gap in academic scholarship regarding food policy coordinators, help to strengthen the networks among existing coordinators, and offer valuable insights to Missoula and other U.S. communities interested in local food policy initiatives. While specifically tailored to Missoula's policy foundation and political dynamics, this study provides a useful framework for future research to understand the role and potential impacts of local governmental food policy staff throughout the U.S.

## **Chapter Three: Food Policy in Missoula**

### **Introduction**

Nestled at the juncture of five mountainous valleys and three major rivers, Missoula is a community dedicated to sustainability and preserving natural resources and landscapes. The County is home to some 117,000 Montanans, and its population is only expected to grow, primarily in the urban center (Missoula County CAPS, 2019). In anticipation of this growth, both the City and County have made commitments to robust goals for livability, resilience, sustainability, and affordability. Included in these goals are support for a vibrant local food economy, sustainable agricultural practices, and farmland protection. The development of a strategic vision for the local food system and a comprehensive food policy framework will be important steps in realizing food- and agriculture- related goals and enhancing the local food system.

This chapter provides an overview of Missoula’s food system and existing food policy. First, a brief history of agriculture in Missoula is provided, followed by descriptions of prominent elements of the Missoula food system and key policy documents relating to food and agricultural dimensions.

### **Missoula’s Food Economy**

While Missoula City and County are distinguished by the City’s boundaries, Missoula is considered “one community” that “transcends jurisdictional lines” (Missoula County CAPS 2019, p.4). Similarly, the local food system is not confined by city or county limits; the impacts of local food- and agriculture-related policies and programs reverberate throughout the entire Missoula and Western Montana community. While it is not the largest or most profitable industry in the County, agriculture has long played a vital cultural and economic role in

Missoula. Furthermore, the community fosters a pride and commitment to local and sustainably-produced food.

In 2017, the market value of agricultural products sold in the County was \$9.8 million, while farm-related income was over \$5 million (USDA, 2019). Of the County’s 576 farms, 94% are family owned and operated and 21% hire farm labor. A summary of key findings from the 2017 Census of Agriculture are illustrated in Figure 5. Since 2007, the number of farms in the County has decreased, leading to a decrease in the total acreage of land in farms, shown in Figure 6a. In addition, the largest size group of farms remains the 10- to 49-acre range, followed by the 1- to 9- acre range, shown in Figure 6b. Beyond the numbers, many Missoulians value their agricultural heritage and support efforts to cultivate a vibrant local food economy (City of Missoula, 2015). As a result, Missoula’s local food movement continues to evolve and grow.

**Figure 5: Missoula County Highlights: 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture**

**576** total farms

**260,117** acres of farmland | average farm is **452** acres

**989** total producers | **56%** are ages 35-64

**\$9,849,000** in products sold | **\$5,049,000** in farm-related income

*per farm average:* **\$17,098** in products sold | **\$30,057** farm-related income

*of Missoula farms:*

**94%** are family farms

**21%** hire farm labor

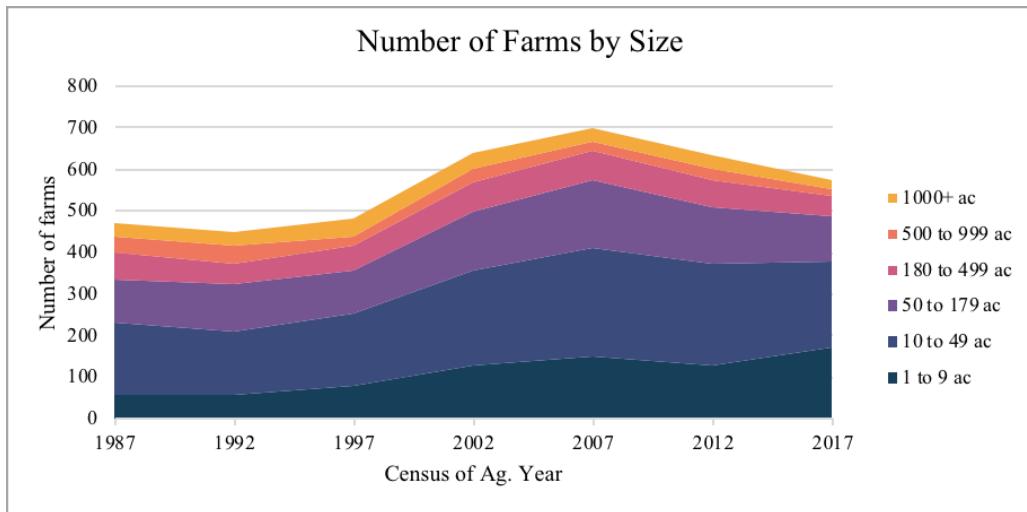
**12%** sell direct to consumer

The City of Missoula has three thriving farmers markets, including the Clark Fork Farmers Market, which was started in 1970 and now has over 125 vendors. Missoula is also home to the Western Montana Growers Cooperative, a cooperative of over 40 regional small-

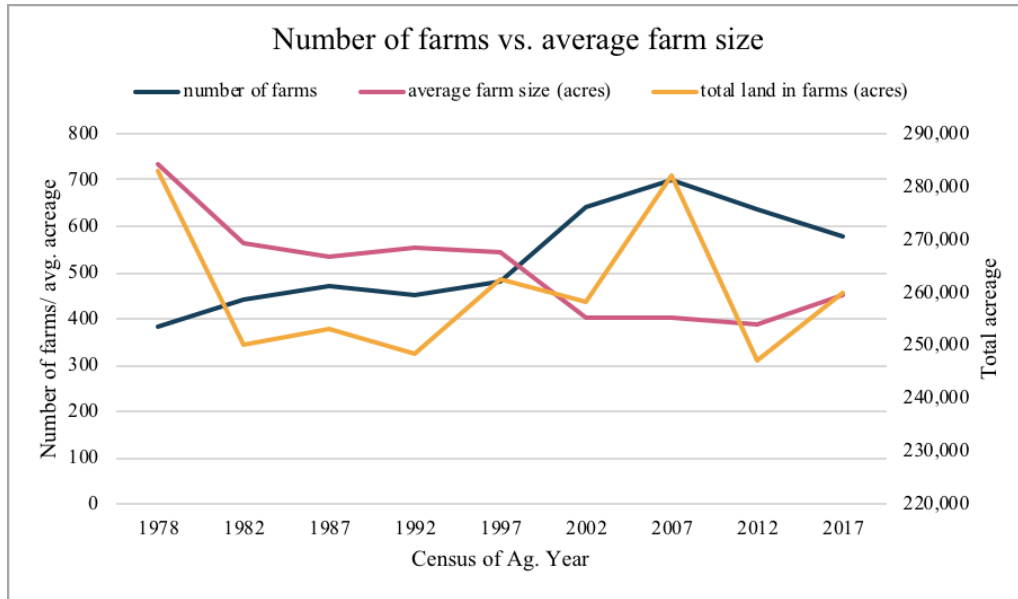


scale producers. Since its creation in 2003, the Co-op has successfully expanded the local food market and now grosses about \$3 million in annual sales. The number of Missoula farmers selling directly to consumers also continues to grow. As of 2017, 12% of the 576 farms in the County engage in direct sales, up from 10.7% in 2007, a 12.1% increase (USDA, 2019). Additionally, a growing number of local food retailers and restaurants strive to purchase locally sourced and sustainably produced products. These local food trends are a testament to the fact that “Missoulians value the potential of their agricultural soils for the growth of local food, and an emerging local food system is building a strong support infrastructure” (City of Missoula 2015, Appendix D:23). The University of Montana and local food- and agriculture-related non-profit organizations also prove to be vital assets to the local food system.

a)



b)



Figures 6a-b: (a) Number of farms according to size, in acres, in Missoula County; (b) Number of farms, average farm size, and total acreage of land in farms in Missoula County (USDA, 2019). (USDA, 2019).

## Strengthening the Local Food System

### *Food System Research*

Over the last two decades, University of Montana researchers and community organizations collaborated to publish several foundational reports documenting various aspects of Missoula’s food system. In 2003, in an effort to more fully understand the local food system at a holistic level, University faculty and students partnered with several Missoula organizations to conduct a comprehensive community food assessment; their findings were published in two reports and a resource guide in 2004. At the time, Missoula was one of about 15 communities across the U.S. to pursue a community food assessment, which was identified as an essential step in enhancing food security (Hassanein & Jacobson, 2004). The first report, *Our Foodshed in Focus: Missoula County Food and Agriculture by the Numbers*, analyzed existing data provided by governmental and nongovernmental agencies to describe the state of local agriculture and food trends in Missoula. The second report, *Food Matters: Farm Viability and Food*

*Consumption in Missoula County*, illustrated findings from a systematic and participatory research process in which student researchers gathered qualitative data centered around the following questions: “What is needed for viable and sustainable, commercial food production in Missoula County? What are the existing assets and barriers to creating a more viable and sustainable production system?” (Hassanein & Jacobson, 2004).

On the producer side, findings highlighted a rapid loss of working farms due to decreases in production and farm size, as well as loss of farmland due to subdivisions and development. The majority of producers interviewed also highlighted low economic returns as a problem for their production. On the consumer side, the majority of Missoula residents participating in the assessment expressed concerns over food safety and quality. Additionally, when asked if having enough money to purchase food for themselves and their families was a concern, 32.5% of respondents identified it as a major concern while 33.3% said it was somewhat of a concern. The majority of consumers also identified a strong interest in seeing more local foods in grocery stores but were concerned about the prices of local products. In addition to identifying prominent issues and gaps in Missoula’s local food system, the *Food Matters* (2004) report offered several recommendations to address them. Drawing upon the assessment’s findings, the Steering Committee for the Community Food Assessment and the University of Montana researchers developed the following recommendations for the Missoula community:

1. Create a multi-stakeholder, food policy coalition that addresses community needs related to food and agriculture in a comprehensive, systematic, and creative way.
2. Improve food quality and access to healthy foods at emergency food services and elsewhere in the County.
3. Work with relevant advocacy organizations to create public education campaigns around the human right to food, and expand the current dialogue around cost-of-living concerns to include food issues.
4. Develop a strong community- based food system that supports local farmers and ranchers, and meets consumers’ interest in access to locally-grown food.

5. Identify and assess strategies for protecting and assisting working farms and ranches, and for keeping agricultural land affordable for farming and ranching.
  6. Investigate further the extent to which transportation to grocery stores and food pantries is a concern for low-income residents throughout the County.
- (Hassanein & Jacobson, 2004)

Recommendations from the Missoula County Food Assessment were met with action. In 2005, with the help of concerned community members, the City and County of Missoula successfully passed Joint Resolution 6889 entitled, “A resolution to actively support efforts to increase the security of our local food system so that it is based on a sustainable agriculture which enhances the local economy and builds regional self-reliance and so that all citizens have access to nutritious and affordable food.” The primary policy goal of this resolution was to create a diverse, multi-stakeholder food policy coalition to address the community food and agricultural needs, pursuant to recommendations made in the *Food Matters* report. With the help of funds granted from the USDA Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program, the Community Food and Agriculture Coalition (CFAC) was borne out of Joint Resolution 6889 and was tasked with tackling many of Missoula’s most pressing food-related issues.

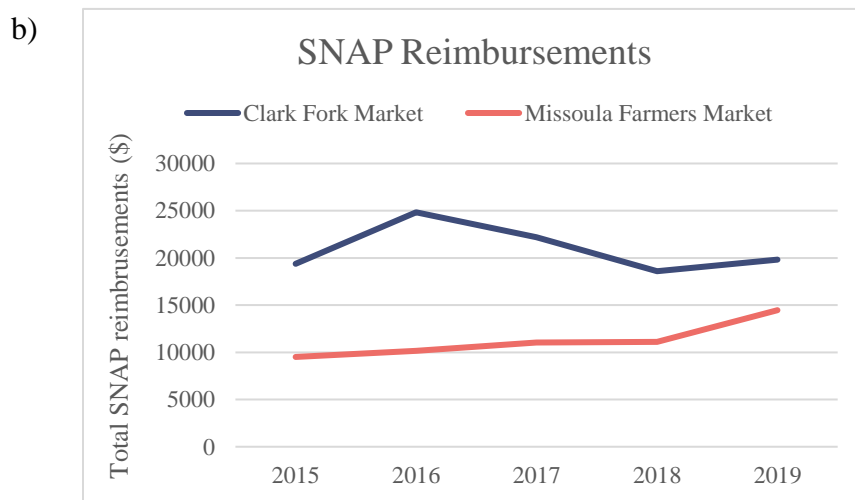
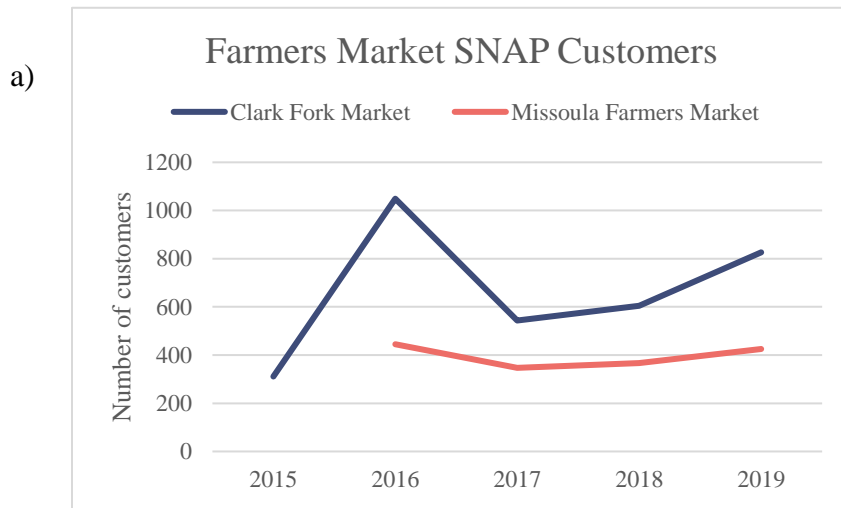
CFAC was originally established in accordance with the language of the Resolution, whereby City Council members and County Commissioners appointed representative individuals to serve on the board of the Coalition. Later, in 2008, CFAC incorporated as a non-profit (501c3) organization and eventually shed its direct ties with local government. As an organization, CFAC has made tremendous achievements in improving Missoula’s food system, particularly around three programmatic areas: healthy food access, beginning farmers and ranchers, and farmland protection. Of their many accomplishments, CFAC has helped to secure over \$450,000 in grants to support the Double SNAP Dollars Program, which allows Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients to purchase double the value of their benefits, up to \$20 per day, on

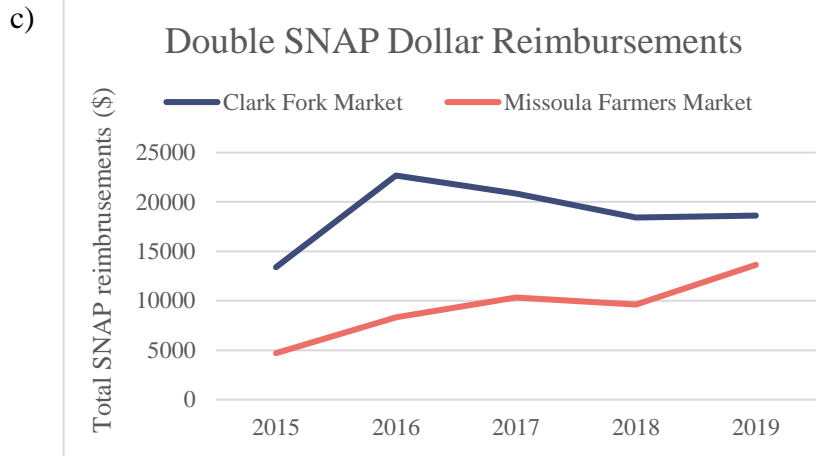
produce at the farmers market (Kim Gilchrist, Personal Communication, March 11, 2020). Although CFAC continues to serve a vital role in advancing policy on behalf of a local, sustainable, and equitable local food system, the organization has expanded its reach beyond Missoula County and tends to influence local policy in an advocacy capacity. Ultimately, the need for a collaborative, multi-stakeholder food policy coalition with a systemic approach to addressing Missoula's food-related concerns has gone unmet.

Building upon the Missoula County Community Food Assessment, two additional research reports were published documenting the persistent issues of food insecurity and the loss of viable farmland in the County. In 2007, the collaborative working group, Finding Solutions to Food Insecurity Project published the report: *Food Insecurity in Missoula County: Barriers, Opportunities, and Solutions*. It documented findings from surveys of food service providers and their users to more fully illustrate the causes of food insecurity in Missoula, the existing services and resources available to residents, and the potential steps to improve food security in the future. The report found that 77% of service users either skipped or cut down on the size of meals because they did not have enough money to purchase food. The majority of service providers interviewed identified an increase in the need and use of their services while their funding was simultaneously cut. In addition to underscoring the urgent need to improve food security and access in Missoula County, the report offered both short- and long-term solutions. The long-term solutions generally focused on institutional and systemic changes including "Develop a food policy for Missoula County that addresses food access and is informed by people with limited incomes" (Finding Solutions to Food Insecurity Project, 2007, p.78).

Looking at food access and insecurity more recently, in 2017, Missoula County had a 13% rate of overall food insecurity, down from 15% in 2013, a 13% reduction (Gundersen, 2013;

Gundersen, 2019). The County’s rate, however, remains above the Montana state average of 11.1% and the U.S. average of 12.5%. In recent years, several local organizations, including CFAC, partnered to support SNAP and Double SNAP dollar programs at the Missoula farmers markets in order to improve healthy food access for Missoulians. The total number of SNAP customers and annual SNAP and Double SNAP purchases, referred to as reimbursements, at both the Clark Fork Market and Missoula Farmers Market are shown Figures 7a-c.





Figures 7a-c: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Double SNAP Dollar sales and customers at Clark Fork Market and Missoula Farmers Market (CFAC, 2019)

In addition to issues surrounding food security and food access, the loss of farmland and agricultural soils has long loomed as a threat to Missoula’s local food production. Using data from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the 2016 Missoula County Growth Plan details the County’s existing agriculturally viable soils: 4.68% of the County is farmland of local importance, 1.69% prime farmland if irrigated, 1.14% farmland of statewide importance, and 0.07% prime farmland, as noted in Figure 8. Several decades ago, a 1983 report published by the then Missoula Planning Office, found 23.5% of the County’s prime farmland soils were subdivided and either slated for development or not in agricultural production.

