

FOOD POLICY COUNCIL REPORT 2018

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Contents

Acknowledgments.....	2
Executive summary.....	3
Introduction.....	6
Overview.....	7
Relationships.....	14
Funding.....	19
Organizational priorities.....	22
Policy work.....	25
Systems thinking.....	32
Conclusion.....	36
Methods.....	37

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Executive Summary

According to findings from an annual survey of food policy councils (FPCs) by the Food Policy Networks project (FPN), the number of FPCs continues to grow in the United States and Canada. The FPN project is a project of the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future (CLF), based at the Bloomberg School of Public Health. Through FPN, CLF works to build the capacity of cross-sector stakeholder groups to collectively advance equitable, healthy, and sustainable food systems through policy, programs, and partnerships. Since 2013, the FPN project has surveyed FPCs annually with the aim of both documenting the work of FPCs and informing our understanding of the similarities and differences among FPCs and their activities. This year, we added questions to the survey that explore the advocacy activities of FPCs within the last 12 months. The survey was sent to 380 FPCs and state food policy council conveners across the United States and Canada. Responses were received from January to April 2018. This report reflects responses from 278 FPCs, including 40 FPCs in Canada, 236 FPCs in the United States, and two Native American FPCs. Below is a summary of the key findings from the survey responses.

Status

At the end of 2017, 341 FPCs were verified to be either active, in development, or in transition in the United States and Canada, up from 329 in 2016. In 2017 alone, 25 new FPCs were formed. In the United States, at least one food policy council was identified in all but three states (Arkansas, South Dakota, Wyoming), with the largest number of councils in California, North Carolina, and Michigan. Over half (54%) of the FPCs were over 6 years old as of 2018.

Geography

The majority of FPCs (71%) operated at the local level—county, city/municipality or both city/municipality and county level. Newly forming FPCs tended to work at the county level. Additionally, 20% of FPCs focused on

multi-county or multi-state regions, 8% worked at a state or provincial level, and 1% worked within First Nations or Native American communities.

Organizational Structure

The most common (34%) type of organizational structure for FPCs was being housed within another non-profit organization. The second most common structure was being embedded in government (26%), followed by acting as an independent grassroots coalition (20%), an independent 501(c)3 non-profit organization (13%), and embedded in a university or Extension office (5%). The greatest proportion of FPCs in the US operate at the county level and are housed in another non-profit organization.

Membership

FPCs are known for their diverse membership, with members from across the food supply chain. Half or more of FPCs reported having members representing the community, public health, anti-hunger or emergency food, food production, colleges/universities, government, healthcare, labor, retail, social justice, and economic development.

Relationship to Government

Most FPCs, 83% in the US and 79% in Canada, reported having some type of relationship with government, including receiving in-kind or financial support from government, providing advice to government, being formed by government, or having council members composed of government staff or people appointed by government. Not surprisingly, FPCs embedded in government reported stronger connections to government compared to all other structure types.

Funding

Securing funding for operations and policy work is one of the most commonly reported challenges among FPCs every year. In 2018, two-thirds of FPCs reported that they had some funding. Our survey shows a correlation between the longevity of an FPC and a higher approximate annual budget. A greater proportion of FPCs that have been in existence for over 6 years had annual budgets over \$100,000. A greater proportion of FPCs that operated as non-profit organizations or were housed in a non-profit organization also reported an annual budget over \$100,000. In-kind donations and govern-

ment funding (from local, state or federal grants or through the government budget process) were the two primary sources of funding for the majority of FPCs. In the US, private foundations were also an important source of funding.

Organizational Priorities

From a list of 13 options, FPCs were asked to select their top three organizational priorities. The only organizational priority reported by a majority (60%) of FPCs was community engagement. Forty percent of FPCs reported advocacy and policy capacity building, 35% reported strategic or policy planning, and 33% reported education as organizational priorities. Newer FPCs, ages 1-2 years old, were more likely to report membership recruitment, research and data collection, and governance structure as organizational priorities than older FPCs. The longer an FPC was in existence, the more likely it was to prioritize advocacy and policy capacity building, networking, and fundraising and the less likely it was to prioritize membership recruitment and retention. Older FPCs, ages 6 and over, also showed more interest in diversity and inclusion.

Policy Priorities

From a list of 11 categories, FPCs were asked to select their top three policy priorities. Since 2016, healthy food access has been a policy priority for the majority of FPCs. Following healthy food access, the next two most commonly identified policy areas were economic development and anti-hunger.

Additionally, there was a noticeable increase in the number of FPCs that prioritized food waste reduction. Newer FPCs were more likely to prioritize economic development, while FPCs over 10 years of age were most likely to prioritize food labor. FPCs that work at a state/province level were the most likely to prioritize anti-hunger policy.

Policy Influences

A number of factors can influence an FPC's policy priorities, including its membership composition, its structure or leadership, members' knowledge of the policy process, its relationships with policymakers, the feasibility of a policy's enforcement, and funding. When asked which factors influenced its policy priorities, most FPCs reported that their relationships with other organizations in the community and their membership matter the most. These relationships can also be particularly important for FPCs to advance their policy agendas. When asked to identify the degree to which it needed certain relationships to accomplish its policy priorities, three-quarters of FPCs responded that relationships with

non-profit organization leaders, community members, local elected officials, and local government employees were needed "to a great extent" or "a lot."

Advocacy Activity

For the first time, the survey also asked FPCs about their advocacy activities, including if they had met with a policymaker, provided policy recommendations to a policymaker, supported or directed a campaign to advocate for a specific policy change, or supported a partner organization's policy agenda by signing onto a letter or providing testimony. Out of the 243 FPCs that responded to this question, only 14% (33 FPCs) reported to not have engaged in any advocacy activities in the last 12 months. The longer FPCs were active, the more likely they were to report engaging in advocacy activities.

This report is part of CLFs ongoing effort to advance equitable, healthy, and sustainable food systems change.

Introduction

The number of food policy councils (FPCs) continues to grow in the US and Canada. The Food Policy Networks (FPN) project—a project of the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future (CLF), located at the Bloomberg School of Public Health—identified 341 FPCs active at the end of 2017. Only five years earlier, in 2012, there were 246 FPCs. Over the course of this five-year span, the FPN project has witnessed the construction of a robust infrastructure to support FPCs, including the launch of the FPN project, formation of over a dozen state FPC conveners and technical assistance providers, growing civic engagement, passage of hundreds of state and local bills in support of local and regional food systems, and expansion of resources on food systems policy and councils. This report summarizes results from the annual FPC survey, conducted since 2013 by CLF, which aims to document trends among FPCs across the United States and Canada. The results are reflected in the FPN project’s online, publicly accessible [directory](#) and [map](#) of FPCs. They are also used by students, researchers, and FPCs to identify trends, explore research questions, create resources, and support other activities.

The FPN project is a CLF initiative to build the capacity of cross-sector stakeholder groups to collectively advance equitable, healthy, and sustainable food systems through policy, programs and partnerships. We consider an FPC to be an organized group of stakeholders that may be sanctioned by a government body or may exist independently of government, which works to address food systems issues and needs at the local (city/municipality or county), state/provincial, regional or Native American/First Nations levels. We use the term ‘food policy council’ to emphasize the effort of these groups to collectively reform policy. Policy can be an uncomfortable term in certain contexts, therefore, food policy councils go by many names: food council, food action network, food partners alliance, food and hunger coalition, healthy food access

committee, food systems collaborative, or community food partnership.¹ We use a broad definition of policy to describe the work of FPCs because food systems reform requires multidimensional changes, from the passage of laws and ordinances to the administration, funding, and implementation of policies at local, state, tribal/First Nations, or federal levels of government. It can also include changes in practices among public and private institutions. Policy work could include working directly to change these various policies, as well as educating or coordinating others who might be advocating for such policies.

