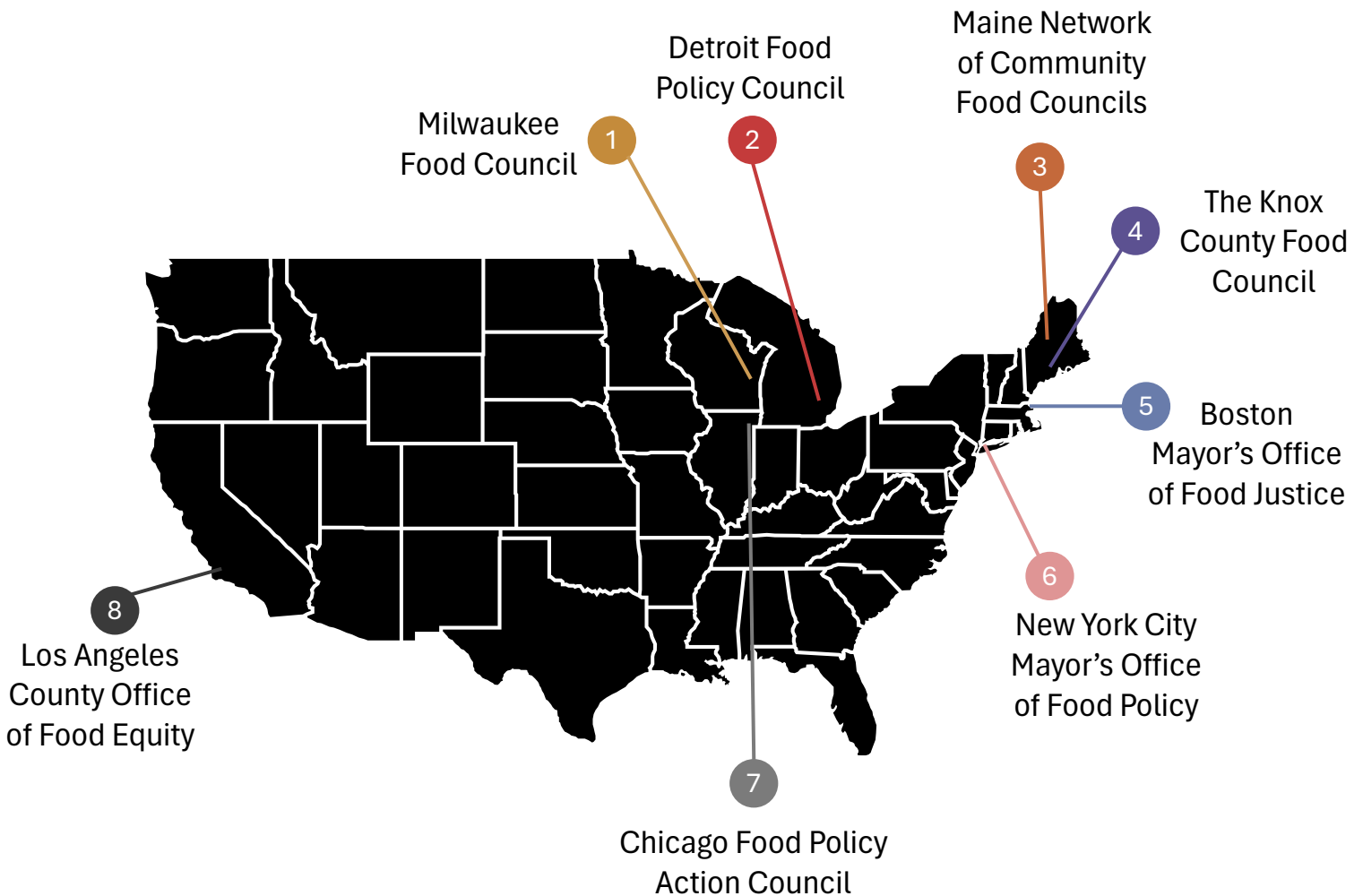


FSTF Food Structure Conversation Summaries

Goal: Develop recommendations for a new structure for food organizing which addresses food insecurity in San Francisco based on qualitative data from 8 U.S. cities or counties.