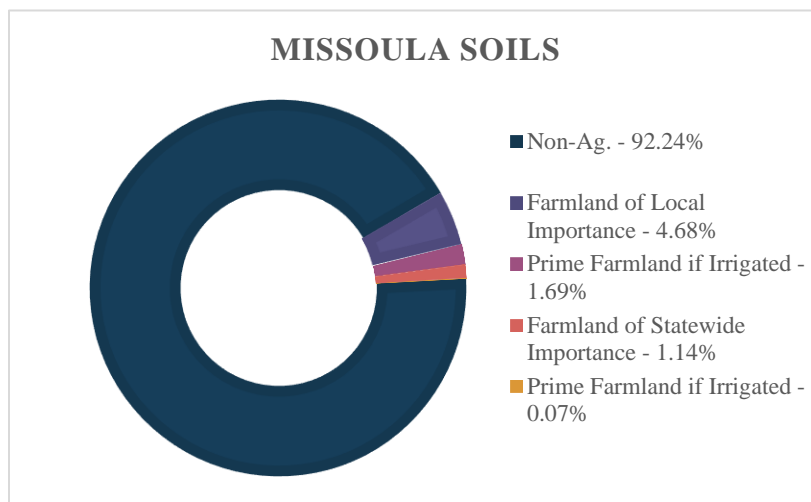


Figure 8: Breakdown of Missoula Soils using Natural Resources Conservation Service data (Missoula County, 2016)

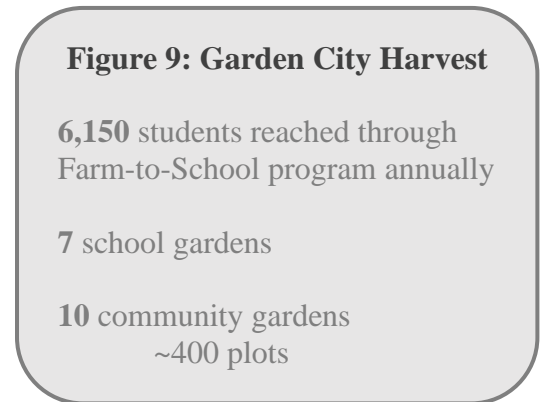
In 2010, CFAC published a report entitled, *Losing Ground: The Future of Farms and Food in Missoula County*, to describe the state of agriculture and farmland in Missoula County. Some key findings from the report were: since 1974, the number of acres in cropland production declined by 44%; 80% of the County lands containing the best agricultural soils had been subdivided for development into parcels of 40 acres or less; and nearly 29,000 acres of agricultural land had been converted to non-agricultural use since 1986 (Hubbard et al., 2010). Many of these trends have only continued, with only 8.9% of the County's prime farmland soils remaining undeveloped as of 2018 (Frederickson, 2018). The Missoula community recognizes the need to balance agricultural farmland protection with future development, yet the County's farmland of importance currently has no legal protections from development (WGM Group, 2018). Additionally, the population in Missoula County is expected to steadily increase by 1 to 2% annually, posing an increased demand for residential development (Missoula County and City of Missoula, 2017).

### ***Community Organizations Lead the Way***

Over the years, the work to understand and bolster the local food system has been coupled with community advocacy and the leadership of several non-profit organizations. Prior to the creation of CFAC, many community organizations sought to address market failures within the food system. For example, the Poverello Center was formed in 1974 to provide services for those experiencing poverty and homelessness. In 2019, the Center provided meals for over 1,600 people (The Poverello Center, 2020). The Missoula Food Bank and Community Center was established in 1982 and currently serves 100 families monthly and one in six of the County's residents annually (Missoula Food Bank & Community Center, 2020). In 1996, Garden



City Harvest, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing access to local and sustainable produce to Missoulians through community gardens and educational programs, was created. A brief summary of the impact of their work is shown in Figure 9. Shortly after Garden City Harvest was established, the organization collaborated with the University of Montana’s Environmental Studies



program to establish the Program in Ecological Agriculture and Society (PEAS) Farm, a hands-on educational and sustainable farm that now produces 15,000 pounds of produce for the Missoula Food Bank annually (Garden City Harvest, 2020). Together, these organizations, as well as several others, continue to serve as leaders in bolstering Missoula’s local food system.

In recent years, Missoula has made significant strides in supporting its local food system; yet, the community continues to face challenges regarding food security, food access, and farmland preservation. At the same time, Missoula has expressed commitments to building a resilient, accessible, and vibrant food system for the future. Missoula local government should seek holistic approaches to not only addressing issues within the food system, but fostering a system that reflects the values of the community.

### **Food Policy Foundation**

In the context of Missoula’s persistent food-related needs and the community’s local food values, a profound opportunity exists to address gaps in the food system while simultaneously bolstering a sustainable and resilient local food economy that works for all Missoulians. With this opportunity in mind, Missoula County Commissioner Josh Slotnick gathered an ad hoc group of stakeholders interested in food policy, including myself, in the Fall of 2019 with the

purpose of developing food policy strategies for the City and County, particularly within local government.

Over the course of several months, this group of about ten individuals met regularly to discuss potential avenues for supporting Missoula's local food system at a governmental level. Without a clear governmental pipeline, food policy stakeholders pointed to a subsequent lack of capacity and coordination among food-related agencies and organizations, on both a city and county level. With such a robust knowledge of the County's existing food system, as well as a clearly established commitment to improving it, Missoula has the chance to develop innovative new vehicles and strategies to continue building a more equitable, sustainable, and healthy local food system. Upon revisiting Joint Resolution 6889 from 2005, and looking to other communities across the country, this group drafted a new joint city-county resolution entitled,

A Joint City-County Resolution implementing one of the recommendations of Joint Resolution 6889 and establish a Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board to provide policy recommendations to increase security of Missoula's local food system, promote sustainable agriculture that enhances the local economy, connect food access programs to local nutritious food, build regional self-reliance and climate resiliency. (City of Missoula Resolution 8413, Missoula County Resolution 2020-020 2020)

The resolution was unanimously passed by both the Missoula City Council and Board of County Commissioners in February of 2020, and the Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board is currently being formed. As the resolution title describes, the Board is charged with identifying and recommending food policy initiatives; coordinating among existing food- and agriculture-related programs; and highlighting opportunities for new programs for the city and county. The Board will consist of seven voting members, three of which are to be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, two by the City Council, one by the Mayor, and one by Community Food and Agriculture Coalition. Part-time administrative staff support will be provided by the County. The Board will operate strictly in an advisory capacity, with no decision-making power,

however, it will provide vital technical assistance, expertise, and leadership on behalf of a healthy, sustainable, and equitable local food system for Missoula.

Of course, Missoula City and County government have always been involved in food- and agriculture-related programs and policies in various capacities. For example, Missoula City-County Health Department, Missoula County Community and Planning Services, City of Missoula Development Services, Missoula County Extension, and various boards and committees are all integral parts of Missoula's local food system. Appendix III shows a preliminary schematic of the various governmental food and agriculture programs across the County (a more detailed assessment of governmental programs was beyond the scope of this project). While these governmental programs provide essential support for the community's food and agriculture needs, they are not necessarily coordinated or unified under a strategic vision for the Missoula food system. That said, several key planning documents adopted by both the City and County in recent years provide a policy springboard for the Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board to enhance Missoula's local food system. Brief descriptions of relevant policy documents are provided below as well as in a handout format in Appendix IV.

Both the City and County adopted growth policies in recent years that include several food- and agriculture- related goals, objectives, and actions. Adopted in 2015, *Our Missoula: City Growth Policy* outlines a growth management plan for the next 20 years, built around community input and values, such as:

Missoulians are committed to preserving and protecting natural systems, wildlife habitat and environmentally- sensitive lands. Support of local food production through small growers and community gardens reflects a respect for Missoula's agricultural heritage. (City of Missoula, 2015, p.8)

Similarly, the 2016 County Growth Policy and its subsequent 2019 amendment, the *Missoula Area Land Use Element*, highlight the importance of preserving local agriculture and food

production while providing policy recommendations and guidance for the County’s next 20 years of growth. Currently, only about seven percent of County land outside of city limits is zoned, potentially allowing for unrestricted growth and the development of viable farmland. In an effort to guide future zoning, the 2019 amendment provides fifteen land use designations, including six that would allow for agricultural activity. Both growth plans place an emphasis on farmland protection, economic development, sustainability, and healthy communities; they provide a clear context for pursuing progressive food policy initiatives and food system reform.

In 2016, the City of Missoula passed Resolution 8044, “A Resolution Supporting the Creation of a Zero Waste Plan and Setting Waste Reduction Goals for the City of Missoula,” which established the ultimate goal of a 90% reduction in municipal waste diversion and prompted the development of a zero waste plan. The City’s Zero Waste Plan, *Zero by Fifty: Missoula’s Pathway to Zero Waste*, was then adopted in 2018. Food waste contributes significantly to waste streams, accounting for 15% of all waste in the U.S. (City of Missoula, 2018). Food, therefore, is an important piece of the zero waste puzzle for Missoula, both in the context of upstream food service packaging and downstream food scrap disposal. The *Zero by Fifty* plan provides valuable context for pursuing more sustainable and waste-free policies within the City and County.

In light of global climate change, the 2017 update to the *Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan* and the 2020 climate resiliency plan *Climate Ready Missoula*, are both joint city-county plans that seek to prepare Missoula for a changing climate regime and its effects. Both plans note the importance of local agriculture and mention promoting mitigation strategies for agriculture and range management. *Climate Ready Missoula* includes agriculture as one of eight sectors of focus, outlining the potential impacts of climate specifically on local agriculture while also providing

several goals and objectives for developing a more resilient local agricultural industry. While the *Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan* sets a precedent for considering agriculture in disaster mitigation, the climate resiliency plan marks a significant step in developing a community-wide and holistic adaptation response to the potential impacts of climate change.

Collectively, these plans demonstrate Missoula's commitment to a sustainable, resilient, and healthy agricultural sector and local food economy. Though they are primarily guiding documents and do not establish specific policy obligations, they effectively set the stage for developing and implementing forward-thinking food policy initiatives.

## **Conclusion**

Missoulians have demonstrated, time and again, that they value their agricultural heritage and support locally and sustainably produced food. With these values in place, the work of community members, University of Montana researchers, and non-governmental organizations over the last few decades, has built the foundation for governmental action on food policy and food systems reform. Establishing the Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board is an essential step in moving food policy forward.

As the Board begins its work, it will have the opportunity to refer to valuable research on the local food system, develop strategic partnerships with food-related organizations, engage with community members, and promote action on the many progressive plans that Missoula has set forth. Furthermore, the board will be able to take lessons from communities across the country, which are discussed in the next chapter, and tailor policy recommendations to the Missoula community.

## Chapter Four: Findings - Food Policy Coordinators

*“How do we make the system better? How do we make the system better for all of us?”*

- Supreet Gill, Food and Equity Program Manager, Salt Lake City, UT

### **Introduction**

The central purpose of this research is to learn from the perspectives of staff engaged in food systems work within local governments around the United States in order to inform and inspire the City and County of Missoula and the newly-formed joint Food Policy Advisory Board. Findings from interviews with eleven individuals in local government food policy coordinator positions highlight both the uniqueness of each position, as well as their common perspectives, goals, and priorities. Of the eleven individuals interviewed, eight operate at a municipal level and three at a county level. As we shall see, for various reasons, community members and local government officials in these eleven cities and counties recognized their need for strategic, innovative, and inclusive food systems work.

This chapter describes the basic organizational structure and functions of each position, some of the many achievements led by these particular food policy coordinators, and the key takeaways that can be drawn from their experiences. While these results by no means offer a definitive or generalizable understanding of food policy coordinators, they do give us valuable insight into the benefits that full-time, governmental food policy staff can provide, as well as the limitations experienced and lessons learned by eleven of the nineteen confirmed food policy coordinators working within local government throughout the U.S.

## **Food Policy Coordinators: The Basics**

### ***Organization***

As mentioned in Chapter One, food policy coordinator positions are often unique in how they are positioned within local government, as well as in their specific title and duties. Among the eleven individuals interviewed, each position has a different title, but all of them have a food systems or food policy focus, and serve in a leadership or advisory capacity. As of April 2020, all of these positions are one full-time equivalent (1 FTE). Many, but not all, serve as the sole staff person working on food systems in their local government. Two positions, the Food and Equity Program Manager for Salt Lake City, UT and the Sustainability and Food Systems Analyst for Douglas County, KS, have a focus that extends beyond food, as suggested by the position titles. Details about the location and organizational structure of each of the eleven positions can be found in Table 3.

All but one of the communities represented in this research have an active food policy council or board, which their respective food policy coordinator is tasked with staffing (Lexington, KY currently does not have a council). The City of Columbus and Franklin County have several local food policy entities that work closely together across the two jurisdictions. In addition to a local food team of city and county government staff, there is a government-convened Columbus-Franklin County Local Food Board and a non-profit organization, the Franklin County Local Food Council, that work on food policy development and implementation. Both the Food Board and Food Council are supported by City and County staff, Cheryl L. Graffagnino and Brian Estabrook, respectively.

## Food Policy Coordinators: Interview Participant Information

<b>City or County</b>	Austin, TX	Columbus, OH	Denver, CO	Indianapolis, IN	Lexington, KY	Madison, WI	Minneapolis, MN	Salt Lake City, UT	Dane County, WI	Douglas County, KS	Franklin County, OH
<b>Name of Position</b>	Food Policy Manager	Local Food Systems Strategies Coordinator	Food Systems Administrator	Food Policy and Program Coordinator	Director of Local Food and Agricultural Development	Food Policy Director 2016; 2012-formerly Food Policy and Alcohol Policy Director	Local Food Policy Coordinator	Food and Equity Program Manager	Community Food Systems Coordinator	Sustainability and Food Systems Analyst	Food Systems Planner
<b>Year Established</b>	2014	2015	2015	2016	2014		2014	2019	2019	2014	2016
<b>Position Location</b>	Office of Sustainability	Public Health Department	Department of Public Health and Environment	Office of Public Health and Safety	Mayor's Office of Economic Development	Mayor's Office	City Coordinator's Office, Sustainability Division	Sustainability Department	Dane County Extension	Sustainability Department	Economic Development and Planning Department
<b>Position Funding</b>	City general fund	Originally funded through temporary funds (i.e. grants, foundations, innovation fund); now city general fund	Originally funded through temporary funds (i.e. grants, foundations, innovation fund); now city general fund	City-county council budget	Originally funded through temporary funds (i.e. grants, foundations, innovation fund); now city general fund	City general fund	City general fund	Originally funded through temporary funds (i.e. grants, foundations, innovation fund); now city general fund	County and state extension funds	Originally funded through temporary funds (i.e. grants, foundations, innovation fund); now county general fund	County general fund
<b>Individual in Position</b>	Edwin Marty	Cheryl L. Graffagnino	Laine Cidlowski	Milele Kennedy	Ashton Potter-Wright	George Reistad	Tamara Downs Schwei	Supreet Gill	Jess Guffey Calkins	Kim Criner Ritchie	Brian Estabrook
<b>Years in Position</b>	6 years	5 years	3 years	1 year or less	6 years	4 years	6 years	1 year or less	1 year or less	1 year or less	3 years
<b>Additional Staff</b>	1.5	1	5	None	None	None	2	None	None	None	None
<b>Food Policy Council</b>	Austin-Travis County Food Board	Columbus-Franklin County Local Food Board; Franklin County Local Food Council	Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council	Indy Food Council	None	Madison Food Policy Council	Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council	Salt Lake City Food Policy Council	Dane County Food Council	Douglas County Food Policy Council	Franklin County Local Food Board; Franklin County Local Food Council
<b>Year Established</b>	2008	2016; 2013	2010	2014	N/A	2012	2011	2008	2006	2010	2016; 2013
<b>Structure</b>	governmental	governmental; non-profit	governmental	governmental	N/A	governmental	governmental	governmental	governmental	governmental	governmental; non-profit
<b>Members</b>	13	12; 10	varies	varies	N/A	23	21	up to 16	12	16	12; 10

Table 3: Description of 11 positions and the respective food policy council



## *Purpose*

In general, these eleven positions were established as the result of advocacy by community leaders and elected officials. For example, at the time that positions were created, the Mayors of Indianapolis, Minneapolis, and Madison, and the Vice Mayor of Lexington were particularly interested in addressing food-related issues and expanding upon energy around food systems work. In Lexington, this interest was particularly tied to the city's urban-rural identity; "there's this real strong connection to our rural lands and the need to maintain it...I think the Vice Mayor and others saw this as a way to really elevate what's happening and connect what's happening in our rural communities with our urban core" (Ashton Potter Wright).

In Austin, Denver, and Dane County, the local food policy council recommended that the local government develop a staff position to support and advance the council's work. For instance, in Denver:

The Food Policy Council itself advocated really strongly for the creation of my position. They really felt like, in order to advance some of this work within the city, they needed a dedicated person working on these issues. And there were maybe three or four other people within the city who are spending part of their time, or peripherally doing this work, but they really wanted that additional support and guidance and capacity. (Laine Cidlowski, Food Systems Administrator)

In Salt Lake City and Douglas County, leaders in the Sustainability Department saw an opportunity to broaden their work through a food lens and were able to secure initial funding for a position through the city's Innovation Fund and a USDA grant, respectively. In Columbus and Franklin County, the architects behind the joint city-county Local Food Action Plan pushed "local government to recognize that we actually needed to create permanent positions within city, county government to facilitate and oversee this work" (Brian Estabrook). Overall, the impetuses behind creating these positions center around democratizing and elevating the food

system, developing a holistic and coordinated approach to food system governance, and addressing the community's persistent food-related issues.

Eight of the eleven participants described their city or county's interest in developing a meaningful response to their community's growing awareness and concern around the local food system. These local governments saw both an opportunity and a need to engage the public, particularly marginalized populations, in food systems work. In essence, these communities developed a food policy coordinator position with the intent of fostering food democracy and lasting food systems solutions. As Hassanein (2003) describes, "the concept of food democracy rests on the belief that every citizen has a contribution to make to the solution of our common problems" (p.85). Local governments, therefore, must strive to engage all constituencies in the decision-making process in order to successfully plan for community food systems (Raja et al., 2018). In considering the integral nature of food in community well-being, several of these communities also identified community engagement in food system work as a means to improve quality of life across the board. Salt Lake City, for example, created the Food and Equity Program Manager position, in large part, because "we were not engaging the people we needed to engage. We were not truly helping the people that needed the help in ways that was empowering and building community wealth," and food was seen as a "preliminary door" for "trying to push equity work through...and then seeing if we can replicate it in other departments" (Supreet Gill).