In 2017, the vast majority of FPCs in the United States and Canada engaged in some form of advocacy, like meeting with policy-makers or providing policy recommendations

1. Of the groups CLF determined “active” in 2018, 28% had names that included the term “food policy council,” 21% used “food council,” 9% used “network,” 8% used “alliance,” 8% used “coalition,” 5% used “committee,” and 21% used other terms.

to policymakers. Their advocacy efforts focused most commonly on healthy food access and economic development. The extent to which FPCs engage in advocacy and prioritize advocacy and policy capacity building increases as they age. For most FPCs, food systems advocacy is a labor of

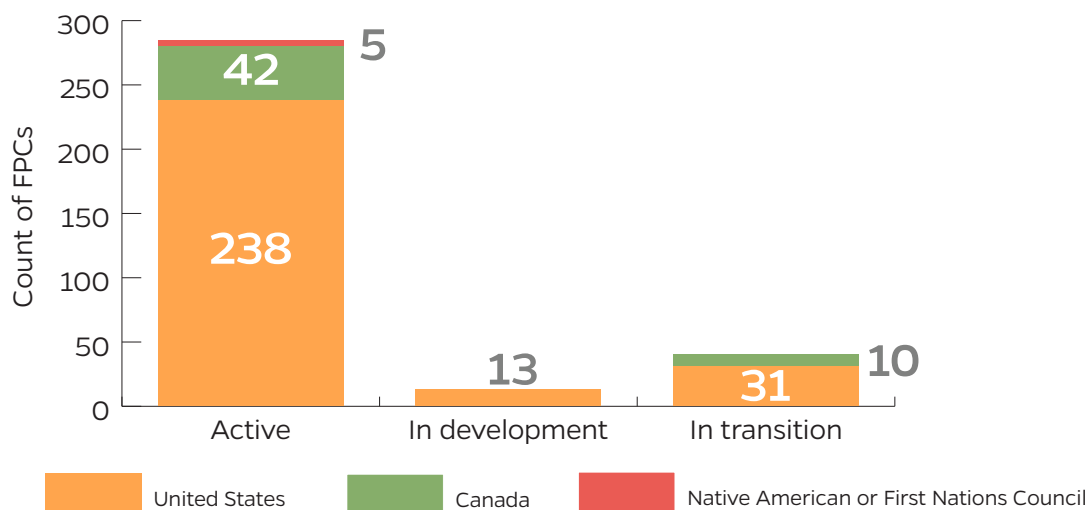
love, as over 60% of FPCs operate on a budget of less than \$10,000. What drives these multi-stakeholder groups forward and holds them together is something that we continue to learn about through this annual survey of FPCs.

Overview

As of April 2018, 339 FPCs were verified to be either active, in development, or in transition in the United States and Canada. “Active” is defined as meeting at least once annually, “in development” as formed within the last 12 months, and “in transition” as a council that is redefining their structure and/or purpose. Of the FPCs determined to be active, in development, or in transition, the largest cohort (39% or 133 councils) was 6-10 years old as of 2018. Thirty-one percent (105 councils) were 3-5 years old, 15% (50 councils) were 1-2 years old, and 15% (49 councils) were over 10 years old.

Figure 1: Status of FPCs in North America (n=339)

Figure 1 note: This graphic includes 61 councils that did not complete the 2018 survey, but whose activity was verified through a partner organization or active web presence.



In the United States, at least one food policy council was identified in all but three states (Arkansas, South Dakota, Wyoming). The distribution of FPCs across the states varies widely, with the largest number of councils in California, followed by North Carolina and Michigan. Between 2016 and 2018, the number of FPCs increased sig-

nificantly in both North Carolina (from 22 to 30) and Michigan (from 13 to 22), largely because of the role played by their state convening networks (See gray box on page 9). At the end of 2017, there were 25 states that either had a state food policy council and/or a local food policy council network convener.

Figure 2: Age of FPCs in 2018 (n=337)

Figure 2 note: This graphic includes 59 councils that did not complete the 2018 survey, but whose activity was verified through a partner organization or active web presence. It excludes 2 councils that were portrayed in Figure 1 because their age was unknown.

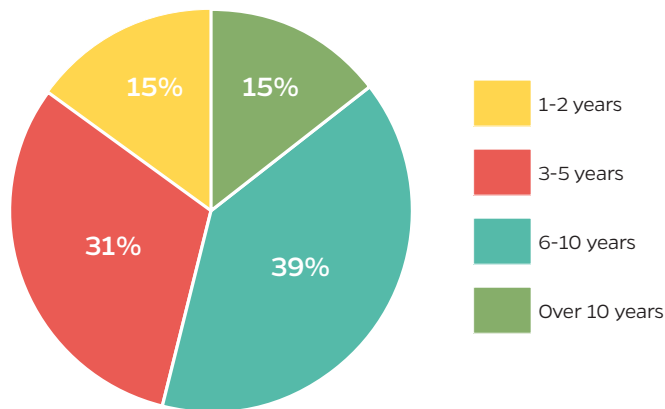
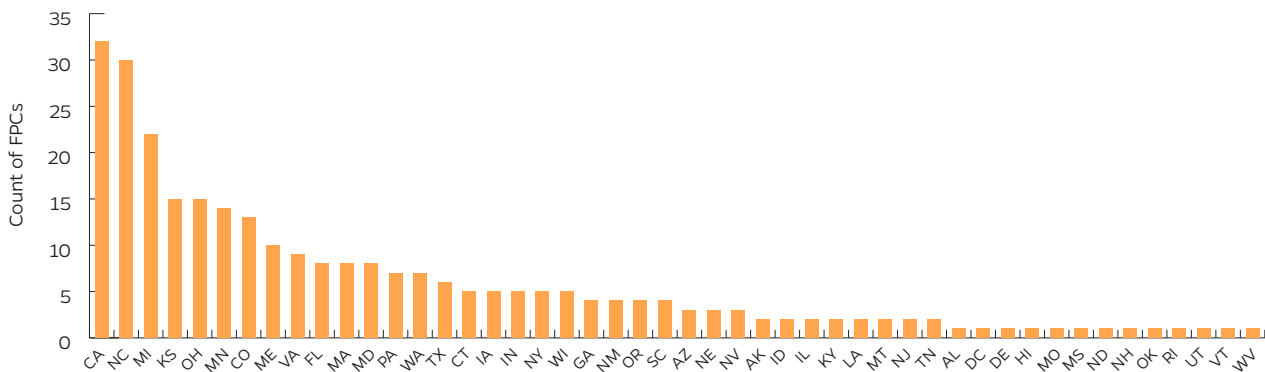


Figure 3: Number of FPCs per state (n=282)



The role of state conveners

A growing number of state food council conveners have arisen over the past five years to help build capacity, align efforts, and create a collective voice for local FPCs in their state. Like FPCs, not all state council conveners are the same. Some work on influencing state-level policy. Others monitor progress toward shared goals. Some provide training, technical assistance, and mini grants to local FPCs. Others convene their local FPCs annually. The primary function of conveners, though, is to network local FPCs. To our knowledge, 13 such convening networks were active at the end of 2017 in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, and Ontario. Michigan and North Carolina saw a drastic increase in the number of FPCs in 2017 due to support provided from their state conveners: Community Food Strategies, based in North Carolina, and the Michigan Local Food Council Network.

[Community Food Strategies](#) (CFS) works to empower FPCs emerging throughout North Carolina by linking them through a collective network, providing council development tools and resources, offering technical assistance and training, and hosting conferences. The project is organized by a team from five food system organizations: Care Share Health Alliance, Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, NC Rural Center, Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, and lead organizer Center for Environmental Farming Systems.