Table of Contents (click on a number to jump to that model):



Report developed by



Note that in some cases, language used in these summaries has been pulled verbatim directly from the websites of the relevant food structures.



Milwaukee Food Council

The Milwaukee Food Council is a network of community members and organizations, professionals, and government officials committed to supporting a food system that is community-driven, healthy, environmentally sustainable, and economically vibrant. The Council uses a collective impact model for its work and primarily focuses on food organizing rather than programming. It functions with a number of flexible working groups convened as needed to address priorities, along with two standing committees: one focused on policy and one on communications.

Key Notes About Structure & Scale

- Nonprofit organization guided by an 11-person board of directors
- Two staff: an Executive Director and a Healthy Food Systems Coordinator, who works for the Food Council through a partnership with the UW-Madison Division of Extension and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services
- Historically and currently, food council members and board members have not been reflective of the demographic makeup of Milwaukee, which has been difficult to address

Key Focus Areas

- **Racial equity.** Committing to leading the Council as an anti-racist organization by writing it into the organization's doctrine and as a guiding principle; the Council seeks to understand and dismantle conditions that keep us from achieving true equity in our food system
- **Tracking funding sources.** Using the [equitable grant-making continuum](#), the Council hopes to better achieve its mission by carefully selecting and assessing their funders
- **Service partnerships.** Partnering with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to increase nutrition education through schools, community centers, senior sites, and farmers markets, and food pantries

Advantages of this Model

- Collective impact supports diverse stakeholders and communities to address food security issues in mutually reinforcing, coordinated ways
- Though there are some governmental partners as part of the collective impact model, the Food Council is independent from government and therefore is not bound by governmental bureaucracy or other related limitations of government affiliation

Disadvantages of this Model

- Without a dedicated point person in government who is dedicated to food systems work at the citywide level, the Council is limited in its ability to make lasting, structural changes even when needs are identified



Detroit Food Policy Council

The Detroit Food Policy Council serves as an implementation, monitoring, and advisory body and consists of 23 members, including 15 representatives from various sectors of the food system, 4 “at-large” representatives, 1 youth representative, and 3 governmental representatives, one each from the Mayor’s Office, City Council and the Department of Health and Wellness Promotion. The DPFC engages and administers an annual survey to identify priorities for the council, such as food access, education, and nutrition. As a community-centered model, DFPC serves as a connector and dedicates time to fostering partnerships between food systems actors and non-food organizations like health organizations.

Key Notes About Structure & Scale

- Operates as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization
- Council has deliberately diverse membership, with 1-vote seats allocated to specific stakeholders from different sectors, with government representatives sharing 1-vote
- 7 committees work in tandem to accomplish mission, with 3 open to the public

Key Focus Areas

- **Policy.** Working towards changing animal ordinances and agricultural laws, such as legalizing chickens in residential properties or regulating urban farming practices
- **Procurement.** Implementing the Grocery Store Coalition to advance health equity and economic vitality in Detroit by increasing capacity of grocery stores and local markets to provide equitable access to healthy food, and to foster collaborations between communities and grocery store operators
- **Racial equity.** Acknowledging history of racism and white supremacy and offering courses to council members on racial equity, ensuring similar values of food justice and respect

Advantages of this Model

- Advisory body deliberately includes stakeholders that may not be found in other food policy councils, such as local farmers, grocery store owners, and residents. This brings a diverse set of perspectives to think through challenges and develop solutions

Disadvantages of this Model

- City-level policies and administrative changes do not always align with the mission and goals of this independent advisory body, which may force a shift of Council priorities



Maine Network of Community Food Councils

Formed in 2011, the Maine Network of Community Food Councils is composed of local food councils throughout the state that are tackling a variety of issues in regional food systems. Local councils range in size, makeup and mission, but are united by a shared desire to make Maine's food systems better for everyone. The Network values sharing information, funds, and resources to help member councils remove barriers to health and empower their communities to improve their well-being. They do this through monthly meetings, resource sharing, annual summits, shared education, and shared fundraising efforts.