The majority of participants also mentioned that, while their local government had previously been working within the food system in various capacities, their community lacked a strategic approach to food policy and programs. At the same time, there was momentum around strengthening the local food system. In reflecting upon issues regarding urban agriculture and

farmers market operation in Austin prior to the creation of the Food Policy Manager position, Edwin Marty explained, “somebody needed to be embedded within the City that had expertise around these issues, that could really spend the time to think about the issues, that could bring best practice research, and that could work with all parts of the community to help create the best possible outcomes.” Across these eight communities, it became clear that developing a staff position dedicated to food systems and policy work was an important step in moving the needle within the food system.

In addition to holistically elevating the local food system, most participants described their community’s high rate of food insecurity, poor access to healthy food, and/or other economic and health disparities as drivers for creating a governmental food policy staff position.

Milele Kennedy, Food Policy and Program Coordinator for the City of Indianapolis explained,

One in five people are food insecure in our city. We have 22 percent of the population that struggles with access to food, and we have a large number of food deserts... so, if you just look at the data and the numbers, it was really apparent: there just needed to be some specific actions or progress made towards alleviating those things in our city. So, I think that was the biggest reason for getting this body of work started.

With a clear and urgent need to reform the local food system in order to support the well-being of all community members, these communities identified the creation of a government staff position as integral to the development of solutions. As has been the case with the proliferation of food policy councils, the failures of the dominant food system ultimately galvanize local action. As Lieb (2013) suggests, whereas national policy and programs may fall short in addressing issues of food access and insecurity, local governments have the ability to pinpoint food systems gaps and develop community-generated solutions that uniquely serve their locality.

Together, the reasons behind developing these eleven food policy positions represent a desire to not only solve inequities and shortcomings within the local food system, through

innovative and community-based strategies, but also to bolster the work of existing food policy and program entities, through coordination and systems thinking. Local governments in these cities and counties have made a commitment to advancing food policy work on behalf of the health and well-being of their communities.

### ***Responsibilities***

The role played by these food policy coordinators is often complex and dynamic, as a result of the nature of the food system and shifting community needs, priorities, and resources. As briefly discussed in Chapter One, the responsibilities and duties assigned to these positions are distinct in some instances, but, generally, they fall into the following common categories:

- Communication, coordination, and public relations;
- Policy development and implementation;
- Project development, support, and management;
- Food systems analysis.

All of the eleven participants mentioned collaboration and coordination across sectors as an integral part of their work. Often, this translates into frequently networking and communicating with a diversity of community members and players within the food system. To Cheryl L. Graffagnino, the Local Food Systems Strategies Coordinator for the City of Columbus, that means that “a big chunk of my job, to be quite honest with you, is knowing, at any given time, what's happening both in local government and in the community as far as local food efforts and then trying to coordinate those efforts. Coordinate, organize funding, and get those things moving forward.” Similarly, Milele Kennedy explained, “most of my time is actually spent visiting with urban farmers, going to the food banks, the food pantries, working with community organizations. Being able to really see the boots on the ground, being out there all the time seeing what's happening in the community, and that makes a big a big difference.”

Coordination responsibilities also entail acting as a kind of “public face” of the food system, both internally within government and externally, by giving talks and presentations and engaging in community outreach. Many participants are also in the process of developing new and innovative opportunities for the community to engage in food systems work. Through her work as Community Food Systems Coordinator, Jess Guffey Calkins has found that “there are a lot of people interested in working on food systems in Dane County. And I think we’ll have a lot of, even more, strength if we can provide spaces to bring those people together.” In looking at food from an equity perspective, Supreet Gill spends a lot of time thinking about how to develop equitable community engagement processes, particularly because “a lot of times, decisions in city government or county government, or any government are made by people who can come to these advisory board meetings, come to these commissions... that’s not always accessible for those most in need.”

The vast majority of participants engage in policy development and implementation, which includes staffing the local food policy council and pursuing the council’s policy recommendations. Together, the work of the councils and the food policy coordinators effectively move policy initiatives forward. George Reistad, Madison’s Food Policy Director, is the only staff person focused on the food system there, as a result, “the volunteers of the food policy council essentially act as the de facto food policy department for the city, and so, their capacity has been really helpful for us in terms of actually getting stuff done.” Likewise, the Columbus-Franklin County Local Food Board, which is a twelve-member appointed board populated by high-level food system experts and community leaders, has been instrumental in helping the Columbus Local Food Systems Strategies Coordinator, Cheryl L. Graffagnino, and

the Franklin County Food System Planner, Brian Estabrook, in their policy implementation work.

Implementing the local food action plan is, in fact, the primary responsibility for both Graffagnino and Estabrook, as well as Laine Cidlowski in Denver; “my job is to really implement the Denver Food Vision... a guiding document that really sets a 10-plus-year vision...for how to make sure that the Denver food system is sustainable, vibrant, inclusive, resilient. And my job is to take that vision and make it a reality” (Laine Cidlowski). Tamara Downs Schwei, Local Food Policy Coordinator for the City of Minneapolis, is currently working with the Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council to develop a food action plan, which will apply a ten-year view. In cities and counties where there is no food action plan, several participants mentioned that they were tasked with implementing food-related goals within their community’s comprehensive growth plan. Additionally, three of the cities represented, Austin, Madison, and Minneapolis, are signatories of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, an international agreement that commits cities to developing sustainable and healthy food systems through 37 various actions. Edwin Marty and George Reistad both mentioned that their responsibilities include implementing actions in the Pact.

Most of these coordinator positions also have responsibility for developing, managing, and supporting food-related programs. Programs range from community gardens, to local food business microgrants, to mobile markets, to urban land leasing for food production. Several of these programs are detailed in the achievements section below. For a handful of participants, program management involves “seeking grants to support different food system projects” (Kim Criner Ritchie, Sustainability and Food Systems Analyst, Douglas County, KS) or funneling existing community dollars toward food programs. For example, Cheryl L. Graffagnino and

Tamara Downs Schwei were able to leverage their experience in grant-writing to secure funding for their city's network of farmers markets. For Minneapolis farmers markets, that has meant nearly half a million dollars in support and, for Columbus farmers markets, just over a quarter of a million dollars. Graffagnino explained, "most of the time we find that we're not the right ones to actually do the work. We tend to be more effective at coordinating the groups that do the work really well ... do the heavy lifting to help them get the money to do it, either local money, philanthropic money, or federal grants." Similarly, Milele Kennedy works to incubate programs and then find the most appropriate home for them within local government.

Along with coordination, policy development and implementation, and program management, six of the eleven coordinators described gathering data and analyzing their local food system as part of their responsibilities. As Food Policy Manager, Edwin Marty worked to develop a State of the Food System Report for Austin and continues to work on "gap analysis of the food system and trying to help departments understand what they can do to support a better food system." Ashton Potter Wright also spends time analyzing Lexington's food system and identifying gaps. In her first year as Director of Local Food and Agricultural Development, she made the effort of "going around to all these groups, these partner organizations and saying, hey, what is the need? You are all doing these great things, what are the gaps? What do you all need help with? And so, really, the niche that I heard was market development." Gap analysis is ultimately how her position became centrally focused on agricultural economic development and market support.

Across the many responsibilities among coordinator positions, there is a shared goal of improving the local government's approach to managing, planning, and coordinating the community food system.

## ***Priorities***

While each community has its distinct food-related needs and opportunities, the food policy priorities among them are often similar. These priorities are usually driven by available resources and concurrent policy movement throughout the city, such as the intersection of healthy food access and multi-modal transportation development. Priorities are also commonly determined by community input and the work of the local food policy council or board. Participant responses regarding policy priorities were categorized using the same categories identified by the Center for a Livable Future's Food Policy Networks and are shown in Figure 10 below. All categories except for local food processing and food labor emerged as priorities among these eleven food policy coordinator positions.



Figure 10: Policy Priority Categories (Bassarab et al., 2019a)



When asked about which areas of food policy they prioritize in their position, the majority of participants identified economic development, healthy food access, food waste reduction and recovery, and food procurement as priorities, as shown in Figure 11. A handful of participants also mentioned food production, land use planning, and transportation. While different positions have different central focuses, often relating to where they are housed in local government, ultimately, the many intersections within the food system lead food policy coordinators to pursue a variety of common policy objectives. For example, only two positions are housed in an economic development department or office, yet nearly all positions focus on economic development as an essential component of their food systems work. Likewise, for Ashton Potter Wright, economic development is the cornerstone of her work, but that focus has also lent itself to prioritizing institutional food procurement and healthy food access;

The primary goal is to really stimulate economic development for local farmers and food producers and food businesses in Lexington and central Kentucky...the primary area of this is around market development for producers. So, helping them build relationships and maintain relationships with restaurants, schools, institutions, retailers with the goal of getting more Kentucky-grown food into more places. And so, I do work with farmers market scale, CSA scale growers, but really, I try to focus a lot of my time on wholesale and trying to move large volumes through institutions. And then I also work on two programs that all get at the bottom line of helping producers, but also kind of have an increasing access to healthy food component.

In many instances, participants described policies and programs that seek to address multiple priorities at once, such as the City of Madison's Healthy Food Retail Access Program, which provides funding support to small food retail businesses in areas where healthy food access may be poor; simultaneously supporting economic development and healthy food access in low-resource neighborhoods. Several positions have sought to implement and expand Double SNAP Dollars programs for their community, which double the purchasing power for SNAP

recipients when they purchase fresh, local produce at participating farmers markets and retailers. Such programs also play a vital role in boosting sales for local producers and businesses.

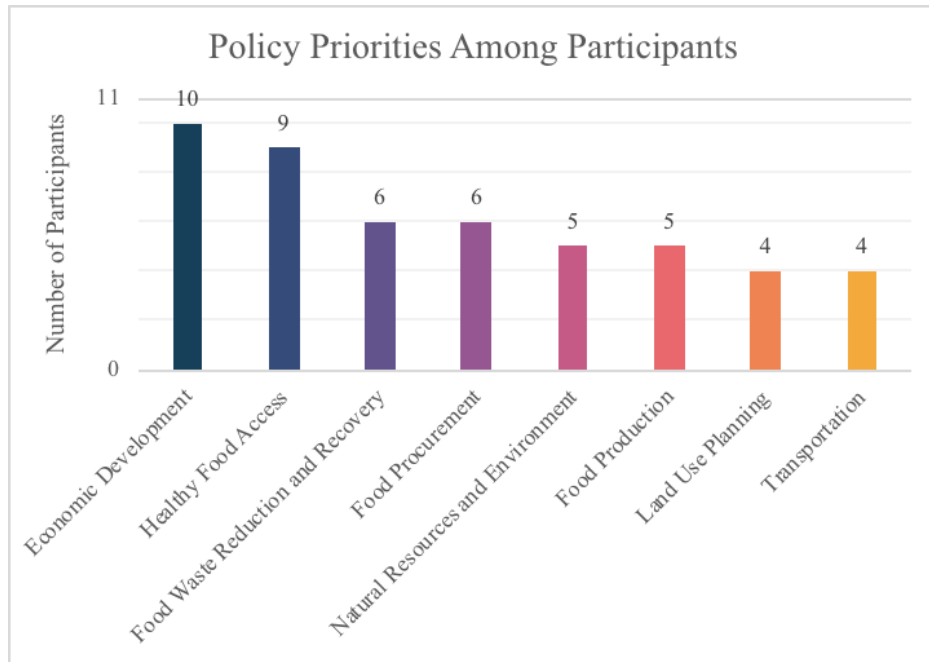


Figure 11: Policy priorities among the 11 participants

Policy priorities naturally shift over time, especially as coordinators and FPCs continue to develop and implement various policies and programs. Several coordinators described their position and its priorities as constantly evolving over the course of their position’s existence, Tamara Downs Schwei explained that, in Minneapolis,

We've gotten low-hanging fruit. We've gotten some of the big items, and what happens next is a little bit more challenging in some ways because the easiest things have been taken care of, or it seems they were. And then funding—maybe it goes away and it's not so sustainable as one would hope. So, I think these have all been interesting insights that we've lived through together. How do you keep this group relevant when some of the most urgent and impactful ordinance changes may have already been accomplished and the city has other urgent needs to address, like affordable housing, homelessness, and the opioid crisis, and challenges like those in many other big cities?

Others expressed a similar evolution, through which their position has taken on a broader and, simultaneously, more nuanced approach to its priorities. Although priorities among these positions can be categorized into tidy boxes, the work itself is often complex and multifaceted, and requires a “systems-thinking” approach that encompasses the various scales and feedback loops inherent to food systems, as Palmer and Santo (2020), Bassarab et al. (2019a), and Clancy (2012) suggest.

### ***Progress and Evaluation***

While the individuals in these eleven food policy coordinator positions have both pioneered and supported impressive food systems policies and programs, the majority of participants expressed that they currently do not have a robust or meaningful way to evaluate their progress on food-related goals. This challenge, again, points to the complex nature of food systems work. While coordinators are often tasked with realizing strategic planning goals and reporting out on progress, they are “still waiting for somebody to come along with a suggestion of how to think about a quotient that incorporates multiple metrics together to provide an easily translatable way to track progress” (Edwin Marty). George Reistad pointed to the inherent challenges in attempting to evaluate food systems work:

I think even if we had the most robust food plan and had clear metrics for success for every single thing we took on, one issue that's always going to come up is that there's going to be a ton of confounding variables that you can't control. Because if you're talking about a food system, if you're talking about people's ability to afford food or access food, those aren't functions that are solely controlled by local government... with that in mind, the way that we would view our successes is: are we actually helping people? Are the things that we're doing helping people? It's not a very good answer, but I think it's been something that, I think from both a food policy council membership perspective, a staff perspective...or a political perspective, mayoral perspective, something we've done a pretty good job on.

For those positions who are working toward local food action or comprehensive plan goals, there may be clearer metrics and deliverables to track; yet, individual metrics do not necessarily offer a clear overview of progress across the entire food system. As a result, individuals in these positions are constantly thinking about how to best understand their progress, now and in the future.

### **Achievements**

Each participant was asked to share their most notable achievements or the programs that they are particularly excited about, shown below according to policy priority categories. Collectively, this list of achievements is impressive and demonstrates the impact that these particular food policy coordinators have had on their local food system. This is not an exhaustive list of participants' achievements, rather, it serves to illustrate the breadth, depth, and innovative spirit of their work. These achievements were also not made single-handedly but are products of collaboration, coordination, and teamwork.

#### **Economic Development**

- Increased sales for local producers by \$4 million (Lexington, KY)
- Host annual Field to Table dinners (Lexington, KY)
- Secured USDA farmers market promotion grant (Columbus, OH)
- Led farmers market assessment (Columbus OH)
- Developed farmers market collaborative network (Columbus, OH & Minneapolis, MN)
- Manage Homegrown loan and grant program (Minneapolis, MN)
- Leveraged nearly \$.5 million for farmers market collaborative (Minneapolis, MN)
- Launching food business portal (Franklin County, OH)

## Healthy Food Access

- Launched multi-media platform to connect residents to food resources and access information (Indianapolis, IN)
- Developing; piloted mobile markets program (Indianapolis, IN & Salt Lake City, UT)
- Established food entrepreneurship training and grant program (Indianapolis, IN)
- Established culinary incubator kitchen program (Salt Lake City, UT)
- Piloted Resident Food Equity Advisors Program (Salt Lake City, UT)
- Manage Neighborhood Food Access program (Denver, CO)
- Manage Seed Grant Program for neighborhood food access (Madison, WI)
- Expanded Double SNAP Dollars Program (Madison, WI & Lexington, KY)
- Launched and expanded Kentucky Farmshare Coalition for government employees (Lexington, KY)

## Food Waste Reduction & Recovery

- Launched zero waste restaurant challenge (Denver, CO)
- Developed food waste toolkit for restaurants (Douglas County, KS)
- Developed Central Ohio Food Waste Initiative (Columbus & Franklin County, OH)

## Food Procurement

- Developed & manage Good Food investment fund (Austin, TX & Salt Lake City, UT)
- Manage Healthy Food Retail Access Program (Madison, WI)
- Implemented Good Food Purchasing Program (Austin TX & Denver, CO)
- Secured commitments from institutions to purchase local food (Columbus, OH & Lexington, KY)
- Increased local food purchasing by school district from 4% to 21% of budget (Columbus, OH)

## Food Production

- Launched floodplain leasing program for urban agriculture (Austin, TX)
- Manage Garden Lease Program—over 60 acres of city-owned land (Minneapolis, MN)
- Manage Microgrant program for local food producers (Salt Lake City, UT)

## Land Use and Food Systems Planning

- Reorganized and built FPC capacity (Indianapolis, IN; Salt Lake City, UT; Dane County, WI)
- Developed State of the Food System report (Austin, TX)
- Developing or Implementing local food action plan (Denver, CO; Minneapolis, MN; Douglas County, KS)
- Expanded urban agriculture zoning (Austin, TX & Douglas County, KS)
- Developed interagency food system collaborative (Austin, TX & Salt Lake City, UT)
- Expanded governmental food systems team (Denver, CO)
- Streamlined agritourism zoning codes (Douglas County, KS)
- Got food included as focus of Mayor's sustainability team (Columbus, OH)

## Transportation

- Implemented and expanded the Lyft grocery access program (Indianapolis, IN)

## Food Policy Perspectives

### *Personal Background and Experience*

Just as food systems and the work of food policy coordinators are diverse, so are the individuals in coordinator positions. What is clear from this research is that there is no typical path or background that leads to becoming a governmental food policy coordinator. Coordinators do, however, share common skills in communication, networking, and capacity building, which prove to be instrumental to the job at hand. As Kim Criner Ritchie suggests, “an individual doing this work does need to be a good communicator and able to communicate with a wide variety of audiences, whether it's stakeholders, different populations, rural-urban commissioners, too, because I think, at its best, it's a very public role.” Likewise, a solid working knowledge of food systems and policymaking are important prerequisites for these positions but are skills that can also be gained from a myriad of experiences and professions.