CFS connects councils through regional calls, an annual summit, and an email list. They also provide one-on-one technical assistance; host webinars; and offer a series of toolkits on starting a food council, building an advocacy plan, or planning a candidate or public forum. Some of CFS's hallmark initiatives include a [micro-grant program supporting local councils](#), [resources on the phases of food council development](#), and dedicated trainings on racial equity in the food system. Since Community Food Strategies' inception in 2012, the number of councils in the state has tripled.

Meanwhile, the [Michigan Local Food Council Network](#) brings together food councils to build their individual and collective capacities to work on food and food policy issues, operate effectively, and engage their communities through peer-to-peer learning. The Network began in 2015 to encourage and support local councils to use the Michigan Good Food Charter in their work. The Michigan Good Food Charter, created in 2010, "envision[s] a thriving economy driven by equity and sustainability for all of Michigan and its people through a food system rooted in local communities and centered on good food." The Charter aims to have 20% of food purchased by Michigan institutions and residents coming from Michigan sources by 2020.

Housed in the Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems, the Network provides a space for local councils to network with one another; connects local councils to statewide and national policy information, issues, and actions; and provides hands-on training to build the capacity of local food councils. In 2017, the Network began offering seed grants to local councils for capacity-building activities. The Network is also a significant partner in organizing the annual [Michigan Good Food Summit](#).

Year of Formation

As displayed in Figure 4, the total number of FPCs continues to grow. Twenty-five councils reported forming in 2017 alone. These numbers only count councils that have completed the FPC survey at some point, or that CLF has learned are active from state or regional conveners.² It is possible that some FPCs were missed in the total yearly counts.

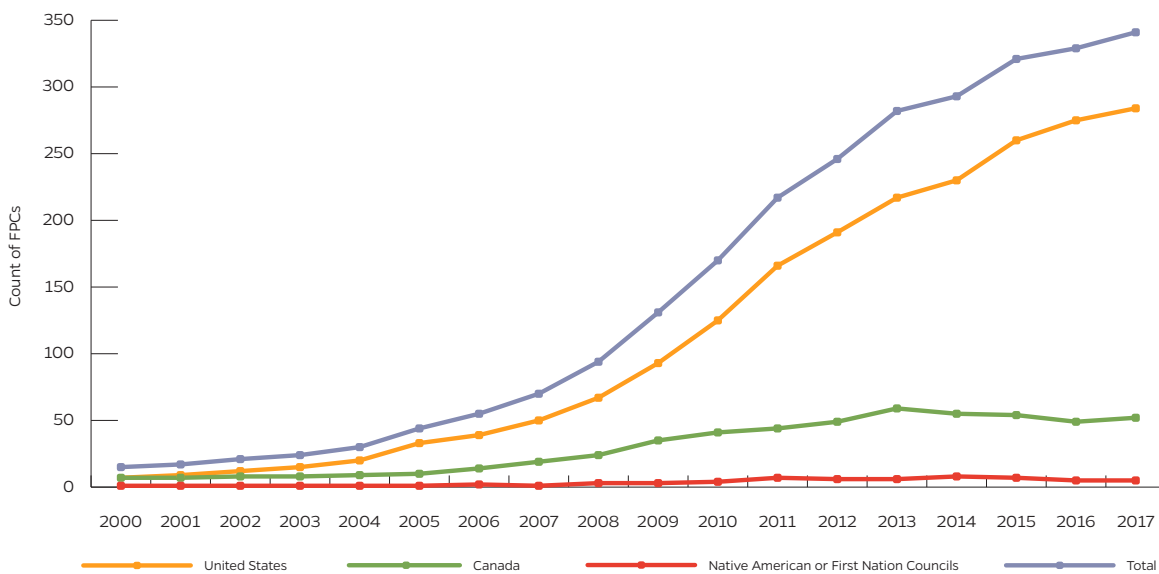
Jurisdiction

FPCs most commonly indicated that they operate at a county level (36%), followed by those working at the city/municipality level (20%) and within multi-county or multi-state regions (20%). An additional 15% of councils indicated that they oper-

ate at both a city/municipality and county level, 8% at a state or provincial level, and 1% within First Nations or Native American communities.

Canadian councils were more likely to operate at the city/municipality level or at both the city/municipality and county levels (40% and 38%, respectively, compared to 16% and 12% in the United States). US councils were more likely to operate at the county level (42% in the US compared to 5% in Canada). It appears newer councils are particularly prone to this jurisdictional position, as 52% of the 1-2-year-old councils in the US reported a county-level focus. For example, in North Carolina, 11 of the 12 FPCs formed in the last two years indicated that they operate at the county level.

Figure 4: Active FPCs since 2000 (n=461)



2. Figure 4 does not reflect the number of FPCs that dissolved or entered a period of hiatus each year. While some dissolved councils may become active again in the future, our records indicate that since 2000, 120 councils have dissolved and remain inactive.

Structure

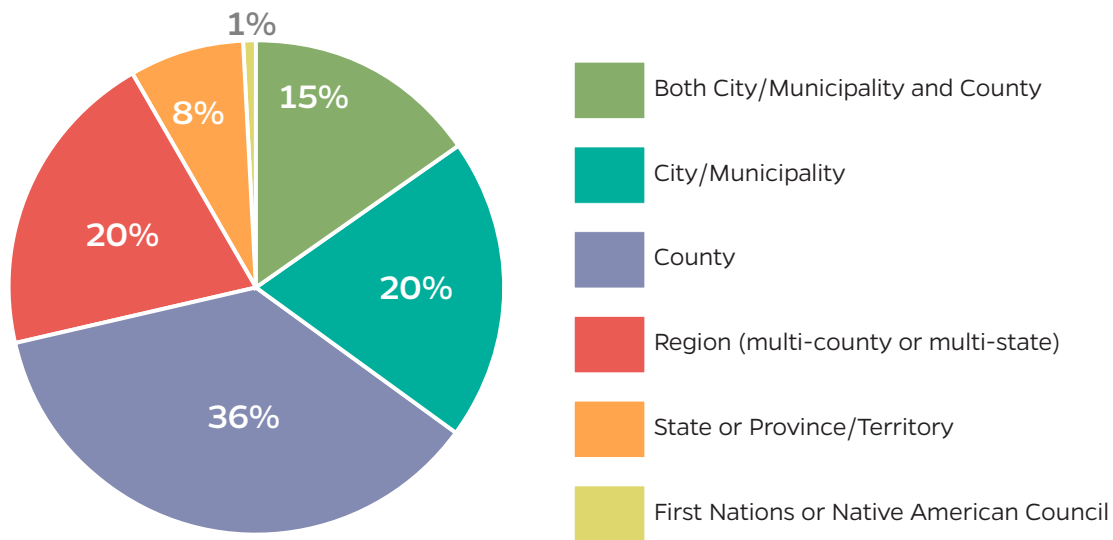
How to organize and structure the group—for instance, within a government entity or Extension office, as an independent non-profit organization, or as a grassroots coalition—is one of the most common challenges that FPCs encounter. While the decision depends on several factors, including the group’s mission and goals, membership, funding and resources available, and culture, it also influences many aspects of the group’s programmatic and policy objectives and effectiveness.³

As shown in Figure 6, the most common (34%) organizational structure for FPCs was being housed in another non-profit organization where an FPC may be a specific program or project of a non-profit organization, or may have another non-profit

organization serve as its fiscal sponsor. For example, the Central Louisiana Food Policy Council is a project of the Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance. The work of the FPC fits with the Alliance’s mission to help people prosper in vibrant, thriving communities by creating opportunities to connect area residents and producers. This structure was followed by being embedded in government (26%), an independent grassroots coalition (20%), an independent 501(c)3 non-profit organization (13%), and embedded in a university or Extension office (5%).