Key Notes About Structure & Scale

- Organized by a statewide coordinator and “lead team” of 4 people, each from a different local member council
- Does not receive funding from any government source
- Fiscally sponsored by external group (Third Sector New England, Inc.)
- Would like to apply for non-profit status

Advantages of this Model

- Membership structure and policy focus have led to strong policy and advocacy relationships
- Member councils have a shared financial network, which improves collective sustainability

Key Focus Areas

- **Breaking down silos.** Developing a community of practice to communicate with each other, share resources, and coordinate state-wide food security efforts
- **Shared financial network.** Dedicating a portion of the annual budget to Shared Gifting, whereby local food councils in the Network can request an allocation of funds by completing a short MOU in which they describe how they will use the local allocation and how they will be engaged with the Network as a whole during that year
- **Policy.** Voting on which food bills to endorse, writing letters to legislators; membership includes some government officials across different counties

Disadvantages of this Model

- The Network is designed primarily as a convening body, supporting sharing of information and funding. While members do vote to endorse bills and advocate to legislators, the Network has limited concrete programmatic impact throughout the state, as these activities lie more directly with the local member councils



The Knox County Food Council

The Knox County Food Council is a community-based coalition that formed in 2019 to promote a more resilient food system in Knox County, Maine. It aims to build a community-based, collaborative healthy food system, ensuring access to healthy resources for Maine communities. The Knox County Food Council is comprised of community members and representatives from various businesses and nonprofits in the county. As a community-based, grassroots coalition model, the Council has a close relationship with local communities, and is also part of the Maine Network of Community Food Councils, which allows them to collaborate with other similar councils around the state.

Key Notes About Structure & Scale

- Community-based coalition with connection to the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, an organizational partner of the Maine Food Convergence, which is a project designed to unite Maine's local food networks
- Holds public meetings once per month via Zoom, with collectively determined meeting topics and guest speakers at each meeting
- Does not have a fiscal sponsor nor official 501(c)(3) nonprofit status

Key Focus Areas

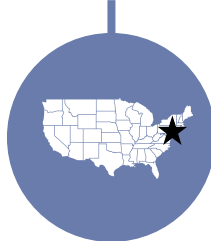
- **Food as medicine.** Working directly with the hospital system to support on-site pantries across five different hospitals, which serve as hubs for nutritional education with dedicated staff
- **Social justice.** Explicitly operating based on the belief that safe, healthy, and affordable food and clean water are a basic human right
- **Policy.** Connecting with the Maine Food Convergence Project and the Maine Food Policy Work Group with the goal of monitoring the food policy landscape in Maine, informing Maine's food system stakeholders, and encouraging advocacy for good food policy
- **Data.** Driving local food advocacy efforts by tracking how many miles food travels from farm to pantry, how many hours staff took to unload food, and how many hours it took to dispose of food waste

Advantages of this Model

- The coalition exists within a tight-knit community, which allows for quick response to immediate food needs for community members and farmers

Disadvantages of this Model

- No fiscal sponsor and not a nonprofit, so does not have the capacity to pursue larger scale policy endeavors on its own
- As a community-based coalition without a government link, it is sometimes challenging to affect policy in ways that impact the larger food system



Boston Mayor's Office of Food Justice

Boston is a “mayor-strong” city, and much of the city’s food security organizing happens from within the Mayor’s Office of Food Justice (OFJ). The mission of the OFJ is to build a food system that is equitable, resilient, sustainable, and just. Under the previous administration, there was an Office of Food Access under the Department of Health and Human Services. Mayor Wu is very supportive of food security efforts and when she started her term, she moved the office under the Energy, Environment and Open Space Cabinet and renamed it with a focus on food justice. The Director of the OFJ reports to the Cabinet Chief, who used to be a farmer.