The majority of participants did have some level of educational or professional experience in specific food-related dimensions, such as nutrition, public health, food advocacy, or farming. For several of them, this included working for a food-related, non-profit organization. A couple also bring their experience of serving on a food policy council to the job, while a handful of individuals bring policymaking and lobbying expertise. A few participants have an educational or professional background in environmental studies and sustainability. A couple have experience in the field of economics, and one individual has a degree in Peace and Justice Studies. While the tenure of these coordinators only spans less than a year to six years, many spoke to their ability to apply an interdisciplinary systems-level perspective to their food systems work. In many ways, the broad scope of backgrounds and expertise among the participants is representative of the multi-faceted and interdisciplinary nature of the food system.

### ***Benefits of the Position***

In considering the value of their particular position and the role it plays for their community, participants mentioned a number of benefits, many of which align with the driving purpose behind the creation of their position. Benefits were grouped into four thematic categories: community engagement and coordination, food system leadership, capacity building, and holistic problem solving. The majority of participants spoke to benefits in all four categories, but benefits in the community engagement and coordination category were mentioned most frequently.

**Community Engagement and Coordination.** The most commonly mentioned benefit associated with these positions was that they provide a point-person for food systems work, which ultimately enables the community, organizations, and local government to more actively engage in and coordinate food policy and programs. Brian Estabrook, Food Systems Planner for Franklin County, OH, explained:

the primary benefit is that there is someone within the county who is aware of all of this work happening across multiple different, siloed efforts, and can understand and communicate across all those silos and coordinate work and make connections. A big, big, big, big part of our role with the local food team is coordination, collaboration, connection. And so, that can only be done if someone knows everything that's going on. So, a lot of the benefit is just having one sort of centralized hub where those things are known.

Participants felt that the expertise, resource-sharing, and coordination that they are able to provide in their position is what allows them “to be engaged in various levels to work on change” within the food system (Cheryl L. Graffagnino). Beyond coordination and collaboration at a local level, the position also provides an opportunity for the community to connect with, learn from, and exchange resources with other communities across the country.

**Food System Leadership.** Along with coordination and expertise, these positions also benefit the community by serving as leaders of food system reform. Participants expressed that, through their position, they are able to start and lead conversations around food in their community and beyond. Reflecting upon her work, Supreet Gill said, “a lot of the times I find myself leading these conversations... strategically navigating big boulders... The city did a community food assessment...and now I'm working with the state and bringing people together on different conversations, and how we can do a statewide community food assessment.” In Denver, Laine Cidlowski has been able to expand the local food team that she manages, now one of the largest municipal food systems teams in the country, to five full-time staffers. Cidlowski



believes that this kind of leadership on food, in addition to making important strides for securing the community's access to healthy food, affords the city national and international prestige.

Several participants attributed their ability to act as leaders in advancing the local food system to the fact that their position has the “opportunity to just be solely focused on this area. And coming from a background where food was always tied to, it seemed like, something else, whether it was education or housing or crime or other things... It's refreshing to be able to just solely focus on food and our food system” (Milele Kennedy). Rather than addressing the food system in a patchwork fashion or with part-time staff, food policy coordinators are entirely focused on food. In addition to being able to look “laterally at a whole range of issues” (Edwin Marty), coordinators can also dive more deeply into the food system.

**Capacity Building.** Perhaps one of the most obvious benefits of these positions is that they build capacity. Beyond simply expanding a community's support for food systems work, food policy coordinators have unique advantages as government staff that they are able to leverage for the benefit of the community. Several participants mentioned that working within a municipality or county allows them to explore opportunities and incubate new programs, whereas non-profits and community organizations may not have the capacity or resources to do so. George Reistad described the two largest benefits of his position for the City of Madison as “the allocation of resources for programs and then a person to manage those resources.”

Three participants also mentioned that their position specifically adds capacity for the local food policy council. While the councils in these communities had some level of governmental staff support prior to the creation of the coordinator positions, it was often limited to administrative work. Now, staff support from these positions also means stronger avenues for

project and policy implementation as well as increased community engagement, as Jess Guffey Calkins describes:

I think one of the strengths I see in my position is being able to do, for lack of a better word, more outreach and recruitment about the councils; to engage more community members. And that's sort of a twofold thing where not only does it help the councils to accomplish more with having more people, but then also... it gets to... wanting the council's work to be more informed by community members and citizens, and so it starts to set up a cycle, or a process, where more community members are shaping the work of the council.

**Holistic Problem Solving.** Another advantage that working within local government provides is the freedom to focus on food and apply complex systems thinking. For example, Milele Kennedy has found that, contrary to working in the non-profit sector, her work is not limited by the narrow focus of grants; rather, she has more flexibility to “do the work that needs to be done in the community.” Coming from a non-profit background, Edwin Marty also spoke to the benefits of a governmental position:

One of the great things about working for municipal government is I don't have to ... do some kind of quarterly evaluation of the impact of our work. We have sort of a lot of leeway to say, hey, this is a really complicated issue and we're not seeing any good way to describe this. And we're going to keep working on this and we're going to keep talking about it and keep putting this all on the table.

While coordinators struggle to find meaningful metrics and ways to evaluate their work, their position within government allows them to be both nimble and thoughtful; dedicating the time necessary to understanding complex issues in order to build the best possible outcomes. Even within government, George Reistad, felt that his position was among only a handful of other positions in the City of Madison that have the opportunity to look across departments, organizations, and the community to develop and implement solutions.

## *Challenges*

While participants described many benefits provided by their position, their work is, of course, not without its challenges. Although these challenges were often unique to the particular community and position, they generally fall into three categories: resources, process, and sociopolitical dimensions.

**Resources.** The most common challenges faced by participants were related to a lack of personnel and financial resources. Ironically, in their efforts to build capacity for food systems work, five individuals mentioned that they, themselves, experience a lack of capacity or struggle with being the sole person working on food systems. For instance, Ashton Potter Wright wishes that she “had more time and more resources.” Three participants expressed frustration with not having a permanent or big enough budget to actually support the programs that they manage. Similarly, some have found it difficult to sustain programs over time. For example, Brian Estabrook explained:

My budget is zero. And if we want to do something, we have to work within the standard channels of requesting dollars, which can be challenging... It's one thing to hire staff to implement a plan, it's another thing to actually earmark money on an ongoing basis for the work of that staff. So, the lack of dollars is a challenge.

A related concern for Cheryl L. Graffagnino is “that we still have a funding system that is competitive. So, it does not encourage collaboration and people working together.” Two participants also mentioned that they lack authority and power to actually make changes. As lower level employees, they do not necessarily have immense influence on policymakers and elected officials. As a result, they must rely on partnerships and coalitions to implement their work.

**Process.** Several individuals described challenges related to the scale of the issues that they are tasked with addressing. Reflecting upon Indianapolis’s high rate of food insecurity and prominent struggle with food access, Milele Kennedy explained, “when you look at the numbers...you're constantly thinking about the kind of impact that you can make, and so, that can be a really daunting task.” A couple participants also noted the challenge of navigating the tension between short-term emergency food work and longer-term, systemic food policy work. The complexity of food systems can also make it difficult to decide what to prioritize or how to determine next steps. Edwin Marty spoke to this challenge when looking at food security in Austin:

When we look at simply measuring food insecurity, everybody would agree that food insecurity is bad and that increasing food security is good. That said, even that is deeply problematic in a city like Austin...where we're seeing rapid gentrification, rapid property value increases, rapid increases in rent, destabilization of existing neighborhoods, displacement of existing community members, as more and more new people move to Austin...What we are really concerned about is tracking food insecurity as a siloed metric, basically, and then coupling an aspirational goal to see a decrease in food insecurity is, at some level, outlawing poverty. And if we're saying that we want to see food insecurity go down in Austin without putting it into the context of other metrics, we're saying we don't want poor people to live in Austin, and we are going to support policies that make it difficult for poor people to live in Austin, because having poor people leave Austin will decrease our food insecurity rate. Obviously, nobody is going to say that publicly. But the issue is when you sort of prioritize what policies we should be supporting through that lens, it's almost impossible to do something that would stabilize a community, ensure that low income people can stay in Austin while also trying to decrease the food insecurity rate.

While coordinators are able to take a nuanced and systems-level approach to food systems work, the challenge remains of finding appropriate, equitable, and sustainable solutions. Considering this, George Reistad expressed that not having a local food action plan or any sort of clear roadmap to guide his work is particularly challenging.

**Sociopolitical Dimensions.** Other challenges among participants centered on the inevitable social and political aspects of their work; these were fairly unique to their community and individual experiences. A couple participants, including Laine Cidlowski, mentioned the inherent political frustrations that come with working in local government. Cidlowski has spent much of her career working in local government and describes the process as being “very political. And getting over, passed, around politics is an art, not a science... adapting to whatever the existing conditions are and understanding what will help people to change the way they've been doing things or why they should care about these food access needs. It's definitely a trickier part of it.” Similarly, Edwin Marty faces obstacles working within the context of a state government that has different, and often opposing, priorities and perspectives on food systems work.

Another tension that Kim Criner Ritchie faces in her work is the rural-urban divide in Douglas County. Working with the Douglas County Food Policy Council, Ritchie explained:

there is a challenge to get maybe more conventional farmers to participate in food policy councils, and our council, at least, really actively wants to have that voice... I report to our county commissioners on the Food Policy Council on their progress, and they really want it to be representative of Douglas County and all the practices that are happening in Douglas County. It's also... ultimately important for us to make any sort of shift of practice. If we're not engaging the people involved, in all the practices, then...we're not going to hear what they need and what their challenges are and what they care about. We're not going to hear those things so that we can all agree on common ground and where we need to move in the future in regard to our land use and our resource use.

In general, participants suggested that these challenges are not insurmountable, and they continue to find strategies to minimize or overcome them. Over time, individuals in these positions are able to leverage their relationships and establish credibility, which has translated to more resources and a stronger commitment by the local government to food systems work.

## *Lessons Learned*

In addition to the perceived benefits and challenges of their position, participants were asked to share the major lessons they have learned during their tenure. Lessons were not as easily generalized, particularly because some participants have been in the position for several years, while others have less than a year of experience in the position. Furthermore, lessons are relative to the individual's personal experience and prior knowledge. That said, several common takeaways describe their work and provide valuable insight for other communities. These lessons are organized into three thematic categories: nature of the work, strategies for approaching the work, and best practices.

**Nature of the Work.** One of the most common, and perhaps obvious, lessons that participants shared was that their work takes time, and therefore, requires patience. This temporal component is both a function of the bureaucracy and the work that goes into making systemic change. Reflecting upon his six years as Food Policy Manager, Edwin Marty explained: "We've been able to do some pretty exciting stuff. That said, municipal work is very, very slow, and to have things done requires a whole lot of agreement across a whole lot of different parts of the city, and so, progress is very slow." This has also been George Reistad's experience, particularly when working with the Madison Food Policy Council. The 23-member council has several working groups tasked with addressing specific areas of the food system. When a working group brings forth recommendations or ideas, they must be approved by the council as a whole, prior to moving up the chain of command within the city. Reistad explained that the process is time-consuming, but "more often than not, the criticisms or the feedback that come through that vetting process of the food policy council has actually helped improve the idea." The time and dedication required of this work suggests that it is indeed "its own full-time job... something that

needs undivided attention” (Milele Kennedy). In learning to accept the slow pace of their work, participants have also developed strategies to maximize progress.

**Strategies for Approaching the Work.** A frequently made observation about food policy work is that it is unique to each community. As a result,

a lot of the food solutions in the food system and the food problems are not one-size-fits-all. You really have to take a tailored approach to the specific town that you're in and the specific neighborhood or community. Different things will work differently in different contexts...be flexible and really have a suite of options available. Knowing that some things won't fit in some ways, but being ready to offer lots of options and finding the right one for the right situation. (Laine Cidlowski)

Several participants have learned that while models from other communities provide valuable insight and useful ideas, they need to be adapted to the specifics of their community. Edwin Marty and Laine Cidlowski both use a “why not both?” or “yes and proposition” strategy, where they pursue multiple avenues and opportunities simultaneously in an effort to find the best possible outcomes. This, again, points to the significance of coordinators having an intimate knowledge of the community’s food system and the various food-related activities that government departments, organizations, and community members are engaged in.

Several individuals have realized that, due to the complexity of food systems and policymaking, their work does not follow a linear trajectory, rather, “it's always a squiggly line kind of path. There's never really like, ‘OK, this is what we're going to do and this is how we're gonna do it’” (Supreet Gill). In navigating the dynamic nature of the work, Milele Kennedy prioritizes “innovation and being willing to be open to new ideas and new suggestions.” In general, participants spoke to the importance of maintaining flexibility, openness, and a collaborative spirit.

**Best Practices.** In her study 2012 study of municipal food policy programs, Hatfield suggested that there were no best practices established yet for food policy coordinators because the concept was still inchoate. Supreet Gill maintains that there is still a lack of best practices for positions such as hers. Indeed, eight years later, food policy coordinator positions are still emerging as a means for local governments to engage in food systems work. Yet, despite the novelty of these positions, participants shared a few common lessons that may be translated into a preliminary set of best practices.

A fundamental lesson discussed by participants is that they do not achieve anything alone. As a result,

Relationships are really paramount in this work, and I couldn't do anything without the partnerships that I've developed. Building relationships, relationship-building with growers, obviously, gaining their trust, but also building relationships with buyers and everybody in between; logistics people, delivery people, wholesalers, that kind of thing. So, developing those relationships throughout the supply chain, but then also relationships are really key for state and federal partners who see the good work we're doing and want to help support it in any way that they can. (Ashton Potter Wright)

Relationships are what allow coordinators to leverage resources, make in-roads, develop lasting strategies, and achieve both leadership and community buy-in. The majority of participants expressed that buy-in from leaders is key to successful policy and program development, while buy-in and engagement from community members, is key to successful implementation. As a result, coordinators are constantly seeking ways to network, build champions for their work, and engage the community.

In terms of community buy-in, coordinators prioritize “engaging community members on the solutions so that it's not just us in a separate group thinking of some idea that we think might be a solution when, in fact, potentially, the populations that it's intended to support, it's not something that they're interested in or doesn't fit or doesn't make sense” (Jess Guffey Calkins).



With this in mind, a few participants highlighted the significance of fostering inclusivity and making sure that all voices within the community are represented in their work. This often means finding “not just one approach to reaching the community, but ensuring that there are a number of ways for the community to be involved, whether it's at a personal level from their smartphone or online, or in a community level by coming out and being engaged in community groups and community meetings” (Milele Kennedy). Tamara Downs Schwei also spoke to the value of being authentic and transparent when engaging the community in order to develop mutual understanding and reasonable goals within her work.

Another important practice that a handful of participants mentioned is, first, having a plan that outlines food systems goals for the community and, second, developing strategies for implementation of the plan. In regards to implementation, Brian Estabrook suggested that “a lot of times, local government creates a plan, and it sits on a shelf and no one looks at it. And everybody says, ‘hey, we created this cool plan,’ but there's no plan to do something with the plan. So, we really gave a lot of thought to: what does it look like to actually make this actionable?” This lesson of strategic plan development and implementation was also mentioned in regards to food policy councils. Several FPCs have found a lot of benefit in establishing working groups according to policy priorities. For example, the Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council follows

a policy platform that they've written up that sort of drives their work in a more detailed way. And, annually, they look back at that and sort of assess what's already happened within the city, what hasn't happened... Then they divide up and develop working groups and do research around the different topics that are in it. And they select priorities based on a series of criteria, like ‘is it politically feasible?’ ‘Do we have the money to do it?’ ‘Is it going to have a big impact?’ (Laine Cidlowski)

In several cases, working groups enhance a council's ability to develop meaningful and effective solutions in response to their goals.

Overall, the lessons shared by participants highlight the dynamism of food systems work and the need to strike a balance between being flexible and taking strategic action. In finding this balance, engaging the community and building diverse relationships are key.

### **Participant Recommendations**

When asked if they would recommend that Missoula, and other communities, develop a position such as theirs, the majority of participants felt that it was a valuable means of advancing a community's food system. Examples of their responses include:

I think lots of places could benefit from a position like this. Again, I think it takes a single individual. There may be lots of groups working tangentially on these issues, but to have somebody who wakes up every day thinking about the specific task at hand, whether economic development, food policy, or whatever, it really takes a person, and ideally more than one person. For starters, one person to do that every day. (Ashton Potter Wright)

I definitely recommend that Missoula City, and County ideally, actually develop local government positions that are focused on food policy. (Brian Estabrook)

I would say any opportunity to have a staff person that can focus on food systems work can only be a good thing. (Kim Criner Ritchie)

I think it's a huge opportunity to have someone in a position where their goal is really to look for those connections and opportunities or gaps within a food system as a whole, because there's huge diversity of work and programs and projects that are out there that touch on food. (Laine Cidlowski)

A few others suggested that, while not every city or community may need a coordinator position, they do need someone specifically working on food systems and policy. In considering the possibility of developing a position, participants offered several recommendations to help ensure the position's success.

Prior to establishing a coordinator position, several individuals strongly recommended that the city or county perform a community food assessment to identify food systems gaps. Additionally, George Reistad suggested doing an “asset assessment” to better understand where the community is doing well and what assets can be leveraged by a coordinator to address the gaps. Next, the community should develop a food action plan or food vision because “a roadmap is really going to be crucial and it's going to make people's jobs a lot easier moving forward, because once you have a plan, you can update a plan” (George Reistad). While developing a plan is important for moving a coordinator’s work forward, several participants also felt that, reciprocally, a coordinator is essential to moving a local food action plan forward. For example, Cheryl L. Graffagnino explained:

I think that if you're going to invest the money and the time in developing a plan and focusing on local food, if you don't [have] a dedicated staff member doing the work, then you might as well not do it. Because these are the types of plans that you can't just hand them off and say, oh, this is a community plan, go get it done. I've seen that done, particularly in obesity prevention. There was a community plan that was developed by some community partners and it literally went nowhere because they left it as ‘somebody take this and put it into place.’ And unless there's an owner or driver, somebody to move it forward, it's not going to do that. And I think it really needs somebody's full attention. It can't just be part of somebody's job.

Once a clear purpose and directives are established, several participants recommended that the community spend time carefully considering where the position is housed in local government, as this influences the type of work that the coordinator will be able to engage in. One participant, however, felt that the department was not nearly as important as having the support of leadership. In addition to considering how the position is organized, four participants expressed that the position needs financial support and, ideally, a small budget to begin with. In terms of who should be in the position, most participants stressed the importance of having someone who is a strong communicator and able to practice collaboration across sectors.