These averages elude some significant differences in structure between US and Canadian councils. Canadian councils were more likely to operate as grassroots coalitions (35% of FPCs in Canada compared to only 17% of FPCs in the United States).

Figure 5: Geographic Focus (n=278)



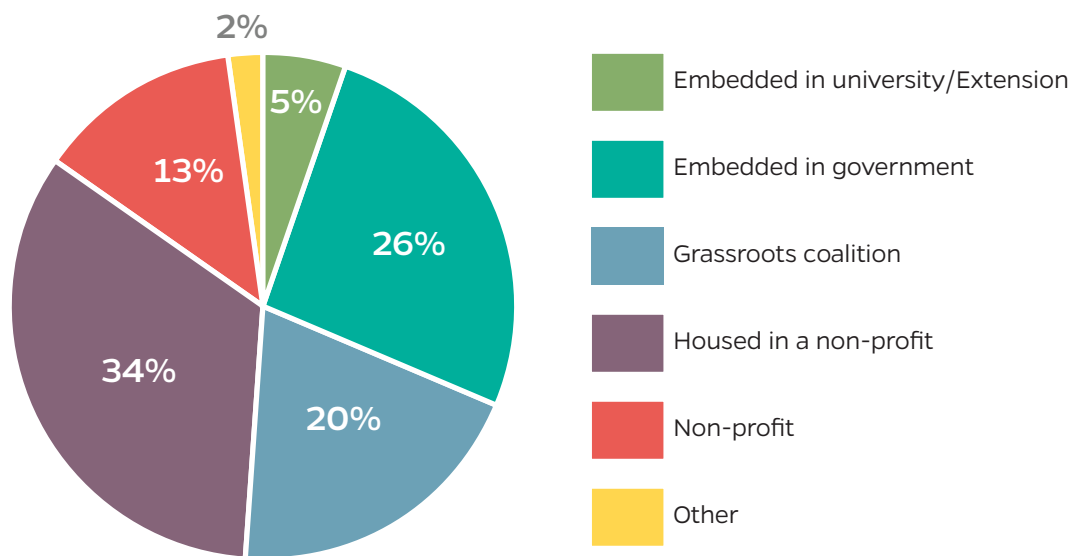
3. Palmer, A. (2016, February 12). Structuring Your Food Policy Council [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://livablefutureblog.com/2016/02/structuring-your-food-policy-council>

Meanwhile, US councils were more likely to be embedded in government (28% of FPCs in US) compared to Canadian councils (13% of FPCs in Canada).

When considering how both geographic focus and organization structure interact, it is interesting to note that at the time of

the survey, the greatest proportion of FPCs in the United States operated at the county level and were housed in another non-profit organization. Additionally, there were no Canadian FPCs embedded in government at the provincial level while there were seven FPCs embedded in government at the state level in the United States.

Figure 6: Organizational Structure (n=277)



Fiscal Sponsorship

The majority of FPCs are housed in another non-profit organization (34%), embedded in government (26%) or embedded in a university or Extension office (5%). This means that most FPCs rely on some form of sponsorship from a partner organization. One form of sponsorship is fiscal sponsorship, whereby “501(c)(3) charitable corporations... give unincorporated groups whose missions are aligned with their own a tax-exempt home.”¹ In exchange for a small administrative fee, a fiscal sponsor provides help with human resources, accounting, and administration. Fiscal sponsorship relationships tend to differ around the fiscal autonomy and legal separation of a sponsored group, the level of liability incurred by the sponsor, and the reporting of economic transactions between the two organizations. Fiscally sponsored groups tend to be responsible for their own strategic planning and programs, boards, and fundraising.²

Fiscal sponsorship is particularly important, especially for FPCs, because it allows them to maintain autonomy and yet receive help with necessary administrative functions. According to Vu Le, author of the blog [Nonprofit AF](#), fiscal sponsorship allows groups to focus on their mission and improving their operations and services; provides critical support for groups led by marginalized communities; encourages collaboration; and provides groups a necessary structure to raise funds for capacity building.³ In a review of fiscal sponsorships in 2015, 37% of sponsors were willing to take on projects focused on policy advocacy/social justice, while 45% were willing to support projects related to people or communities of color/minorities.⁴ The projects most likely to be sponsored were in the areas of arts and culture, education, and children, youth and families. For more information about fiscal sponsorship, visit the [National Network of Fiscal Sponsors](#).

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1. Spack, J. (2005). How fiscal sponsorship nurtures nonprofits. *Communities & Banking*, 16, 22-24.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Le, V. (2018). [These 10 adorable bunnies want you to read this blog post about fiscal sponsorship and equity](#). Nonprofit AF.
 4. Andersson, F.O. and Neely, D.G. (2017). Examining the Role and Diversity of Fiscal Sponsors in the Nonprofit Sector. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*. 46:3. 488-504.

Relationships

Food policy councils are known for their diverse membership, with actors from across the food supply chain; representatives from different sectors, including government, civil society, and academia; as well as community members. Certain relationships are particularly important for FPCs to advance their policy agendas. For example, for the Chicago Food Policy Action Council (Illinois), a strong relationship with the City of Chicago as well as working with a multi-sector coalition were crucial to the adoption of the Good Food Purchasing Policy by the City of Chicago. Figure 7 shows that three-quarters of councils identified relationships with non-profit organization leaders, community members, local elected officials, and local government employees as needed “to a great extent” or “a lot” for the FPC to accomplish its policy priorities.

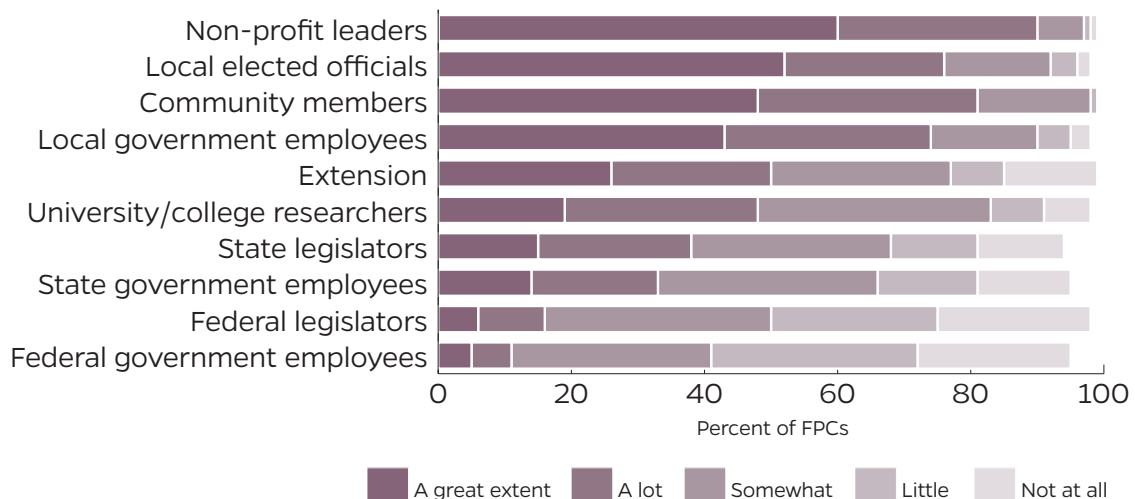
The following sections explore councils’ memberships and internal relationships, connections to government, and relationships with the community in more depth.