Key Notes About Structure & Scale

- Office within the Mayor’s Cabinet of Energy, Environment, and Open Space
- There are 4 full-time staff and 3 more full-time positions currently vacant (one grant-funded)

Key Focus Areas

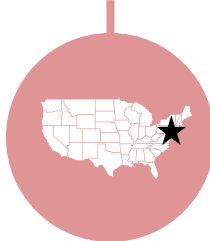
- **Policy.** Writing briefs to educate policymakers and their policy team
- **Breaking down silos.** Interfacing with critical governmental and community partners
- **Services.** Overseeing a citywide food rescue program, per legislative mandate
- **Procurement.** Implementing the Good Food Purchasing Program, which allows for values-aligned purchasing of nutritious food on a large scale to save costs for city institutions, like the Boston Public Schools
- **Community engagement.** The model includes a Community Advisory Board component, required by the Good Food Purchasing Program ordinance. Members are required to prove residence in the community in which they serve

Advantages of this Model

- Mayoral support results in governmental resources to address food security directly
- The governmental lens allows for the use of strategic priorities tied to metrics that can be measured over time, to drive decision-making and resources

Disadvantages of this Model

- A mayoral-driven model is subject to the whims of the current mayor, and the entire focus and structure may change whenever a new mayor is elected
- Being positioned within government can lead to administrative contradictions. For example, the OFJ can be mandated by City Council to carry out various activities that may not be practical – e.g., the Good Food Purchasing Program ordinance requires public hearings to be held, but the OFJ does not have the authority to schedule public hearings
- The systems-level approach that is possible for a governmental body also makes it difficult to address more acute food insecurity from community (e.g. they are struggling to respond to all the phone calls from residents asking for food)



New York City Mayor's Office of Food Policy

The Office of Food Policy is a Mayoral Office that works to advance the City's efforts to increase food security, promote access to and consumption of healthy foods, and support economic opportunity and environmental sustainability in the food system. The Office works across city agencies, including the Departments of Education, Corrections, Social Services, and Aging, to develop and advance innovative food policy. Within a mayor-strong city, this model provides top-down leadership on food policy issues that effect the regional and global food system, with a strong focus on integrating an equity frame into food policy priorities and solutions.

Key Notes About Structure & Scale

- Mayor's Office of Food Policy (MOFP) Director reports to New York City Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives
- 10 full time staff, \$1M-1.5M budget

Key Focus Areas

- **Policy.** Implementing [Food Forward NYC: A 10-Year Food Policy Plan](#) focused on affordable, high-quality food as a fundamental human right
- **Breaking down silos.** Launching the NYC Regional Food Working Group to deepen regional engagement and increase cross-sector collaboration. Led by the Mayor's Office, the Working Group convenes various policy stakeholders in New York State to develop a shared policy agenda and inform priorities around the federal Farm Bill
- **Services.** Offering loans, grants, trainings, and technical assistance to food businesses that meet certain criteria
- **Procurement.** Implementing the Good Food Purchasing Program, which allows for values-aligned purchasing of nutritious food on a large scale
- **Racial equity.** Partnering with the Racial Inclusion and Equity Task Force, which works to address deeply rooted racial and economic disparities by applying an equity-based approach to COVID-19 response and recovery efforts across city agencies

Advantages of this Model

- New York City Council has discretionary grants to provide funding to community-based orgs through this Office. These grants can be used to focus on concrete programs such as plant-based nutrition programs in hospitals
- As a mayoral-driven model, the MOFP has high levels of authority to influence regional and national food policy

Disadvantages of this Model

- A mayoral-driven model is subject to the whims of the current mayor, and the entire focus and structure may change whenever a new mayor is elected
- Relies on community-based organizations for input (i.e., community members must reach out to specific city agencies with issues)
- Office has limits on its independence and may be seen as influenced by political winds rather than grassroots organizing and community voices



Chicago Food Policy Action Council

The Chicago Food Policy Action Council (CFPAC) co-facilitates, advocates, and implements policies that advance food justice & sovereignty in Chicago and across the region. Their mission is to ensure that all Chicagoans, especially Black, Indigenous, and other residents of color, have the right to produce and access culturally appropriate, nutritious, sustainable, and fair food. The CFPAC functions as non-profit model with a strong focus on equity. With diverse governmental and philanthropic funding mechanisms, the Council has a considerable level of independence and maintains strong relationships with decision-makers across the city.