Ultimately, these eleven coordinators found that their position was instrumental in moving food policy and food systems work forward for their community. If other communities identify gaps in their food system, experience a lack of coordination among food-related programs, and have leadership that is supportive of elevating the food system, then a coordinator position may offer significant benefits.

## **Conclusion**

Interviews with eleven food policy coordinators housed in municipal or county governments throughout the U.S. help to illuminate the potential value and outcomes of local governments dedicating staff to food systems and policy work. While each position is specific to its community, in both its organization and priorities, the experiences of these eleven participants suggest common benefits, challenges, and lessons. In learning to appreciate the complexities of their work, these coordinators have managed to develop and implement a number of innovative and meaningful programs and policies for their communities. While operating within local government presents a variety of challenges for these coordinators, many have found that there are unique advantages to pursuing food system reform at a governmental level; these include flexibility, resources, and connections to leadership. Participants demonstrate that, with a clear purpose, community-generated goals, leadership support, and intentionality, a full-time food policy coordinator position within local government offers a community an important avenue for engendering food systems reform.

## Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

### Introduction

Over the last several decades, communities across the United States have sought opportunities to solve their most pressing food-related challenges and strengthen local food systems through democratic and localized policymaking. The growing network of food policy councils and alternative food movements, increasing demand for local and sustainably produced food, and amplifying concern for equitable food outcomes are demonstrative of a collective desire for food system reform. While food policy has primarily been addressed at a federal level, policy action in recent decades suggests that local governments have a unique and significant potential to advance local food systems on behalf of, and with, their particular community. In working directly with their community, local governments have the opportunity to build healthy, sustainable, and equitable local food systems that bridge gaps and support community flourishing.

The value of community-based local and regional food systems has only been made more apparent in recent months, as the COVID-19 crisis continues to expose the fragility and shortcomings of the dominant globalist food system. While food banks across the country are experiencing a 40% increase in the demand for their services, largescale farmers—who usually sell bulk quantities to restaurants and large institutions— are being forced to dump their perishable products (Jackson & Yurkevich, 2020). The nation’s largest meat processing plants have become hot spots for the spread of the coronavirus, as they defy public health directives and fail to protect their workers (Telford & Kindy, 2020). Similarly, migrant farm workers— already one of the most vulnerable population groups in the country—are being coerced into risking their lives to keep the nation’s food supply afloat (Shoichet, 2020). While the pandemic continues to wreak havoc on America’s food system, food policy councils and local organizations are the

boots on the ground, responding with innovative, community-based solutions (Grillo, 2020). In exposing the weaknesses of the national food system and the strengths of local solutions, the coronavirus crisis foreshadows yet another impending crisis: climate change. The need for resilient, socially just, and sustainable food systems has never been clearer. Fortunately, local food policy offers a powerful means for achieving change.

This study offers insight into some of the food policy strategies that communities across the U.S. are engaged in, including developing food policy councils and governmental food policy coordinators, with the intent of reforming and strengthening their local food system. As Missoula City and County continue to bolster the community-based food system, and begin the exciting step of forming the Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board, this research can inform and strengthen their work. A review of scholarship regarding food policy councils, a brief analysis of Missoula's existing food system and food policy framework, and in-depth interviews with eleven food policy coordinators within local governments across the U.S. offer a description of the potential benefits and limitations of local food policy coordination, specifically for the Missoula community. Findings from this research echo previous scholarship by highlighting the complex nature of food systems and the subsequent need for comprehensive, strategic food system planning and policymaking (Winne, 2008; Harper et al., 2009; Biehl et al., 2018; Raja et al., 2018). This chapter provides a brief summary of key research takeaways as well as several recommendations for Missoula for realizing a healthy, sustainable, and equitable local food system.

## **Food Policy in Action**

### ***Food Policy Councils***

Research on the many food policy councils in the U.S. and Canada suggests successful councils have achieved the important task of placing food on local government policy agenda. And they continue to serve as vital institutions for fostering food democracy and advising local governments in their efforts to create vibrant, resilient, and equitable local food systems (Bassarab et al., 2019<sub>b</sub>). FPC scholarship and the active Food Policy Networks reveal a number of ways in which FPCs can ensure that they are effective and maximize their potential. These strategies include prioritizing membership diversity and community engagement, pursuing a variety of funding opportunities, securing dynamic leadership, and maintaining strong working relationships. Yet, despite their fundamental role in food system reform, FPCs face limitations in their capacity, resources, and longevity. Furthermore, as Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) suggest, FPCs are simply one of several approaches to pursuing local food policy. Rather than relying on one avenue to address local food policy, communities may find food systems work can be amplified and strengthened through an integrated and multifaceted approach. For a handful of U.S. cities and counties, such an approach has involved the establishment of a local food policy coordinator position housed within local government.

### ***Food Policy in Missoula***

The Missoula community has been engaged in food system analysis and advocacy for decades. Several reports, including a comprehensive community food assessment, highlight food-related assets as well as some fundamental issue— including food insecurity, lack of healthy food access, and the loss of farmland. For many years, organizations and businesses have served as the champions for local food policy and programs to address shortcomings in the food

system. At the same time, local food businesses have grown rapidly, and the community has often expressed its support for local and sustainable agriculture. In recent years, this support was translated into City and County growth plans and other key policy documents. In early 2020, the Missoula City Council and Board of County Commissioners demonstrated their continued commitment to food system progress when they unanimously passed a joint resolution, brought forth by community members, to establish the Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board.

Clearly, Missoula has a strong foundation and continued interest in building a more community-based food system. While Missoula's population continues to grow and the impacts of climate change unfold, developing innovative and collaborative food policies and programs in support of a healthy, sustainable, and equitable local food system will prove to be instrumental in ensuring community wellbeing and achieving the goals set forth by key municipal and county plans. As the Food Policy Advisory Board positions itself to move this important work forward, they can look to other communities for guidance, while simultaneously paying close attention to the unique qualities of the Missoula community.

### ***Food Policy Coordinators***

For various reasons, community leaders and organizations, government staff, and elected officials in the eleven cities and counties represented in this study identified the establishment of a food policy or food systems staff position within local government as a pivotal step in moving their community's food system goals forward. Several shared priorities, benefits, challenges, and lessons emerged from the analysis of participant responses.

Most coordinators are tasked with coordinating food-related programs throughout government and the community, staffing the local food policy council, developing and implementing food- and agriculture-related policies, and analyzing the local food system. The



most common policy priority among these positions is economic development, followed by healthy food access, food waste reduction and recovery, and food procurement. Participants described championing several successful programs and policies in these priority areas. Reflecting upon the benefits of their position for their community, the majority felt it is beneficial to have a full-time food system point-person that is able to fill a needed coordination and implementation role at the local level. Several participants also noted their ability to leverage resources for important food-related programs and apply a systems-level approach as benefits of their position.

Common challenges among participants included having limited financial and personnel resources, developing appropriate solutions to complex problems, and navigating the political nature of their work. While the length of time that participants have held their positions varied from averaged only three years, the majority have learned that food systems work, particularly within a bureaucracy, takes time to progress and is unique to each community. Most participants also stressed that relationships and collaboration are essential to their work.

Overall, participants felt that having a local food policy coordinator within government plays a valuable role for their community's food system and would recommend that other communities who lack coordination and leadership across their food system develop a similar position. Together, these staff positions have accomplished numerous food-related achievements and have been instrumental in moving the needle on food system reform for their community.

## **Recommendations**

Based on key findings from the research, I offer these specific recommendations to the Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board, to government officials in Missoula City and County,

and to local food system stakeholders. In addition, these ideas can inform other scholars and practitioners more generally.

***Recommendation 1: Develop a Strategic Work Plan for the Food Policy Advisory Board***

Once the Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board is officially formed in 2020, its first order of business should be to develop a strategic work plan. The work plan should serve as a guiding document for the Board's work and should be updated every three to five years. The plan should include the following elements:

- 1. Gap Analysis and Asset Assessment.** Prior to establishing policy priorities and goals, it is necessary to update our understanding of the local and regional food system. Over the years, researchers and community organizations have contributed to a significant body of valuable research to describe Missoula's food-related issues and assets. Although several metrics may need to be updated, reports such as *Food Matters*, *Food Insecurity in Missoula County*, and *Losing Ground* offer a strong and well-evidenced foundation for understanding Missoula's food system in order to develop strategic food policy and program goals. This research should be updated as needed and be leveraged to develop an action-oriented plan. A gap analysis and asset assessment should also specifically describe the food system in the context of Missoula City and County government.
- 2. Priorities, Goals, and Objectives.** Based on the gap analysis and asset assessment and community input, the Board should identify policy priorities and establish a suite of short-, medium-, and long-term goals and objectives that are specific, achievable, and measurable.

- 3. Action Plan.** In order to realize the goals and objectives, the Board should dedicate time and effort to developing a realistic action plan. Ultimately, the action plan will provide the Board with clear directives and ensure that their work is meaningful and effective.

### ***Recommendation 2: Establish Working Groups***

Once the Board has a strategic work plan, it should, next, establish working groups according to its policy priorities, such as economic development, healthy food access, and agriculture. Working groups should meet more frequently than the Board as a whole and will serve as the primary stage for analysis, policy and program development, and community engagement. Since the Board will only have seven voting members, it is imperative that a diversity of stakeholders and community members are recruited and encouraged to actively participate in working groups. As a result, in addition to ensuring that the Board's work is focused and strategic, working groups will help to build the Board's capacity and nurture innovative solutions.

### ***Recommendation 3: Develop Training Opportunities for Food Policy Advisory Board Membership***

In order to sustain the Board and strengthen its recommendations, Missoula City and County should support training opportunities, particularly related to local government and policymaking, for Board members. Such trainings should be offered in addition to annual training required of Missoula County Boards, Councils, and Commissions. While members may serve as representative experts for a particular element of the local food system, they may lack experience with local government or policymaking. Although the Board will only serve in an advisory capacity, a working knowledge of local government and policymaking among

membership will ensure that recommendations are well-informed and achievable. Furthermore, training opportunities will provide volunteer members with benefits for their service, encouraging their continued recruitment and retention.

***Recommendation 4: Develop the Missoula County Food Action Plan***

Expanding upon the Advisory Board’s work plan, the City and County should partner with the Board, community organizations, and local businesses to develop a food action plan that would encompass the entire County. In terms of the plan’s development and structure, a food action plan would be similar to *Zero by Fifty* (2018) or *Climate Ready Missoula* (2020). The essential purpose of the plan will be to develop a strategic long-term vision for Missoula’s food system and a path for implementing the vision. It should apply at least a 10-year framework and be updated every 3-5 years. While the plan would be particularly focused on Missoula City and County, it should also include regional considerations and reflect upon Missoula’s position within the greater Western Montana food system. Similar to the Board’s work plan, the Food Action Plan should have the following key elements:

- 1. Overview of Missoula Food System.** Utilizing the Board’s gap analysis and asset assessment and other key Missoula County metrics, the plan should broadly outline Missoula’s food system and specifically identify City and County governments’ role in it.
- 2. Community-Generated Vision and Goals.** A series of community listening sessions and surveys should be employed to develop a food system vision that reflects the values of the community. Several approaches and venues should be used to ensure that all community voices are represented. Community-generated findings should be coupled

with existing food-related goals within key policy documents to establish food system goals.

- 3. Action and Implementation Plan.** In addition to developing a strategic food system vision and goals, an essential part of a local food plan is the action component. This plan should be developed with a clear implementation plan that includes achievable actions and evaluative metrics that will contribute directly to the goals that the community helps to identify.

***Recommendation 5: Establish a Full-time Governmental Food Policy Staff Position***

Considering the challenges that food policy councils face and the benefits described by several food policy coordinators, establishing a full-time governmental staff position to support the Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board and coordinate food system work more broadly constitutes a critical step in realizing Missoula’s food system goals. This position would not only serve the Board in an administrative capacity, but also provide technical advice and a clear means for implementation of policy recommendations. A food policy coordinator can provide the key ingredients—including strong leadership, capacity, and policymaking expertise—to bolster the Board’s work and ensure that it is sustainable. As the name suggests, a coordinator would also facilitate coordination across the County’s food system, which is a need that both the Missoula County Community Food Assessment identified in 2004 and the ad hoc food policy group identified in 2019. Furthermore, Missoula has a strong policy foundation from which a policy coordinator position could spring from.

Admittedly, developing a staff position within government will require sufficient funding, leadership support, and an appropriate department for the position to be housed in. Securing these elements will undoubtedly take time and energy. This recommendation is not

meant to undercut the win of establishing the Food Policy Advisory Board, rather, it is intended to bolster it. To reiterate what several coordinators said, models for food systems work are not one-size-fits all and must be tailored to each individual community. As such, the creation of a position should be developed thoughtfully and in keeping with the Missoula community's interests and values. For reference, examples of job descriptions for food policy positions can be found in Appendix I. Below, I offer two examples of food policy positions for Missoula County:

**A. Food Systems Analyst/Planner within the Missoula Community and Planning**

**Service Department (CAPS).** This would be an entry-level position for someone who has an undergraduate degree, or equivalent years of professional experience, in community or urban planning, public health, food system planning, sustainable development, or environmental studies. This position would staff the Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board, provide food system analysis, and add a food systems perspective in community planning and sustainability activities. The salary would be commensurate with a post graduate entry-level position and would not have a designated operating budget. While this position would add value to the Board's work, it would likely not fill the coordination role that is needed in Missoula. Therefore, the position would likely need to be expanded, or a complimentary position would need to be created in the future.

**B. Food Systems Coordinator within CAPS or Missoula City-County Health**

**Department.** This position would require more educational and/or professional experience, particularly in food systems and food policy. The position would, therefore, require funding for a larger salary and, potentially, a small operational budget. In addition to staffing the Food Policy Advisory Board, this position would take on a vital

leadership and coordination role for food policy and food systems work across the County and throughout the community, similar to the role that the County's Energy Conservation and Sustainability Coordinator serves for energy-related policy and programs. This position would likely be instrumental in the development and implementation of a local food action plan.

Initial funding for either of these options could potentially be secured through federal grants, such as the USDA Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program, which originally helped to establish Garden City Harvest and the Community Food and Agriculture Coalition. A large grant such as the Community Food Projects would likely be pursued in collaboration with several Missoula organizations to fund a variety of food-related projects. After this funding runs out, Missoula City and County could determine if the position serves a valuable role for local government, the Food Policy Advisory Board, and the community, and, thus, if it warrants City and/or County funding to sustain it.

### **Future Research Needs**

Future scholarship should seek to describe the existing network of food policy coordinators, similar to the Center for a Livable Future's Food Policy Council directory, and their work. When appropriate, governmental food policy coordinator positions can provide substantial benefits to a community and its local food system. As such positions continue to emerge, communities across the U.S. will bolster the success of their food policy work by learning from and applying the experiences of other communities. Research to develop meaningful local food system metrics and evaluate progress will also be beneficial to existing and future coordinators. Further study of food policy coordinator positions may also offer insight

into the value of relational leadership models in engendering systemic change, another emergent area of study (Allen and Lachapelle 2012).

## **Conclusion**

Local food policy and food system planning provide an immense opportunity to build better food systems that holistically support the wellbeing and health of the communities that they serve. Through food policy councils staffed by governmental food policy coordinators, local governments across the United States are making progress toward developing resilient, sustainable, and socially just food systems. As the number of food policy councils and coordinator positions continue to grow, so do the opportunities for communities to learn from one another and develop the most appropriate and sustainable solutions for their particular community. In this vein, this report draws on the experiences of other communities engaged in food systems and policy work in the interest of informing the Missoula community.

Missoula values and continues to strive for sustainability, resiliency, livability, and affordability. Included in these values, are a strong commitment to local and sustainably produced food, healthy food access for all, and community wellbeing. A healthy, sustainable, and equitable local food system, therefore, is an integral part of upholding the community's values and vision for the future. In creating the Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board, the Missoula community has taken an important step in strengthening the local food system. As the Board begins the vital work of coordinating food-related programs, developing innovative policy recommendations, and serving as a voice for the community, it has the opportunity to learn from and share resources with food policy groups and programs in other communities. I hope that the new Board and the Missoula community find this report to be insightful, informative, and useful for the work ahead.



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## **Appendix I: Municipal or County Food Policy Job Descriptions**

### **Food Policy Program Manager - City of Austin, Texas**

The City of Austin is seeking an experienced Food Program Policy Manager to provide strategic direction and leadership for the City on food issues, including analysis, stakeholder engagement, policy development, coordination, and tracking. Responsibilities include the identification of priorities, establishment of goals, and implementation of actions to sustainably advance our region's food system. Work is performed under the direction of the Chief Sustainability Officer and in collaboration with key City Departments involved in food related issues and programs, including Health and Human Services, Parks and Recreation, Economic Development, and Planning and Development Review.

#### Key Responsibilities

Duties, functions, and responsibilities specific to this position include but are not limited to the following:

- Identify and prioritize food issues as part of managing and implementing a comprehensive strategic plan for food, incorporating input from internal and external stakeholders and goals from the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan
- Develop and maintain relations with key internal and external partners and networks, coalitions, and organizations critical to the achievement of food policy goals  
Coordinate with the Sustainable Food Policy Board, an appointed citizen advisory board
- Advise and brief senior officials and executive management regarding strategic direction and policy recommendations for food
- Manage and coordinate the creation and implementation of food policies across City departments and the community. Provide technical assistance on food issues to Chief Sustainability Officer and other City leaders
- Maintain community relations and foster community-wide initiatives and cooperative partnerships
- Review, evaluate and recommend revisions to City Code, regulations, policies, procedures and acts as expert resource regarding federal, state and local food policies, legislation, and trends

#### Qualifications

At a minimum, this position requires graduation from an accredited four year college or university with major course work in a field related to Environmental or Natural Science, Engineering, Public or Business Administration, plus five years of experience in a field related to the job. Master's degree may substitute for experience up to two years.

The ideal candidate will have a Master's degree in Planning, Public Administration, Public Health, Food Systems, Food Policy, Social Sciences, Agroecology/Sustainable Agriculture, or a related field, plus at least five years of progressive leadership experience, project management, and research and analytical experience in food systems or related work and at least two years of demonstrated experience cultivating relationships with external constituencies, including historically underserved and/or under-represented populations.