Membership

Most FPCs strive to attract representatives, both practitioners and community members, from across their local or regional food system. The variety of perspectives

that an FPC convenes can help members learn from one another about respective challenges and work together to explore policy and programmatic solutions. As highlighted in Figure 8, half or more of FPCs reported having members representing the community, public health, anti-hunger organizations or emergency food providers, producers, colleges/universities, government staff, healthcare, labor, retail,

Figure 7: Importance of relationships to policy work (n=207)

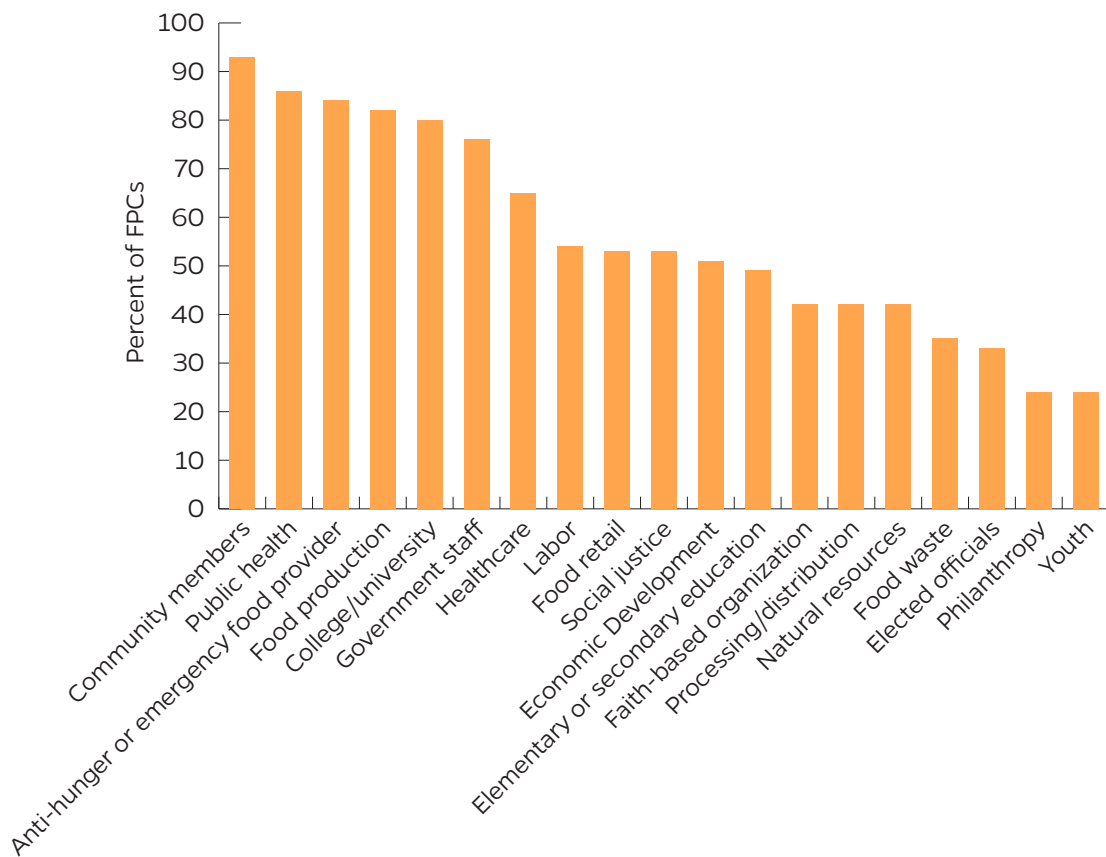


social justice, and economic development. The Douglas County Food Policy Council (Kansas), for instance, has 23 designated seats appointed by the City and the County. These seats include representatives from the agricultural industry, food retail, Douglas County Extension Service, an educational institution, the City of Lawrence Sustainability Advisory Board, healthcare, Lawrence/Douglas County Chamber of Commerce, a farmers market in Douglas County, as well as someone working in hunger or food insecurity and a young person interested in food systems.

Relationship to Government

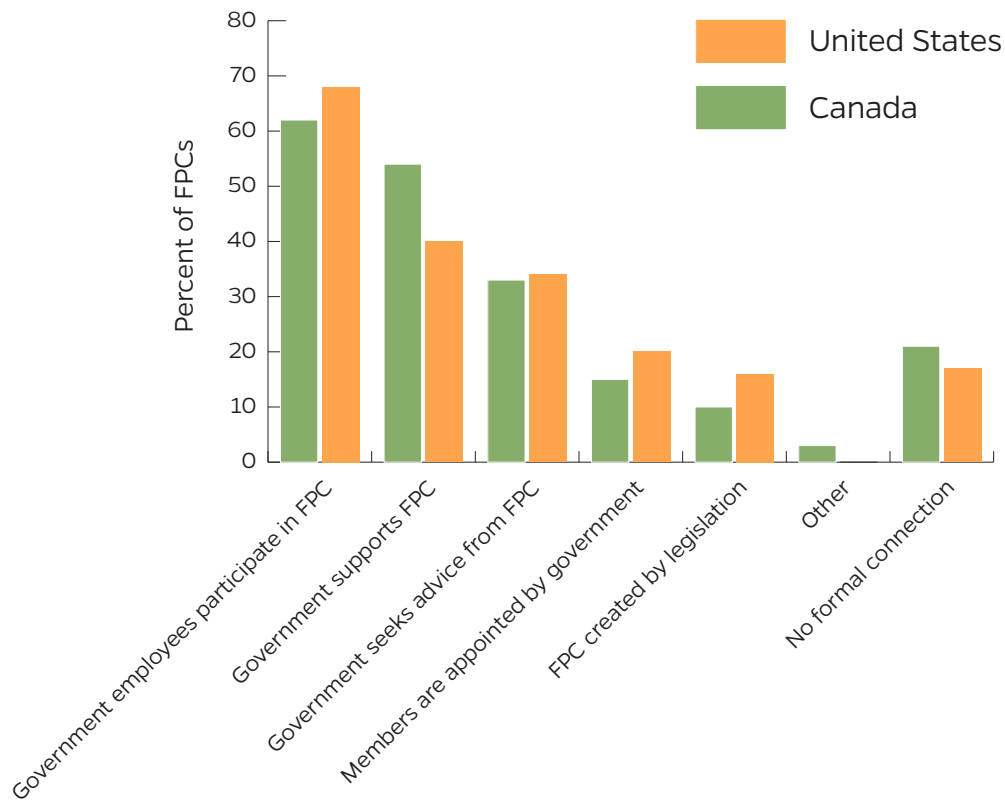
Relationships with government staff and policymakers are valuable assets to FPCs, increasing their legitimacy and visibility as well as providing feedback on the feasibility of different policy options.⁴ For these reasons, 83% of FPCs in the United States and 79% of FPCs in Canada reported having some type of a relationship with government. FPCs may receive in-kind or financial support from government, provide advice to their government, be created by government, or have members appointed by government (Figure 9). Even FPCs that were

Figure 8: Membership (n = 274)



4. Clayton ML, Frattaroli S, Palmer A, Pollack KM (2015). The Role of Partnerships in U.S. Food Policy Council Policy Activities. PLoS ONE 10(4): e0122870.

Figure 9: Relationship to government by country (n = 274)



not embedded within a government agency reported having government employees participate in their council. In Canada, councils reported having more elected officials participate in the council while US councils reported having more representation from government staff.

Not surprisingly, FPCs embedded in government reported stronger connections to government. Compared to all other structure types, FPCs embedded in government were more likely to have members appointed by government, been created by legislation, received support from government,

Table 1: Relationship to government of FPCs embedded in government

	Embedded in government	Other structures
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%

and offered recommendations to government (Table 1).