Key Notes About Structure & Scale

- Nonprofit organization
- 10 full-time staff
- Diverse funding mechanisms with 60% philanthropy and 40% government grants

Key Focus Areas

- **Policy.** Working on various policies such as Chicago Urban Agricultural Zoning and state composting laws. The CFPAC pays for a staff person in the Mayor’s Office who works on policy, which circumvents the city’s hiring process
- **Breaking down silos.** Facilitating the Annual Food Justice Summit, supported partly by federal American Rescue Plan Act funds, to convene an expansive network of food justice advocates committed to changing local, regional, and national food systems
- **Procurement.** Implementing the Good Food Purchasing Program, which allows for values-aligned purchasing of nutritious food on a large scale
- **Racial equity.** Partnering with four working groups of the Mayor’s Chicago Food Equity Council, such as the BIPOC Food Business Workgroup, which aims to increase access to resources and funding for BIPOC-run small businesses and BIPOC entrepreneurs

Advantages of this Model

- Partnerships between independent nonprofit staff and internal city staff with access to decision makers
- Infrastructure allows for convening annual summits to identify priorities
- Funding is diverse, which provides flexibility for different types of programmatic and policy focus

Disadvantages of this Model

- Early on in this model, project-based funding proved challenging because general operating costs were difficult to sustain. In recent years, the CFPAC has moved to increasing internal fundraising capacity to supplement project-based grants and support infrastructure
- The CFPAC has limited influence over how new policies are made in Chicago, which can present continuity problems for their work



Los Angeles County Office of Food Equity

The Los Angeles Office of Food Equity (OFE) works to implement cross-sector solutions to achieve food and nutrition security in LA County with a focus on underserved communities by 1) enabling food justice with enhanced access, affordability, and consumption of nutritious food, 2) advancing equitable impact of food public benefits and food distribution programs, and 3) generating political and financial support to build food systems that are resilient, sustainable, and equitable. The OFE functions as a municipality model of food organizing, with a strong focus on multi-sector collective impact and convening food system stakeholders through roundtable discussions.

Key Notes About Structure & Scale

- Nascent organization born as a prioritized action item in the LA County Food Equity Roundtable's 2022 strategic plan
- Public-private partnership between LA County and three foundations: the Annenberg Foundation, the California Community Foundation and the Weingart Foundation
- [Since the Board of Supervisors formally created the OFE in November 2023](#), many details are still to be determined. The County's Chief Executive Office was directed to report back to the LA County Board by February 7, 2024 regarding the new office's structure, staffing plan, and public-private cost sharing budget, though that report-back has not yet been shared publicly

Advantages of this Model

- Public-private partnership offers close ties to government and access to decision makers, while maintaining some independence
- Collective impact supports diverse stakeholders and communities to address food security issues in mutually reinforcing, coordinated ways

Key Focus Areas

- **Grants.** The LA Food Equity Fund in partnership with the California Endowment's Center for Healthy Communities and the LA County Chief Sustainability Office. This Fund will invest over \$9.8 million of American Rescue Plan Act funding into communities across LA County via food capacity building grants and food distribution grants
- **Breaking down silos.** Hosting roundtable discussions and using a collective impact model allow for diverse stakeholders to address food security issues and coordinate aid efforts
- **Policy.** Overseeing policies to facilitate urban farming, help prevent food waste, and improve the public's access to nutrition assistance programs

Disadvantages of this Model

- As a public-private partnership, there is a possibility of programmatic decisions being influenced by the interests of for-profit companies under the newly created office
- Lack of allocated funding for the Office – it will have to find and apply for its own grant funding