

## Food Policy Councils: Governance, Success, Challenges *Relationship with government and what this means?*

Municipal Food Policy Network

Researchers: Omar Elsharkawy and Sylvie La Forge

### OVERVIEW

While the aim of the earliest food policy councils (FPC) was to form close relationships with local governments, there are now numerous different types of food policy council governance. In Canada, six categories have been identified:

1. Municipality-driven food policy initiatives.
2. Hybrid model with direct links to government.
3. Hybrid model with indirect links to government.
4. Food policy organization linked to government through a secondary agency.
5. Civil society organization with limited government funding and participation.
6. Civil society organization with no direct government involvement

Interviews were conducted with 5 food policy councils, 3 of which identified as civil society organizations, and 2 as hybrid model councils with indirect links to government.

### EXAMPLES TO BUILD UPON

#### Civil Society governance model

- having formally designated staff support from government departments or agencies that act as liaisons has been successful, as they provide updates regarding what is going on in government, and act as allies and a link between FPC and government
- no municipal funding eliminated bureaucracy and allows freedom for the council to pursue whatever project they choose, as well as to apply for funding from community partners
- negatives are a lack of funding and that city council are under no obligation to pursue or listen to recommendations that an FPC might have

#### Hybrid governance model

- indirect funding from the municipal body through allocated time from city staff and official committee representation
- free to govern and organize themselves, and had their priorities change in one way or another which could be harder should they be a municipal body

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Councils need to reflect and focus upon the needs of the communities in which they operate.

For an in-depth discussion of the above, please see the full research paper of the Municipal Food Policy Network available at <http://bringfoodhome.com/bfh-papers/>.