Of the other organization types, grassroots coalitions and FPCs embedded in a university were more likely to report having a formal connection to government than non-profit organizations and FPCs housed in another non-profit. Non-profit organizations, however, were more likely to have offered advice to government. Eighty-five percent of grassroots coalition FPCs reported some relationship with government, though only 13% reported to offer advice to government (compared to 30-54% of all other organization types). One example of a grassroots coalition's relationship with local government comes from the Good Food Council of Lewiston-Auburn (Maine). The Good Food Council is guiding efforts of the local government and community to improve the area's food system through the L-A Community Food Charter. The Charter is a statement of values and actions that residents, businesses, and the local government can commit to uphold. In the fall of 2016, the city councils of Lewiston and Auburn resolved to support the Charter.

For FPCs that responded to the question about the extent to which certain relationships were needed to accomplish policy priorities, 76% and 74% replied that relationships with local elected officials and local government employees, respectively, were needed "to a great extent" or "a lot" to accomplish their policy priorities. As expected, relationships with federal legislators or federal government employees

were not reported to be as valuable. That said, for the councils that reported working on federal policy (20% of councils), such relationships were more important; 30% and 22% of these councils reported needing relationships with federal legislators and federal government employees, respectively, "to a great extent" or "a lot."

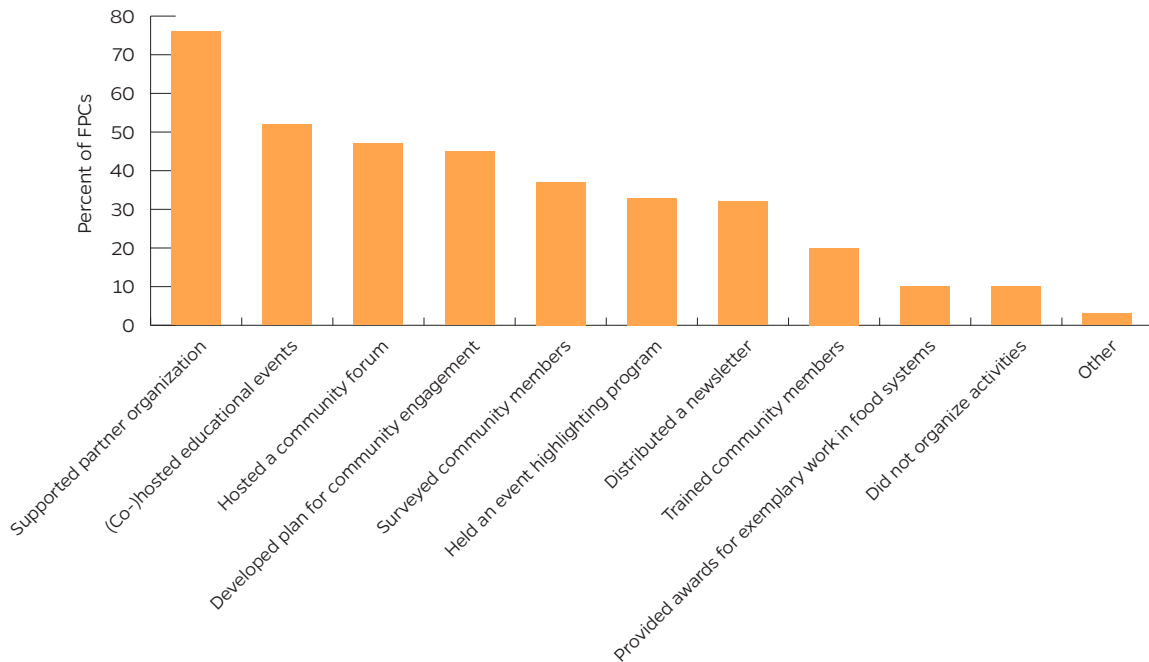
Community

Many FPCs strive to include citizens who are most impacted by food system challenges. The on-the-ground experiences of community members can help FPCs to design appropriate and effective policy solutions and successfully implement policy changes. The importance of community members is recognized by the 81% of FPCs that reported that relationships with community members and the general public were needed "to a great extent" and "a lot" for the FPC to accomplish its policy goals.

FPCs use a number of strategies to engage the general public in their work. These include encouraging community members to participate in an FPC, hosting public events and forums, surveying community members, distributing newsletters, developing specific community engagement strategies, or cross-promoting partner organizations' events (Figure 10).

The types of community engagement strategies employed by FPCs varied based on council age. The percentage of FPCs hosting educational events, supporting community partners by cross-promoting resources and events, distributing newsletters, and

Figure 10: Community engagement activities (n = 271)



training community members tended to increase with the age of the council. 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. The Orange County Food Access Coalition (California), for example, hosts a Resident Leadership Academy that educates community members about the social determinants of health, active transportation, food systems and the municipal ordinance process. A larger proportion of FPCs over ten years old (32%) focused on training community members compared to younger FPCs. Those that were over ten years old also tended to host community forums, but did less work on strategic

planning for community engagement and less surveying of community members. Notably, a larger proportion of younger councils (1-2 years old) did not organize any community engagement activities. This is not surprising as several of these younger FPCs reported to be focused on strategic planning for their FPC, research and data collection, and developing their governance structure.

Organization type also influenced councils' engagement strategies. Councils that were non-profit organizations (63%) or housed in a non-profit organization (66%) were more likely to host educational events compared to other organization types. For instance, the NWI Food Council (Indiana), a non-profit organization, hosted two events — a Food Expo & Discussion and

a series of four FarmHop farm tours — to raise awareness about the local food system and cultivate connections between consumers and area producers. The Food Expo & Discussion drew over 200 people while over 100 people participated in the FarmHop tours. Capitalizing on the excitement generated at the Food Expo & Discus-

sion, NWI organized meet-ups at rotating locations every 6-8 weeks to continue to foster connections and to feature area food businesses. Councils that are grassroots coalitions or embedded in a university were less likely to host a community forum to receive feedback or to develop a strategic plan for community engagement.

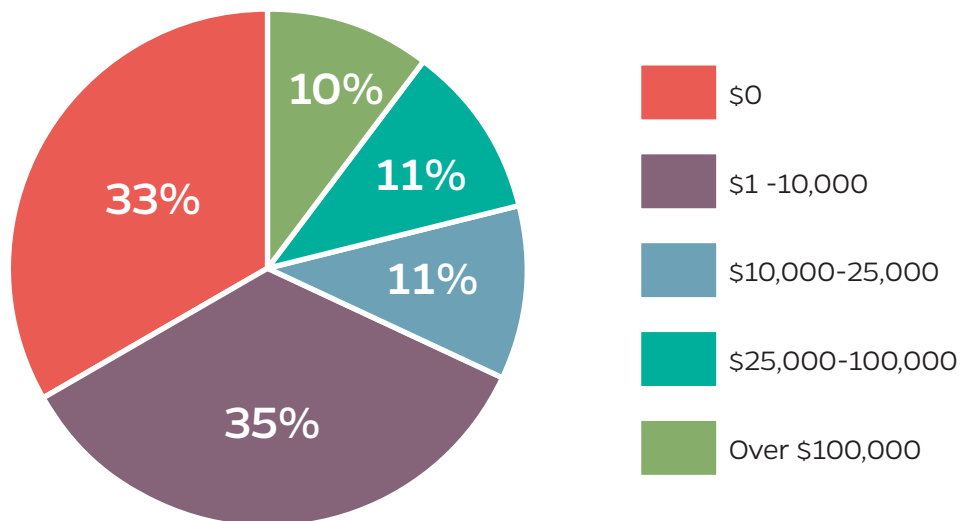
Funding

Funding for operations and policy work is a persistent challenge for FPCs and is one of the most commonly reported challenges in the survey every year. As highlighted in Figure 11, two-thirds of FPCs reported having some funding in 2017. There is some variation in the budgets of FPCs by age and organizational structure; a greater proportion of FPCs that have been in existence for over 6 years or that are a non-profit organization or housed in a non-profit organization had annual budgets over \$100,000.