In addition, candidates with the following qualifications are encouraged to apply:

- Knowledge of local, regional, and national food systems policy and issues, including developing recommendations on policy options and programs
- Experience leading collaborative policy development processes with stakeholders of divergent viewpoints
- Ability to work independently and exercise judgment within the context of the City's policies and procedures
- Ability to provide leadership, guidance, and support to interdepartmental teams
- Strong community leadership experience with exemplary communication and negotiation capabilities
- Self-starter comfortable with advancing toward identified goals given broad parameters and shifting circumstances
- Ability to manage diverse projects and be flexible when priorities changes
- Experience with the political process of local government
- Demonstrated analytical skills, facilitation skills, presentation skills, and writing skills
- Professional working proficiency in Spanish

### **Mayor's Director of Food Initiatives - City of Boston**

In December 2008, Mayor Thomas M. Menino established the Boston Food Council to ensure access to healthy food and expand local food sources for the residents and businesses of Boston and the region. The Council, composed of representatives from the public, private and non-profit sectors of the food industry, provides a broad range of expertise and resources to inform a city-wide food agenda. The Council established four goals, each with a related set of initiatives, to address the directive set forward by the Mayor: 1) Increase access to healthy and affordable food, 2) Expand Boston's capacity to produce, distribute and consume local food 3) Promote food as an economic development strategy and 4) Expand private and public partnerships to advance the food agenda. Brief Job Description: Under the direction of the Mayor's Office and in collaboration with senior administrative officials, the Director of Food Initiatives will develop and implement the City of Boston's food agenda, assist in convening the Boston Food Council, and promote and implement recommendations set forth by the Council. The Director will monitor the progress of key initiatives, and report on progress to the public at regular intervals.

#### Job Responsibilities Include:

- Define and communicate Food Council agenda and track dates & implementation of various council items;
- Work with senior City officials, partners, and other staff to develop and implement city-wide food initiatives;
- Identify emerging opportunities and incubate new food initiatives related to Council goals;
- Work closely with press office to inform the public of important announcements and major events pertaining to the Boston Food Council;
- Identify and raise new funding through foundations, and other federal, state and private sources;
- Promote and communicate Boston's food agenda to the public by clarifying city-wide resources on access to local, healthy food, sharing progress on city-wide food initiatives

and Council activities, and launching campaigns to promote local purchases of fresh food in partnership with appropriate City agencies and partners;

- Enlist stakeholder participation in identifying and removing barriers to food access; conduct information sessions and workshops on food systems; inform Council members on food policy and related matters.

Minimum Entrance Qualifications:

- 4-6 years relevant experience in project management, policy research, development, and implementation, relationship management and/or supervision;
- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university required;
- Graduate degree and/or coursework in public policy, business, or food systems and nutrition preferred;
- Demonstrated skills and experience in developing and implementing work plans with multiple project strands for public-private coalitions;
- Excellent writing skills for writing reports, grants, issue papers, and related documents;
- Self-starter with the ability to work independently;
- Ability to work effectively and collaborate with diverse groups of people;
- Commitment to advancing the healthy, local food agenda and promoting the work of the Boston Food Council;
- Familiarity with Boston's neighborhoods and Boston's health, land, and food business-related issues a plus;
- Boston residency required

**Local Food Systems Strategies Coordinator – City of Columbus**

This position is responsible for the management of the implementation of the Local Food Action Plan. It will facilitate the newly appointed Columbus-Franklin County Local Food Board; manage the dissemination (along with CPH's Fiscal Team) of \$15,000.00 for priority initiatives implemented by the Local Food Advisory Board. Promote healthy food access programs and provide supervision to the Program Manager who will manage the Franklin County Local Food Council (FCLFC). This position may be needed to work night and weekends.

Duties:

- Coordinate the implementation of local food action plan initiatives, e.g. Local Food Advisory Board, increase food access, support economic development and food waste prevention.
- Provide technical assistance, resources, and/or education to community partners, institutions, and local government on opportunities for collaboration to achieve optimal success in local food initiatives.
- Supervise, manage, train and evaluate the Food Access Program Manager.
- Convene meetings of Local Food Advisory Board.
- Write program reports and monitor progress of implementation.
- Investigate budget needs and prepare applications, assist in securing funding for food projects, and analyze relevant data to inform projects. Also, search and apply for additional funding.



- Evaluate food system-related proposals made to City/County. Also identify and guide opportunities for City and County Departments to collaborate on food-system related work.
- Other duties as assigned.

Preferred Qualifications:

Strategic planning and policy, system and environmental change experience required.

**Community Food Systems Coordinator - Dane County, WI**

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of this position is to coordinate community food systems educational programs and public events. The Community Food Systems Coordinator will work closely with the Dane County Food Council, Dane County UW-Extension educators, the Gardens Network, Dane County Food Coalition and other food related organizations to build partnerships, inform programming and strengthen the Dane County food system. The position will focus on increasing equitable access to healthy and affordable food for all Dane County residents.

Position Responsibilities

Program Coordination:

- Coordinate food system programs and events
- Work with the Extension Director and local partners to identify programming needs and coordinate relevant programming
- Access, develop or adapt culturally-relevant, research-based educational programming to meet identified needs and opportunities;
- Expand access by reaching and engaging diverse audiences and ensuring full access to programs, facilities, and educational services; and
- Evaluate and report on programming by utilizing established tools and processes to inform future program design, improve effectiveness and demonstrate value.
- Partner with other Extension educators, County departments, volunteers and community partners to support food system initiatives

Collaboration & Relationships:

- Provide professional staff support to the Dane County Food Council and sub-committees including working with chair(s) on agendas, meeting notices, minutes and other needed activities
- Assist in the recruitment of Dane County Food Council members
- Research and advise the food council and other policy-makers on food policy issues
- Identify needs, research solutions and advise the Dane County Food Council and the UW-Extension office on issues related to inequities within the food system.
- Facilitate the Dane County Food Coalition to bring people within the community food system together to build partnerships to strengthen the regional food system
- Collaborate with local colleagues to promote a positive office environment, determine local needs, and share resources
- Develop and maintain respectful working relationships
- Collaborate with statewide colleagues within and across organizational structures to develop and adapt standardized and relevant programming

- Promote Cooperative Extension and its programs to build greater access, visibility and value.
- Develop and/or support community coalitions and partnerships that extend programmatic reach and expand programmatic impact

#### Administrative & Programmatic Accountability

- Maintain websites and social media to keep members and community informed of activities
- Promote UW-Extension and its programs through media and public relations skills
- Maintain records and prepare reports to the Dane County Food Council and other community stakeholders as requested by the UW-Extension department head
- Create an annual plan of work that identifies local audiences, describes the programming to meet their needs, connects to larger program objectives of Cooperative Extension and assesses programming effectiveness
- Communicate plans, activities, and achievements to relevant stakeholders
- Ensure programs serve and reach audiences reflective of the diversity of the County
- Submit reports that meet the requirements, policies, and established practices of Cooperative Extension and partners, including federal Civil Rights requirements
- Participate in professional development/improvement related to the position
- Other duties as assigned by supervisor

#### Education, Experience & Special Requirements:

Possess a Bachelor's degree in public health, agriculture, urban planning, public policy or other food system related field OR have a minimum of 3 years of relevant community food systems related experience. Combination of coursework and experience may be considered.

**SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS:** Selected individual must have access to reliable transportation and be available to work evenings and weekends.

#### Preferred Knowledge, Skills & Abilities:

- Knowledge of program and stakeholder issues and concerns
- Knowledge of local government operations
- Excellent organizational skills including the ability to coordinate program details and organize events
- Ability to work in a context of individual and cultural differences
- Ability to communicate ideas effectively verbally, in writing, and through educational technology
- Ability to promote UW Extension and its programs through media and public relations skills
- Able to manage multiple tasks/projects in an efficient manner
- Ability to create and present effective public information and educational materials (e.g. reports, news releases, web pages, brochures, etc.)
- Experience planning, developing and evaluating an effective informational or educational program
- Effective written and oral communication skills
- Proven public speaking and group facilitation skills Strong organizational skills
- Ability to effectively work independently

- Ability to use different software to accomplish day-to-day tasks
- Commitment to a team work environment

### **Food Systems Administrator – City of Denver**

The Food Systems Administrator is responsible for promoting and fostering the growth of the Denver regional food system. This position will be charged with developing and implementing 5-year action plans to execute the Denver Food Vision. This will include developing policies and tools to increase Denver's capacity to produce, process, procure and distribute food locally and to maximize development opportunities associated with food related businesses. Ideal applicants will be well-versed in the mechanics and policy implications of the food system, including how food is produced, processed, distributed, marketed, and sold.

#### This administrator will utilize a food system perspective to:

- Coordinate initiatives to expand local capacity to produce, process and distribute food, with a short-term emphasis on developing support to the local food industry, using the institutional purchasing power of the City and County of Denver and other institutional partners to create a growing and reliable market for Colorado food producers and processors, and expanding affordable food access throughout Denver, especially in Denver's underserved areas.
- Formulate and implement strategies that promote food system development such as job training programs, business incentives, local procurement efforts, supply and distribution channels, or expansion of healthy food retail outlets.
- Work with regional entities to implement a unified food vision and plan for the greater Denver region, with the objective of assisting those entities to implement a strategic "road map" for the region's food system including goals and metrics that can be measured.
- Lead strategic planning and relationship building across various agencies (internal to the City) and sectors, stakeholder groups in the region (external to the City).
- Continue to build and maintain an inventory of food system assets (producers, growers, ranchers, distributors, retailers, researchers, health promoters, educators, hunger and equity advocates).
- Create objectives aligned with Denver's economic development, sustainability and health goals and develop measurable ways of tracking the advancement of the food system alignment and achievement of outcomes.

#### About You:

- Our ideal candidate will possess the following special qualifications:  
A proven ability to lead/manage a diverse team and representatives from a variety of City agencies in an affiliated manner.
- A minimum of two years of experience in one or more elements of the food system (i.e. production, processing, distribution, marketing, policy and sale of food, and disposition of food waste).
- Ability to build meaningful multi-sector partnerships and relationships in support of existing strategic goals.
- Provide strategic and credible recommendations about food system issues to the Mayor and City Agency Directors.

- Knowledge of local, regional and/or national food system policies, and understand how these are related.
- Municipal and grant budget management experience.
- Successful experience in fundraising and attracting outside resources to supplement City revenues.
- Strong communication and presentation skills.
- Ability to create structured work plans with tangible metrics and work toward the success of those goals.
- Be systems-oriented; able to see the big picture and how the parts of that system work together to foster greater success of a coordinated system.
- Ability to research related information and analyze for incorporation into collaborative strategic planning and action.
- Please do not apply unless you possess the following minimum qualifications: Education Requirement:
- Bachelor's Degree in Public Health, Environmental Health, Nursing, Early Child Development, Engineering or applied sciences as required by the specific opening.

Experience Requirement:

Three years of field experience of the type/level of EPH-Investigator II or EPH- Analyst I;

OR

Three years of program administration experience which must have included grants, funding, outreach, marketing, reporting and facility licensing to ensure regulatory compliance.

OR

Three years of experience performing Environmental/Public Health analytical work, conducting scientific research, operations analysis, and assisting on technical projects for purposes of Environmental/Public Health protection, and regulatory compliance.

OR

Three years of experience conducting environmental/public health inspections, investigations or environmental/public health management activities

Education/Experience Equivalency:

A combination of appropriate education and experience may be substituted for the minimum education and experience requirements. Licensure and/or Certification:

Completion of the Office of Human Resources supervisory training course prior to completion of the probationary period.

**Sustainability & Food Systems Analyst – Douglas County, KS**

Position Description:

This professional position carries out specialty assignments to strengthen the community-wide efforts towards sustainability initiatives and local food system development. Work performed includes project and program management (principally community garden coordination, Food System Plan implementation, and county recycling and energy monitoring), community engagement and stakeholder collaboration (including serving as staff liaison for the Food Policy Council), and policy research. This position works on complex issues and deals on a continuing basis with delicate, controversial, or confidential matters. This position may also do research and prepare reports. Work requires the exercise of initiative, independent judgment and discretion in various administrative duties. Problems and issues may be resolved at this level without

reference to a higher authority, policies, or guidelines. This non-exempt position reports directly to the Sustainability Director for Douglas County and the City of Lawrence.

Essential job functions include:

- Monitor and manage key sustainability and local food system initiatives and indicators;
- Engage residents, and public, private, and non-profit stakeholders;
- Enhance knowledge, skills, and reputation of Sustainability Office and Douglas County;
- Research and advocate for integrated solutions in Douglas County through planning and policy development;
- Collaborate with local government and public agency staff to support implementation of sustainability in internal operations.

Required knowledge and skills:

- Knowledge of sustainability, public administration, and County operations;  Active learning and restorative problem solving;
- Great communication/facilitation skills;
- Initiative to assure multiple assignments are completed in a timely manner;
- The ability to build authentic relationships (including with racially, ethnically, and socio-economically diverse and rural communities).
- The ideal candidate will bring passion for sustainability, local food systems, and/or the environment, and experience with:
  - Project/program management;
  - Stakeholder partnership development;
  - Local policy and planning processes;
  - Developing and tracking indicators/metrics for evaluation;
  - Working directly with people from diverse racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and geographic backgrounds.

Qualifications:

- Required qualifications include a Bachelor's degree from four-year college or university or equivalent combination of education and experience closely related to the duties of the position.
- Preferred qualifications include a Master's degree and one to five years relevant experience and/or training closely related to the duties of the position; or equivalent combination of education and experience.

**Food Systems Planner - Franklin County, OH**

Classification Purpose:

The primary purpose of the Planner, Food Systems classification is to lead Franklin County's efforts to strengthen the local food system.

Job Duties:

Serve as Franklin County's representative on the joint City-County Local Food Team in partnership with City of Columbus staff to facilitate the work of the Local Food Board, connect local food system efforts in the community, and develop annual progress reports on Local Food

Action Plan implementation efforts. Coordinate with public and private entities at the Local, State and Federal level to implement the Columbus and Franklin County Local Food Action Plan. Lead food- and agricultural-related zoning regulation amendment projects. Coordinate and participate in meetings and represent Franklin County in the community. Build and maintain relationships inside and outside of the Economic Development and Planning Department. Design and conduct research, prepare written reports and analyses, and prepare and deliver presentations related to local food system issues. Utilize independent discretion in making decisions related to Local Food Action Plan implementation efforts. Attend meetings and trainings for planning related projects and local food systems planning. Accept, process and review zoning applications. Respond to inquiries from the public. Maintain regular and predictable attendance. The above is intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by this position. The statements are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities and duties.

Major Worker Characteristics:

Knowledge of public relations; skilled in equipment operation; ability to define problems, collect data, establish facts and draw valid conclusions; use statistical analysis; prepare meaningful, concise and accurate reports; understand manuals and verbal instructions, technical in nature; prepare and deliver speeches before specialized audiences and general public; gather, collate, and classify information about data, people or things; work alone on most tasks; cooperate with coworkers on group projects; collaborate with diverse range of stakeholders; handle sensitive inquiries from and contacts with officials and general public.

Minimum Class Qualifications for Employment:

Bachelor's degree from an accredited postsecondary institution or program in planning, public health, agriculture, natural resources, project management, or related field with an understanding of regulatory, access, and waste issues in the food system and with three (3) years of related experience; or any equivalent combination of training and experience.

**Food Policy and Program Coordinator – City of Indianapolis**

Position Summary:

The Policy and Program Coordinator will be responsible for designing, coordinating, and implementing policies and programs aimed to decrease food insecurity issues in the City of Indianapolis and Marion County. The Coordinator will collaborate across City and County agencies and departments to integrate food insecurity and food access concerns into agency and department programs. The Coordinator will serve as the lead representative for the City on food insecurity, food access, and food sustainability matters. The Coordinator will work with local non-profits and other community-based entities focused on hunger and food insecurity in Marion County to coordinate activities, improve processes, and represent their concerns to City and County entities.