While in both the United States and Canada a majority of FPCs had some funding, a greater proportion of FPCs in the US had no funding (36% compared to 21% in Canada).

In the United States, however, a higher percentage of FPCs had annual budgets over \$100,000 (11% or 25 FPCs compared to 5% or 2 FPCs in Canada).

Figure 11: Approximate annual budget (n=269)



There was a slight increase in the likelihood of an FPC having a higher approximate annual budget the longer it was in existence. Seventeen percent of FPCs that were 6-10 years old and 13% of FPCs that were over 10 years old reported an annual budget of over \$100,000 compared to only 2% of FPCs that were 1-2 years old and 5% of FPCs that were 3-5 years old. Conversely, 46% of FPCs that were less than two years reported having no funding, whereas 13% of FPCs that were for over 10 years reported no funding.

The organizational structure of an FPC bears some impact on its budget (Table 2). More FPCs that are non-profit organizations or are housed in a non-profit organization had higher annual budgets than other organization types. FPCs that are grassroots coalitions or are embedded in a university are more likely to have annual budgets under \$10,000 than any other organizational type, 90% and 87% respectively. No grassroots coalition FPCs reported an annual budget over \$100,000.

Of the FPCs that work locally, 37% that work at the city/municipality level and 40% that work at both the city/municipality and county levels had an annual budget

over \$10,000 while only 23% of FPCs that work at the county level had an annual budget over \$10,000. Almost half (48%) of FPCs that work at the state/province level had no funding.

For those FPCs that reported having some funding, the survey found that a majority of FPCs (61%) reported in-kind donations as a source of funding. Government funding—from local, state, or federal grants or through the government budget process—was also reported as a source of funding for a majority of FPCs (Figure 12). As shown in Table 3, private foundations were a source of funding for 42% of FPCs in the United States and only 19% of FPCs in Canada. The Rhode Island Food Policy Council, for example, has a unique relationship with private foundations in its area. The FPC co-manages the LASA Grant Program with the Department of Environmental Management. The Program is a unique public-private partnership that awards start-up funds of up to \$20,000 toward the development of food and farm related businesses. Funding from the state and private foundations—van Beuren Charitable Foundation, Henry P. Kendall Foundation, and Rhode Island Foundation—are granted to the RI Food Policy Council for the Program.

Table 2: Approximate annual budget by organization Type

Organization Type	Approximate Annual Budget OVER \$10,000		Approximate Annual Budget UNDER \$10,000	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Grassroots coalition	5	10%	45	90%
Embedded in a university	2	13%	13	87%
Embedded in government	19	27%	52	73%
Housed in a non-profit organization	40	44%	51	56%
Non-profit organization	20	56%	16	44%

Figure 12: Funding sources by country;
(United States = 146, Canada = 31)

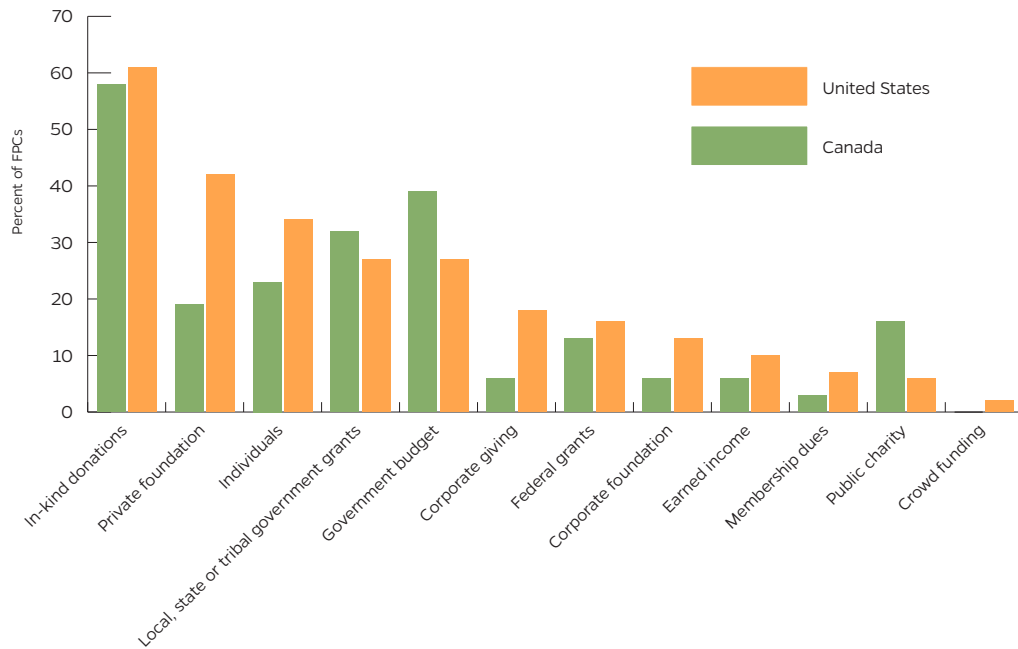


Table 3: Top 5 funding sources by country
(United States = 146, Canada = 31)

Funding Source	United States		Canada	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
In-kind donations	89	61%	18	58%
Private foundation	61	42%	6	19%
Individuals	50	34%	7	23%
Local, state or tribal government grants	40	27%	10	32%
Government budget	39	27%	12	39%

Organizational Priorities

The FPC survey has evolved over the years as our understanding of FPCs has evolved. In previous versions of the survey, FPCs were asked about their top priorities. For the past two surveys, we split this inquiry into two questions to learn about FPCs' top three food systems policy priorities and top three organizational development priorities. FPCs were asked to identify their top three organizational priorities from the list at the right.

As discussed previously, and highlighted in Figure 13, community members are an important part of the work of FPCs. The only organizational priority reported by a majority (60%) of FPCs was community engagement. Forty percent of FPCs reported advocacy and policy capacity building to be a top priority, while 35% reported strategic or policy planning and 33% reported education to be an organizational priority. For example, policy planning and advocacy capacity building have been central to the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council's work on two key initiatives: the creation of food environment and access policy briefs and partnering on the Colorado Blueprint of Food and Agriculture. The policy briefs are short summaries of key challenges and policy recommendations related to food and natural resources. They are intended for use with policymakers and partner organizations. The Blueprint is a project led by Colorado State University to document key assets, emerging issues, and shared priorities in food and agriculture based on conversations with Coloradans. Only 5% of FPCs reported monitoring and evaluation as a top organizational priority.

There were a few noticeable differences in the priorities of FPCs of different ages. As

Organizational Priority Categories

- Advocacy and policy capacity building
- Community engagement
- Communication and marketing
- Diversity and inclusion
- Education
- Fundraising
- Governance structure
- Member recruitment/retention
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Networking
- Research and data collection
- Strategic or policy planning
- Other

expected, newer FPCs, ages 1-2 years old, reported membership recruitment, research and data collection, and governance structure as organizational priorities more often than older FPCs. Only 18% of FPCs ages 1-2 years reported advocacy and policy capacity building as a top organizational priority compared to 42-47% for all other age groups. It takes time for a new FPC to establish a structure, recruit members, and determine policy priorities. The Elkhart