Position Responsibilities:

- Develop and implement a County-wide food insecurity and food access needs assessment with local food partners to generate a base-line report of the food eco-system and food needs

- Establish a food insecurity monitoring system to inform stakeholders and policymakers of the County's real-time food situation
- Coordinate with local non-profits, community groups, other county agencies, and businesses to continue to improve access to healthy meals for all Marion County residents
- Develop a plan in conjunction with Marion County emergency response agencies to provide food to those in need during an emergency, including but not limited to heat waves, extreme cold weather, and other natural disasters
- Design policies for the City of Indianapolis to implement to reduce hunger within Marion County
- Collaborate with City Departments, including but not limited to the Office of Education, IMPD, IFD, and Code Enforcement, to ensure that Marion County families and children can access healthy meals and nutritious food
- Expand the food supply throughout Marion County
- Implement creative solutions to improve the local food market
- Identify new stakeholders and actively recruit them to become more involved in addressing food insecurity in Marion County
- Pursue outside funding sources to support innovative program activities focused on eliminating food insecurity in Marion County
- Meet with local stakeholders, elected officials, and other employees of the City and County to understand their concerns about food insecurity and inform and update them on food insecurity issues in Marion County
- Develop and draft policy fact sheets (briefs) on priority issues related to food and agriculture systems
- Develop methods to consistently and effectively communicate and disseminate the policy fact sheets/briefs and other policy news to key policy decision-makers and other contacts
- Attend and participate in public, community, and neighborhood meetings to understand and contribute to critical policy issues in food systems and represent the City and OPHS at such meetings
- Monitor federal and state policy and regulatory issues regarding food and agriculture systems and brief the relevant policymakers at the City on these issues
- Identify important emerging and likely future policy issues, and identify related research needs
- Propose innovative solutions, design metrics to evaluate them, and draft results into academic format to submit for peer-review and publication
- All other tasks as needed and assigned

Qualifications:

Required; Bachelor's degree in sustainability, public policy, public health, or another translatable degree, Demonstrative knowledge of Marion County food environment, Excellent written and verbal communication skills, Interpersonal communications, tact and diplomatic acumen to effectively represent the City of Indianapolis. Ability to work independently and to foresee, identify, design and/or recommend solutions to needs, issues, and/or problems in the position's areas of responsibility and manage multiple tasks and set priorities. Knowledge of computer/software technology. Experience and ability with public speaking and communication

at meetings and conferences, with a diversity of audiences and people. Must have research, analytical and critical thinking skills, including sound judgment and decision-making skills and skills to correctly identify real and potential problems, advice management as required, and propose effective strategic resolutions. Should be skilled in project management, including meeting deadlines and completing tasks on time, as requested. Preferred; Master's degree in sustainability, public policy, public health, or another translatable degree, 1 - 3 years' experience working in the food insecurity field. Knowledge and understanding of statistical analysis and ability to employ statistical tools and techniques, as well as knowledge of economic development tools to assist in creative, market-based food solutions

### **Director of Local Food and Agricultural Development – Lexington, KY**

#### Responsibilities:

\*\*\*The position is a Food Coordinator and will be a temporary grant funded appointment subject to approved renewal

- Provides guidance for the planning and administration of activities and programs, including the development and supervision of activities designed to meet the goals of the healthy food initiative \* Plans for the maximum use and expansion of existing programs and the development of new programs and initiatives
- Communicates and coordinates with governmental entities, private businesses, volunteers and volunteer agencies to achieve the stated goals of the healthy food initiative
- Participates in planning and policy matters to ensure intra-agency coordination
- Monitors program's compliance with federal, state and local regulations to ensure continued funding for the programs
- Prepares and participates in the preparation of the program budget
- Plans and conducts meetings with relevant administrative staff and subordinates as required or requested
- Plans and directs a continuous public relations program
- Coordinates program area with inter and intra-agency activities, including private agencies/entities \* Develops and maintains relationships with local businesses, existing programs and their employees/volunteers, and governmental representatives
- Provides educational information and speaks before various groups on topics relating to program area
- Prepares financial and budgetary programs for program activities; assumes responsibility for the preparation of adequate records, reports and controls; and writes grant proposals and related reports \* Prepares written reports or provides oral updates to the Mayor, Urban County Council, and other various Departments/Division as requested

#### Qualifications:

- Knowledge of nutritional science
- Understanding of marketing processes and procedures, as well as standard practices
- Knowledge of or is willing to study in-depth the programs already in existence and strategies to increase community involvement/participation in healthy food initiatives/nutrition
- Understanding or knowledge of field realities in improving food and nutrition choices with a diverse business base



- Excellent communication and presentation skills
- Demonstrate a passion for local foods
- Be able to bring macro and micro farmers together
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff, other agencies, clients, community groups, the agricultural community or industry and general public
- Prepare and follow-up on grant proposals and other sources of funding for programs
- Seek opportunities to promote the program through new and existing avenues
- Create/cultivate opportunities to increase public awareness of the program
- Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing at all levels of an organization. This includes excellent facilitator skills and particular interest and experience with interfacing between community leaders and local governments
- Take the lead on various projects which encompasses involvement of community businesses and resources as related to food education and healthy choice initiatives in the community

Minimum Requirements:

Completion of a bachelor's degree in education, dietetics, foods and nutrition, food service system management, health and fitness, agricultural education, agricultural science, agricultural business, agricultural economics, or related field and four (4) years of progressively responsible experience relative to marketing, local governmental relations, nutrition science, or equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

\*\*\* Master's Degree preferred

\*\*\* Possession of a valid Driver's license will be required for this position.

**Food Policy Director – City of Madison**

General Description:

This is responsible professional work involving food policy initiatives for the City of Madison by providing leadership and strategic direction to policymakers and stakeholders regarding policy development, coordination, implementation, and analysis. The position focuses on providing equitable access to healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate food to all communities and developing policies that positively impact the health and well-being of all residents of the City and beyond. Responsibilities include leading the city's efforts in food policy, programs, and initiatives by engaging key stakeholders, including elected officials, senior management, and key organizations; directing the work of key policy committees and/or councils; implementing policies, programs, and initiatives relating to food on behalf of the City by administering policy changes, managing contracts and projects, and leading initiatives; and, directly advising the Mayor on food policy and serving as his or her representative on food issues. This position will exercise considerable initiative, under the leadership of the Mayor, in meeting established objectives.

Examples of Duties and Responsibilities:

- Administer, implement, coordinate and monitor food-related policies, programs, and initiatives for the City. Work collaboratively with and provide leadership to senior City officials, partners, and other staff to develop and implement city-wide food policies and

initiatives. Identify and prioritize food issues, incorporating input from various stakeholders. Identify emerging opportunities and incubate new food initiatives related to Council and Mayoral goals.

- Evaluate local and national policies and ordinances related to healthy foods and food access issues to determine how they may contribute to new City policies. Develop and track performance indicators relative to City food policies and initiatives. Advise, brief and provide technical assistance to the Mayor, and other senior officials as necessary, regarding strategic direction and policy changes for local, regional, state, and federal issues relating to food systems. Work with the Public Health Department on the development and implementation of healthy food and food access strategies in the schools. Enlist stakeholder participation in identifying and removing barriers to food access.
- Develop and manage contracts for the purchase of services for food-related programming. Manage budget items devoted to food policy, programs, and initiatives, and providing briefings. Develop, manage, oversee, and administer grant programming. Fundraise for food-related programs, initiatives, and/or projects.
- Attend trainings on trends and best practices relative to healthy food and food access policies.
- Conduct public policy related research from national and international sources, and prepare statistical and/or analytic reports and recommendations. Research and prepare statistical and narrative reports to committees for analysis of ordinances and issues.
- Provide information and engage in outreach activities pertaining to food policy issues in the City. Develop and recommend related informational materials. Make presentations to various groups to promote program objectives. Serve as media liaison on related issues.
- Provide direction, leadership, and professional staff support for the Madison Food Policy Council. Provide strategic direction to the Madison Food Policy Council by guiding the priorities established. Create goals, annual reports, and other guiding document on behalf of the Madison Food Policy Council. Direct the establishment of working groups of the Madison Food Policy Council. Provide professional staff support to each working group.
- Develop and maintain relationships with various external stakeholders. Perform related work as required.

#### Minimum Qualifications:

##### Training and Experience:

Generally, positions in this classification will require: Five years experience in health-related policy and/or advocacy work that involves leadership in managing and coordinating large projects, programs, and/or policies. Such experience will normally be gained after graduating from an accredited college or university with a bachelor's degree in Urban and Regional Planning, Sociology, Political Science, Nutrition, or a related field. Possession of a Master's Degree in Public Health, Urban and Regional Planning, Public Administration, Public Policy, or a related field can be substituted for two years of experience. Other combinations of training and/or experience which can be demonstrated to result in the possession of the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform the duties of this position will also be considered. Specific training and experience requirements will be established at the time of recruitment.

##### Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Thorough knowledge of group dynamics and related facilitation skills. Working knowledge of process development and consensus building techniques. Working knowledge of local, regional, and national food systems policy and issues, and the history of such policies and their relationship to healthy food access. Working knowledge of public health, nutrition, agricultural, or food systems policy. Working knowledge of application nutrition theory and practices. Working knowledge and ability to use computer software applicable to the duties of the position. Ability to use computers to draft a variety of correspondence and reports, to conduct statistical analyses, and to conduct research. Ability to deal with complex information, to identify problems, and to conduct relevant research and analysis and prepare narrative and statistical reports. Ability to develop and make informational presentations in front of large groups. Ability to facilitate discussion and consider opposing viewpoints. Ability to understand and apply related regulations; and to advise others in their implementation. Ability to identify process stakeholders, to foster their involvement, and to reflect their respective positions in strategic process recommendations. Ability to develop and maintain effective working relationships with co-workers, other City agencies and the public. Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing. Ability to support and advise policy bodies. Ability to assist in policy and ordinance development. Ability to attend meetings outside regular work hours. Ability to work independently and exercise judgment in making decisions. Ability to maintain adequate attendance.

### **Food System Policy Director – City of New Haven**

Nature of the work: The Food System Policy Director is accountable for improving challenges and inequities within the complex range of food system issues with an initial focus on food access and food insecurity. The Director will report to the Community Services Administrator and will serve as a liaison between the City and the New Haven Food Policy Council (NHFP) and its Working Groups. He/she will work collaboratively across City departments and sectors to share information, integrate food policy work into the departments and organization across the City, carry out the mission of the NHFP, expand and document impact and support the implementation of the Food Action Plan.

Minimum Requirements: Completion of a Master's Degree and at least three years of related work experience required; or, a Bachelor's Degree and a minimum of six years of significant related work experience. Specifically, candidates must demonstrate a majority of the following skills, experience and expertise, including but not limited to: Experience in more than one of the following fields: public health, nutrition, racial and economic disparities, agriculture, food system work, community and economic development, collective impact, policy, or community organizing. Experience in community organizing and/or community development, with experience building and sustaining relationships and coalitions. Proven track record in raising funds and working collaboratively across sectors, functions and populations. Experience in program, policy and procedure development. Experience in Results Based Accountability or other tools to measure, improve and track success of work. Supervisory experience and strong management skills. Experience with volunteer councils/boards. Exceptional written and oral communication skills. Skills in Microsoft Office Suite and familiarity with social media required. Website and design experience a plus. Skills in grant writing, grant administration and fundraising. Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with government officials, legislators and representatives of public and private organizations.

### Illustrative Examples of Work:

- Report to the CSA and advance integrated food policy and best practices to enhance overall health and wellbeing of the City.
- Serve as a liaison and connector between City departments and the NHFPC and increase collective impact on food system issues.
- Work closely with key City departments to enhance progress on related food initiatives, policies and funding. Connect food policy work across City departments including but not limited to the departments of: Health, Housing, Economic Development, Public Schools, Public Works, Youth and Elderly Services.
- Work with NHFPC leadership, attend monthly NHFPC meetings and maintain regular reporting to the NHFPC and its working groups on food related initiatives, policies and funding.
- Oversee the implementation of the New Haven Food Action Plan, meeting measurable goals within the following areas:
  - Improve emergency food supplies and systems through coordination with CT Food Bank and local emergency food providers to create efficiencies and customer-focused systems.
  - Increase access to healthy food through information sharing about food assistance, expanding summer food, school supper and other “gap time” feeding programs for youth, increasing community-based cooking/food education, and retail strategies.
  - Support the development of a City Farm and Garden Resource Center to expand urban agriculture in New Haven to positively impact community development, healthy food access and health outcomes.
- Strengthen the coalitions of the NHFPC and its working groups including: Food Assistance, Cooking and Food Education, City Farm and Garden, and Economic Development, to include more City department representatives, community organizations, community members and businesses with racial, cultural and economic diversity.
- Leverage coalitions to identify barriers and effective solutions to food issues, and increase the sharing of resources.
- Work with the NHFPC to increase community engagement, leadership and voices on food policy through city-wide organizing efforts for greater collective impact.
- Promote and communicate New Haven’s food system work to the public by sharing progress on city- wide food initiatives and illustrating the interconnectedness of food and other vital community issues, such as jobs, safety and education.
- Identify and raise new funding through foundations, federal, state and private sources working closely with New Haven’s Director of Development and Policy and in coordination with local community organizations.
- Monitor and track federal, state and local policies and initiatives to identify opportunities for local improvements to food access and food insecurity issues.

- Use the Results Based Accountability framework to approach and document work. Create systems to collect data and measure collective impact. Utilize those systems to review and document successes of the NHFPC since release of the Food Action Plan.
- Performs any other related duties as required.

Requirements of Work:

- Completion of a Master's Degree and at least three years of related work experience required; or, a Bachelor's Degree and a minimum of six years of significant related work experience. Specifically, candidates must demonstrate a majority of the following skills, experience and expertise:
- Experience in more than one of the following fields: public health, nutrition, racial and economic disparities, agriculture, food system work, community and economic development, collective impact, policy, or community organizing.
- Experience in community organizing and/or community development, with experience building and sustaining relationships and coalitions.
- Proven track record in raising funds and working collaboratively across sectors, functions and populations.
- Experience in program, policy and procedure development.
- Experience in Results Based Accountability or other tools to measure, improve and track success of work.
- Supervisory experience and strong management skills. Experience with volunteer councils/boards. Exceptional written and oral communication skills.
- Skills in Microsoft Office Suite and familiarity with social media required. Website and design experience a plus.
- Skills in grant writing, grant administration and fundraising.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with government officials, legislators and representatives of public and private organizations.
- Ability to work effectively with racially, economically and culturally diverse communities and individuals.
- Ability to create a productive, team-based organizational culture that welcomes diversity.

**Food Policy Advisory Coordinator – City of Philadelphia**

General definition:

This is public health program work in food policy analysis, development, implementation and management to reduce the prevalence of obesity in Philadelphia by increasing access to healthy and affordable food and reducing access to unhealthy food. The employee in this class identifies priority policies, drafts policies, and develops and manages a strategic plan for adoption of policies. Significant to the work is contact with the Public Policy Attorney and departmental managers to select and implement nutrition policy changes that closely align with core strategies. This position serves as a representative for the Department of Public Health on food policy issues and includes the responsibility for supervision of one Food Policy Analyst. Work is performed under the direction of an administrative superior.

Allocating Factors: (The following conditions must be met for a position to be allocated to this class.)

1. Position must analyze, develop, implement, and manage policies directly and through subordinate staff to reduce the prevalence of obesity and related chronic diseases in Philadelphia.
2. Only one position will be allocated to this class in the Health Department.

Typical Examples of Work (Illustrative Only):

- Researches complex issues to develop a range of policy options to address food access, affordability, and marketing issues; drafts policy solutions; develops strategies with appropriate timelines and action steps to ensure successful adoption or enactment of policies; monitors and reports on progress of key initiatives; coordinates meetings and reviews policies by departmental management and advisors.
- Serves as a representative for the Department of Public Health on food policy issues, including actively engaging in and speaking at conferences, participating in internal and external coalitions and working groups, etc.; participates in national networks addressing similar policy priorities; writes comments/responses to state and federal food policy rules and regulations; develops talking points for food policy events and drafts editorial comments for local, regional, and national press on food policy issues; assists in directing efforts to raise public awareness for new policies; implements and oversees programs to improve access to healthy food in Philadelphia communities.
- Coordinates citywide efforts to improve access to and quality of foods served in governmental, community, and employer settings including: a healthy vending policy in all City- owned buildings, a healthy food procurement policy for all City-funded food purchases, systemic improvement in school and after school foods, nutritional standards development for food retailers, and other work as directed.
- Supervises one Food Policy Analyst responsible for analyzing, developing and implementing food-related policies; assigns work; manages deliverables and timelines; reviews work products for completeness, accuracy, and clarity; and conducts performance evaluation for subordinate staff.
- Establishes and maintains working relationships with civic leaders at the local, state, and national level; liaises with large employers, food producers, food suppliers, food retailers, food access organizations, anti-hunger organizations, and academic institutional partners. Assists the Nutrition and Physical Activity Program Manager in convening the Healthy Eating-Active Living Coalition.
- Performs related work as required.

Required Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Knowledge ff:

- food policies, laws, and regulations at the local, state, and national level
- food systems approaches to promote better nutrition
- needs and issues related to nutrition in the community
- interrelationships of social, cultural and economic factors as they affect food policy public health principles and the objectives of public health programs including chronic disease prevention programs
- public policy development process
- paradigms for coalition and partnership building

Skill in:

- interpreting and explaining food regulations and policies to various stakeholder groups
- writing and speaking effectively on public health food policy issues
- negotiation to achieve common goals and objectives
- the use of Microsoft Office software and data management

Ability to:

- synthesize complex information concisely and clearly in written and oral communications to diverse audiences
- assess the advantages and disadvantages of various food policies and their effects on health, business, and sustainability
- adapt research developments and current concepts in disease prevention and general nutrition to resolve local problems related to food programs
- facilitate conversation and collaboration among various stakeholders with competing interests to develop and implement food policies
- accurately and appropriately represent the interests of the Department of Public Health in local, regional, and national coalitions
- manage policy implementation, including development of timelines, overseeing work of partner agencies, demanding accountability, and modifying approaches as the circumstances require
- work collaboratively and maintain effective relationships with associates and partners from other agencies

Minimum Acceptable Training and Experience: (The following statement represents the minimum training and experience standards which will be used to admit or reject applicants for tests. Applications submitted by candidates for this class will be reviewed based on training and experience requirements as approved on 4/16.)

Education:

Master's degree in public health, public policy, political science, nutrition or other related field OR current registration as a licensed dietician-nutritionist (LDN) by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Commission on Dietetic Registration or equivalent credentialing agency.

General Experience:

Two years of experience analyzing, developing, or implementing nutrition policies relevant to large urban communities at the local, state, or national level.

OR

Any equivalent combination of education and experience determined to be acceptable by the Office of Human Resources which has included the completion of a Bachelor's degree in public health, public policy, nutrition, political science or other related field as an educational minimum.

**Food Policy Director – City of Baltimore**

Duties or Responsibilities: (% Of Time; Total = 100%)

- 20%: Identify and analyze food access policy barriers and develop new policies or revise existing food policies including: monitor and track federal, state and city policy barriers as it relates to food access, sustainable food systems and urban agriculture; prepare briefs and letters for Mayor, Commissions and Commissioners to provide comment and recommendations on strategies to remove federal and state policy barriers; develop or revise existing city and/or state food access or urban agriculture policies and provide

public comment on federal food policies and meet with federal officials to address relevant food access policy barriers that affect Baltimore City.

- 20%: Assess, develop, implement, and direct inter-agency food access and homegrown Policy Plans and Agendas including: Compiling best practices and potential models to adapt to Baltimore's Food Environment; developing food plans and reports that outline food policy agendas and implementation plans; participating in city taskforces that impact food access in Baltimore and co-directing the Food Desert Retail Strategy in collaboration with BDC.
- 15%: Promote and communicate Baltimore's food agenda and share progress on city-wide food initiatives including: developing briefing memos and talking points for Mayor's Press events, present at conferences and prepare speeches as it pertains to food access and Homegrown Baltimore; speak with the press/media on city-wide food initiatives; write summary reports that effectively convey the city's food agenda's; present on Baltimore Food Policy Initiatives progress city-wide and nationally and meet and develop relationship with city, state and federal officials and staff on importance of food access issues in Baltimore City's Food Deserts.
- 15%: Identify and secure new grant funding, track and monitor grants, write grant reports and meet with new and existing grant funders to provide updates and develop new funding opportunities
- 10%: Regularly seek out innovative and best practices in applicable planning and related fields and incorporate them into Baltimore's Food Policy Initiative work programs. This includes, subscribing to Planning/Food Policy publications; presenting at conferences and working with Executive Staff to integrate best practices into department/staff work plans
- 10%: Direct and oversee food access projects, programs and the Food Policy Advisory Committee (Food PAC). Responsibilities include: providing technical assistance and guidance for food access and sustainable agricultural programs; developing and
- conducting evaluations; tracking performance indicators; assessing impact and outcomes
- of food initiatives; and coordinating and evaluating the effectiveness of Food PAC.
- 10%: Plan, coordinate, supervise, hire, terminate, discipline, evaluate the work of, and direct the work activities of the staff in the Office of Sustainability as it pertains to the Baltimore Food Policy Initiative, Greening Goal #2 in the Sustainability Plan and the City's Food Policy Taskforce Recommendations and grant-funded contractors, interns, AmeriCorps and students.

Work Schedule: Monday – Friday, 9 AM – 5 PM. Evening and weekend hours may be required.

Personal Contacts: Does the job involve contact with people other than co-workers in the unit?

How often? For what reason?

Frequently, on a daily basis, collaborates and works with city, state and federal policy makers, nonprofit organizations, higher education institutions such as Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health and Baltimore city residents,. The purpose is to create increase access to healthy affordable food through food policy, partnerships and community projects.

Supervision Received:

a) Check the box for how work instructions are most often received: In Writing Orally b) Briefly describe how often work is reviewed, by whom, and for what purpose: Managerial direction will be provided and work will be reviewed by the Planning Director as needed.

Supervision Given to Others:



Total number of employees reporting directly to this position: 4 (both full-time City and full- and part-time non-City employees)

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities: List the knowledge, skills and abilities that you feel any employee in this position must possess BEFORE hiring. Same as listed above (duties and responsibilities)

- Knowledge of public health, nutrition, and food systems policy
- Ability to write and administer grants
- Ability to handle multiple priorities simultaneously and manage competing priorities
- Knowledge of application nutrition theory and practices
- Effective project and personnel management skills
- Strong communication, interpersonal, and negotiation skills
- Excellent problem solving skills and a high level of professional judgment o Effectively handle concerns and problems from community, staff and other
- stakeholders

Education and Experience:

a) What kind of, and how much, education and/or experience must an employee have BEFORE hiring in order to assure satisfactory job performance? Master's Degree in public health administration, applied nutrition or related field + 3 years of experience in developing policies and procedures for nutritional health program and grant writing.  
hiring? N/A

b) What licenses, certificates and/or registrations must an employee have BEFORE

c) What kind of training must be provided to an employee AFTER hiring? Mandatory Supervisory Training

### **Food Policy Director- Washington D.C.**

D.C. Food Policy Council Legislation – Established Role of Food Policy Director

Sec. 5. Appointment and duties of Food Policy Director.

(a) The Mayor shall appoint a Food Policy Director ("Director") within the Office of Planning with the advice and consent of the Council of the District of Columbia to promote equitable and sustainable food policies across the District that increase food access and build a local food economy.

(b) The Director shall:

- 1) Collaborate with other jurisdictions to promote locally-grown and sustainable food production practices;
- 2) Seek outside grants, recognition, and partnerships to facilitate positive food policy in the District;
- 3) Provide assistance to participants in the local food economy in securing necessary permits and approvals and in navigating the regulatory process;
- 4) Advocate for new local food economy ventures to locate in the District;
- 5) Devise strategies for the District to meet the food goals identified in the Sustainable DC Plan issued by the Mayor in 2013; and
- 6) Work with relevant agencies to reduce regulatory burdens on the local food

### **Food Systems Coordinator – City of Seattle**

Background and program goals: The City of Seattle’s Food Initiative is a coordinated effort to increase access to healthy and affordable food for all, promote urban agriculture and foster the growth of local food economies.

Position duties: This position will be responsible for advising the department Director, the Mayor, and the City Council on the development of strategic plans, policies, communications, and evaluation tools that will encourage a food system that promotes health, equity, and the environment. Specific job duties will include:

Policy Development and Coordination:

- Provide strategic analyses of current and emerging policies to identify new initiatives
- Coordinate development and implementation of food policy across City departments

Program Development and Implementation:

- Lead food systems strategic planning processes to set goals, develop implementation plan, and identify programmatic activities
- Coordinate and monitor implementation of City’s food systems strategic plan
- Coordinate and prioritize food projects among City departments
- Conduct research, develop strategies, and lead grant writing efforts to enhance program funding from public and private resources
- Develop agendas and lead monthly interdepartmental team meetings
- Report on program progress to City leadership, partners and community members

Communications and Outreach:

- Act as a liaison between the City and other public and private local, state, and federal entities dealing with the development of food systems policies and programs
- Participate in community and department outreach processes related to food
- Lead development of City’s food systems communications plan, including the development and maintenance of website, newsletters, presentations and other materials
- Design and facilitate community outreach efforts
- This position will report to the Department Director, and is expected to play a leadership role, consistent with the Mayoral priorities and City Council priorities and legislative directives. This position represents City government and its priorities to the public.

This is a part-time position funded by the City’s General Fund. The intention is to seek additional funding from other sources to eventually support a full-time position that stewards food systems work for the City of Seattle.

Required Education:

A Bachelor’s degree is required.

A Master's degree in Planning, Public Administration, Public Health, Social Work, Politics, Organizational Development, Social Sciences or a related field; or a combination of education and/or training and/or experience which provides an equivalent background required to perform the work of the class will also be considered in lieu of the Master's degree.

Required Qualifications:

A minimum of four years of progressive leadership experience, project management, and research and analytical experience.

A minimum of two years of experience in food systems or related work demonstrating knowledge of local, regional, and national food systems policy and issues, and including developing recommendations on policy options and programs.

A minimum of two years of demonstrated experience cultivating relationships with external constituencies, including historically underserved and/or under-represented populations.

Demonstrated analytical skills, facilitation skills, presentation skills, and writing skills, including grant writing.

Experience with Microsoft Office software, and experience in research and evaluation tools, methods and approaches.

WA State Driver's License is also required.

Desired qualifications:

- Ability to lead and inspire/motivate colleagues
- Ability to work independently and exercise independent judgment within the context of the City's policies and procedures
- Demonstrated success with grant writing for public funds as well as private foundations.
- Demonstrated commitment to race and social justice work
- Ability to institute, facilitate, and lead collaborative policy development processes • Ability to provide leadership, guidance, and support to interdepartmental teams
- Track record of complete and timely follow-through
- Strong community leadership, communication skills, facilitation skills and negotiation skills
- Self-starter and able to move forward with assignments given broad parameters
- Ability to prioritize work and be flexible when priorities change
- Good understanding of the political process and Mayor-Council form of government

## Appendix II: Interview Guide for Municipal or County Food Policy Coordinators

**Introduction:** Before we get started, I want to thank you for giving your time and agreeing to participate in this interview—I am excited to have the opportunity to connect with you.

I also want to thank you for completing the informed consent form. As I mentioned in my email and the consent form, these interviews will be used to inform recommendations to Missoula City and County in their efforts to advance food policy in support of a healthy, sustainable, and equitable local food system.

### Begin Interview:

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**Personal background:** I'd like to start with a little bit about your background and the basics of your position.

1. How long have you held the food policy (manager/director coordinator) position for (city or county name)?

Follow-up: are you the first to hold this position?

2. Briefly, what educational and/or experiential background do you bring to the job?

Probe: what is your experience working on food-related policy?

3. What are some of your main job responsibilities?

4. I understand that your community has a food policy council, what relationship does your position have with the council?

Probe: How has the council's work changed, if at all, since your position was created?

**Structure/organization of position:** Great, now I'd like to learn about the genesis of the position itself and the local government's work on food policy.

5. What department of government is the position housed in?

Follow-up: who is your direct supervisor?

6. How is the position funded?

7. Why did the (city/county) create this position?

Follow-up (if necessary): when was that?

Follow-up: what steps were taken to establish the position?

Probe: are there any other the reasons?

8. The term "food policy" encompasses a wide variety of food-related dimensions, what aspects of food policy does you prioritize in your position?

Probe: How do you go about setting those priorities?

9. How is progress on food-related goals measured and evaluated?

**Lessons learned from position:** Now that I understand the context of the position, I'd like to hear more about your personal experiences working as the (food policy manager/coordinator/etc.).

10. What do you see as the primary benefits of this position for the (city/county)?

Probe: are there any other benefits you'd like to mention?

11. What are some notable accomplishments that you have led in this position?

Probe: any others?

12. What are some of the major challenges that you face in this position?

Probe: any other challenges?

Probe: how are you meeting those challenges?

13. What major lessons have you learned from this position?

Probe: What changes, if any, would you make to the organization or responsibilities of the position?

**Wrap-up/big picture:** Now, I just have a few more questions to wrap up our conversation.

14. As I mentioned before, these interviews will be used to inform Missoula County in their efforts to make progress on food-related issues. Would you recommend that Missoula develop a food policy coordinator position? Why or why not?

Follow-up: if so, are there any key ingredients they may need for success?

15. Is there anything else you think I should know but we didn't touch on?

16. Do you have any questions for me?

Again, thank you so much for your participation. I've really enjoyed speaking with you. Is it OK if I circle back to you if I have any additional or clarifying questions?

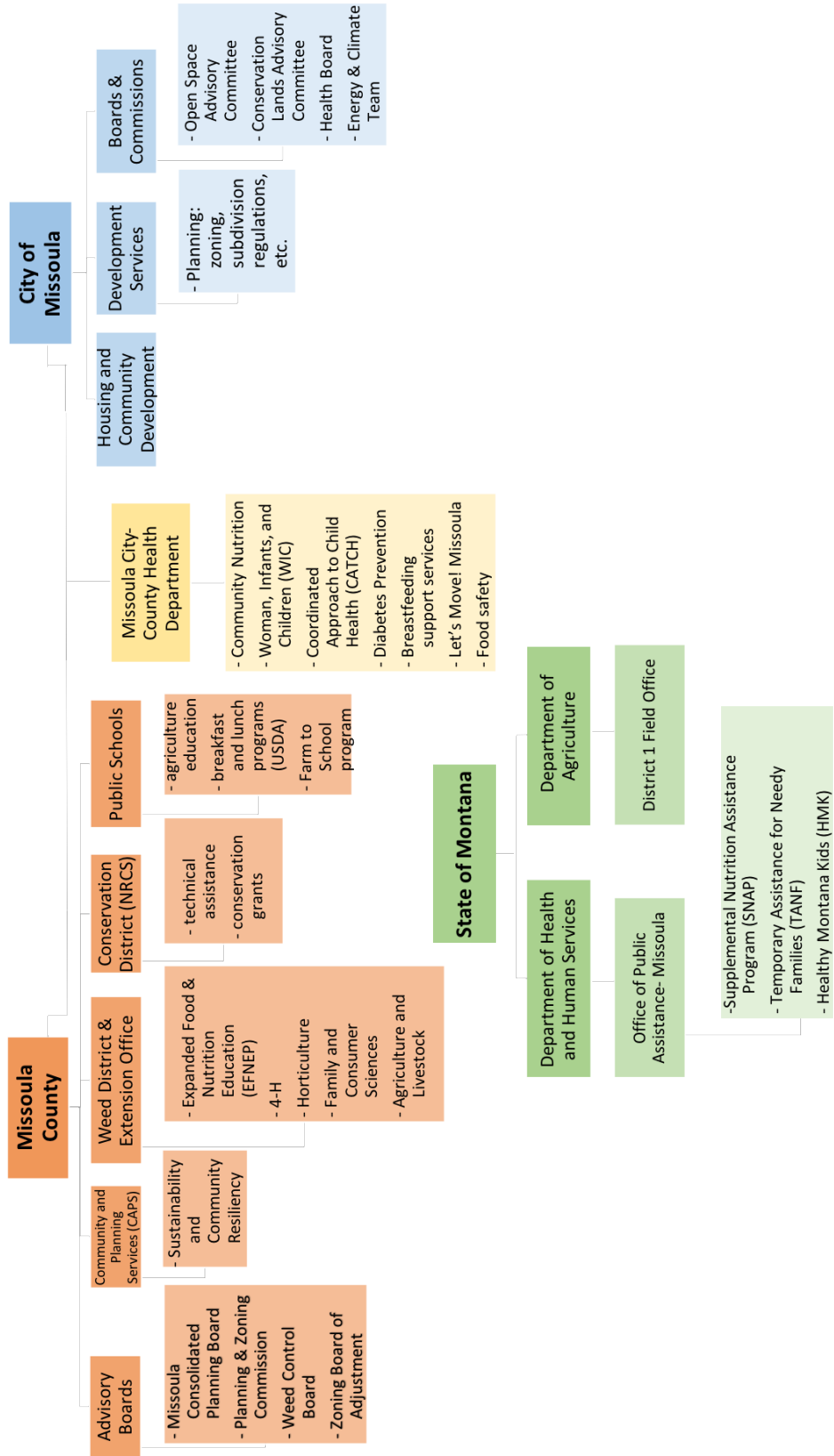
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**End Interview.**

\*note: if unable to find job description online, be sure to request one from interviewee\*

## Appendix III: Missoula Food System Schematic

### Preliminary Schematic of Food-related Local Government Agencies and Projects



## Appendix IV: Missoula Policy One-Pagers

### Climate Ready Missoula

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“Agriculture plays a modest but important role in Missoula County’s economy, and makes a major contribution to the county’s culture and quality of life” (p.64).

Fast facts:

- City-County policy
- Adopted in 2020
- Agriculture is one of eight key sectors included in the plans
- Overall, climate predictions for Missoula County show:
  - Hotter and drier summers
  - Warmer and wetter winters and springs
  - More precipitation will fall as rain rather than snow
- Climate change is anticipated to further increase Missoula County’s population growth
- Warmer temperatures may have some positive effects for agriculture, but extreme heat, wildfire smoke, and milder winters are also expected to negatively impact the health of producers and their products.

5

#### Food- and agriculture-related goals for Missoula County’s growth

Increase economic resilience of Missoula County agriculture given climate change (p.ES-10)

Strengthen social connectivity between farmers, ranchers, and community members (p. ES-10)

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#### Food- and agriculture-related objectives

Identify and promote ecologically sound agricultural best practices in a 1-stop shop, considering pests, pathogens, heat, drought, smoke (p.ES-10)

Increase support for locally sourced food through education and outreach, economic incentives, and other programs (p.ES-10)

Create a farmer and rancher support network at regional or sub-regional level, considering economic and mental health needs of agricultural community (p.ES-10)



## Missoula County Growth Policy

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"Missoula County seeks to conserve agricultural lands, preserve options for local agriculture, accommodate a growing population, provide for the co-existence of agriculture and development, and preserve agricultural infrastructure" (p.48)

### Fast facts:

- County policy
- Adopted in 2016; amended in 2019
- Covers all Missoula County outside of Missoula City limits
- Guiding principles include sustainability, clean and healthful environment, climate change, agriculture, economic development, and public health and safety
- Farmland in Missoula County:
  - 4.68% farmland of local importance
  - 1.69% prime farmland if irrigated
  - 1.14% farmland of statewide importance
  - 0.07% prime farmland
- Includes goals for improving coordination with City of Missoula and enhancing opportunities for public engagement in local government

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### Food- and agriculture-related goals for Missoula County's growth

Goal 1: Conserve vital natural resources including...agricultural resources (p.12)

Goal 4: Sustain and promote the land- and resource-based industries of agriculture, timber, restoration, and recreation that are part of the local economy and heritage (p.17)

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### Food- and agriculture-related objectives

Objective 7.1 Conserve agricultural lands and timberlands (p.17)

Objective 7.2 Support local agriculture and businesses involved with wood products and encourage value-added operations (p.18)

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### Food- and agriculture-related actions

Action 1.1.1: Identify priority resource areas based on agricultural soils, wildlife habitat, water, scenic viewshed, and the functions of the natural environment (12)

Action 7.1.2: Support projects using public and private funding sources to conserve agricultural lands (p.17)

Action 7.2.3: Research and develop policies, legal tools, and funding sources for new farm star-ups and farmland conservation (p.17)

## Missoula Area Land Use Element: amendment to the 2016 Missoula County Growth Policy

### Fast facts:

- County policy
- Adopted in 2019
- "The land use map is a visual representation of the community's values" (p.13)
- Provides guide for future county growth, development, and zoning
- Proposed land use designations

### **Agriculture-related land use designations**

Agriculture land: goals- support economic diversity & health of agricultural productions; allow for large-tract ag where ag soils & irrigation are present; protect continued function of natural landscapes & functions; protect public health & safety. *5.7% of planning area*

Working Lands: goals- provide opportunities for rural lifestyles & generating income from natural resources; protect continuing function of resources; protect public health & safety. *33.8% planning area*

Rural residential and agriculture: goals- preserve natural functions while providing rural residential land use opportunities in areas closer to infrastructure than in working lands or ag designations; support economic diversity; protect public health & safety. *10.3% of planning area*

Rural residential & small agriculture: goals- provide low-density housing in areas w/o services; preserve rural characteristics; accommodate wildlife habitat. *3.2% of planning area.*

## Our Missoula: City Growth Policy

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“Missoulians are committed to preserving and protecting natural systems, wildlife habitat and environmentally- sensitive lands. support of local food production through small growers and community gardens reflects a respect for Missoula’s agricultural heritage” (p.8).

### Fast facts:

- City policy
- Adopted in 2015
- the City’s population is predicted to increase by 25,000 by 2035
- growth management plan for next 20 years
- Missoulians value access to fresh, local food
- Development threatens to consume remaining prime agricultural soils

8

Food- and agriculture-related goals for the City of Missoula’s growth, including livability, safety and wellness, economic health, and environmental quality.

Environmental Quality Goal 7: Protect agricultural land and water (p.83)

Environmental Quality Goal 21: Further develop our sustainable, community-based food system to improve long-term food security and enhance the regional economy (p.87)

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Food- and agriculture-related objectives

Livability Goal 8, Objective 10: Preserve and support sustainable farming, urban gardening, and open space in appropriate areas (p.31)

Economic Health Goal 7, Objective 4: Support local food production and value-added agriculture (p.54)

Environmental Quality Goal 21-22, Objective 6: Promote locally produced food as a community amenity (tourism and economic development) (p.87)

6

Food- and agriculture-related actions

Action 1.3: Educate the public on best practices to promote community gardens, locally-produced foods, healthy food preparation, and ecologically-sound gardening practices that reduce water, synthetic fertilizer and pesticide use (p.92)

Action 2.7: Work with partners to promote and expand the supplemental food programs that support local foods (p.97)