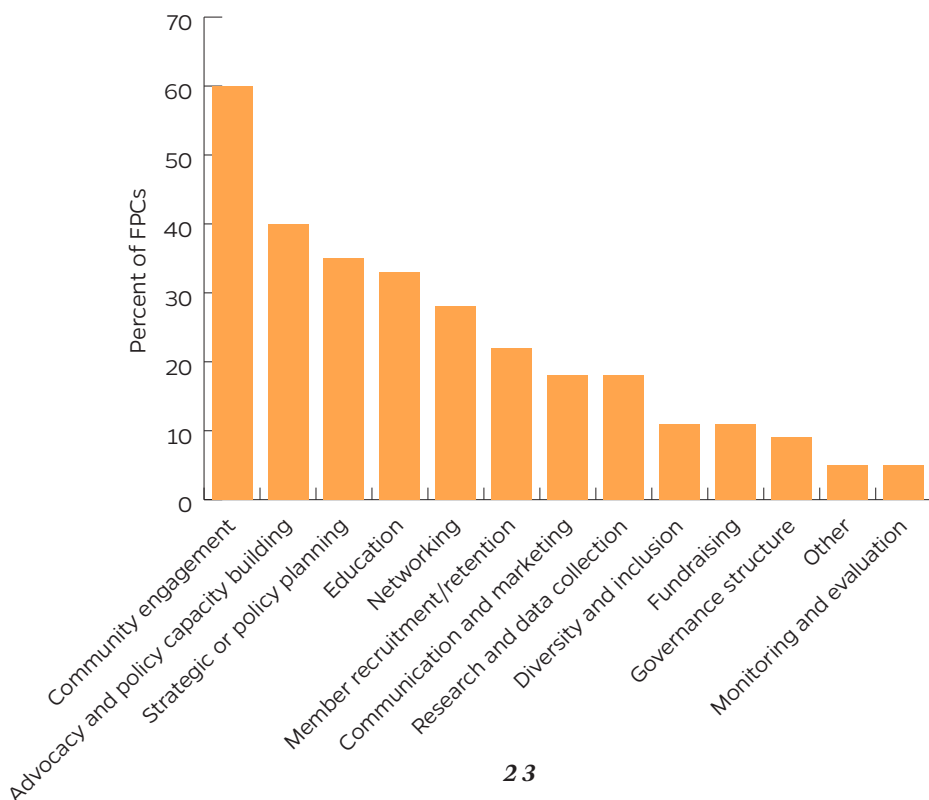
County Food Council (Indiana), for example, emerged out of the Elkhart County Foodshed Initiative in 2014 that convened stakeholders to assess the local food shed. These stakeholders identified a need for more opportunities to connect. After an economic study and work to identify core values and objectives, the Elkhart County Food Council finally launched in 2017.

As FPCs matured, there was a steady decrease in their prioritization of membership recruitment and retention and an increase in their prioritization of advocacy and policy capacity building, networking, and fundraising. For example, Northside Fresh Coalition (Minnesota) has been around for close to a decade but only recently launched a Policy Action Team. Prior to its formation of the Policy Action Team, the Coalition was focused on trust building within the community by working on collaborative projects

like a growers' cooperative and a fruit and vegetable prescription program at a farmers market. The Policy Action Team continues to engage the community by bringing them into the policy process. In 2018, the Policy Action Team, with extensive community input, created a Fresh Food Justice Platform that offers policy recommendations to incoming elected officials centered on a collective vision of food justice. Through this Platform, Northside Fresh Coalition is elevating the importance of food justice in their work, and echoes another finding from the survey — older FPCs, ages 6 and over, showed more interest in diversity and inclusion, with 16-18% prioritizing diversity and inclusion compared to 4-8% of FPCs ages 5 and younger.

FPCs that are embedded in a university tended to focus more on education (47% compared to 27-34%) and less on advocacy

Figure 13: Organizational Priorities (n = 274)



and policy capacity building compared to all other organization types (7% compared to 41-48%). For the Watauga Food Council (North Carolina), an FPC embedded in Extension, community engagement, education, and networking were the top three priorities. The council hosted a Data Sharing Party that aimed to educate the community about the area's food system while networking people working in the food system. Prior to the party, attendees were asked to answer "big picture" questions about the impact of their work on food access, how they measure their impact and successful outcomes, as well as ways to promote the local food system and elevate farming as a viable career. At the event, attendees reviewed the responses and discussed what was missing from information presented. This exercise provided the council with information on the state of the food system, helped them begin to focus their work, and engaged potential new council members. The greater attention on education over advocacy by FPCs embedded in universities is likely due to restrictions on lobbying for government-funded institutions. Government funding can limit lobbying but it does not entirely bar an FPC from engaging in advocacy.⁵ While the Watauga Food Council was focused on education, it was not shy about engaging with policy. In early 2018, the council signed onto a letter to US Senator Richard Burr encouraging him to reject funding cuts to SNAP and other federal nutrition programs in the 2018 Farm Bill.

More FPCs embedded in government prioritized strategic planning and research and data collection than any other organization

type. FPCs embedded in government are more likely to have access to relevant data and rely on strategic planning to communicate their vision, priorities, and impact. FPCs embedded in government were less likely to prioritize fundraising out of all of the organization types (3% compared to 13-17%). The top two sources of funding for FPCs embedded in government were government budgets and in-kind donations. For the City of Madison Food Policy Council (Wisconsin), the only reported sources of funding were the government budget and in-kind donations. The Madison Food Policy Council is an initiative of the Mayor's office with one staff person that works out of the Mayor's office. FPCs that are grassroots coalitions were more likely to prioritize membership recruitment and retention (35% compared to 11-20%) and advocacy and policy capacity building. Only FPCs embedded in government and housed in a non-profit organization reported prioritizing monitoring and evaluation.

While a majority of FPCs that work at local and regional levels reported community engagement as an organizational priority, only 30% of FPCs that work at the state/province level reported community engagement as a priority, likely due to the scope of the "community" that would be included. A quarter of FPCs that work at the state/province level prioritized fundraising compared to 7-14% of FPCs that work at other geographic levels. Additionally, FPCs that work at the city/municipality level were more likely to prioritize diversity and inclusion (27% compared to 4-10% of other geographic levels).

5. For more information on the rules of lobbying and what to consider before engaging in lobbying for food policy councils, see...

Policy Work

Policy Priorities

Survey respondents were asked to identify the top three areas of the food system to which their FPC devoted its attention in 2017 from a list of eleven food systems categories (see below). Of these eleven categories, healthy food access was the only category identified by a majority of FPCs (63%) as a policy priority (Figure 14). Healthy food access has been a policy priority for the majority of FPCs for the past three years. This broad policy area includes efforts like that of the Jefferson County Food Policy Council (Colorado) who worked with the City of Golden to pass an ordinance requiring all farmers markets on city property to

accept SNAP benefits. Following healthy food access, the next two most commonly identified policy areas were economic development (42% of FPCs) and anti-hunger or hunger relief (34% of FPCs). There was a noticeable increase in the number of FPCs that prioritized food waste reduction, up from 12% in 2016 to 20% in 2017. The Dane County Food Council (Wisconsin) pulled out all of the stops to address food waste in 2017. Members of the council served on a joint Food Waste Reduction Taskforce with the City of Madison Food Policy Council. The council also supported a county resolution declaring 2017 the year of food

Policy Priority Categories

- Food procurement (e.g., farm to school, institution or hospital)
- Healthy food access (e.g., healthy food financing, healthy vending, SNAP incentives at farmers markets, soda tax)
- Food waste reduction and recovery (e.g., tax incentive for food donations, date labeling, food waste recycling)
- Anti-hunger (e.g., SNAP outreach and enrollment, food banks, summer feeding programs, senior hunger)
- Land use planning (e.g., urban agriculture zoning, comprehensive planning, farmland protection)
- Food production (e.g., farming, ranching, aquaculture, gardening, beekeeping)
- Local food processing (e.g., cottage food industry, community kitchens, local slaughter)
- Food labor (e.g., minimum wage standards, sick leave, working conditions)
- Natural resources and environment (e.g., water, climate change, soil quality, pesticide regulation)
- Economic development (e.g., food hubs, local food business promotion, food and farm financing)
- Transportation (e.g., access to healthy food retail, last-mile food distribution from wholesale suppliers to consumer food retailers)

waste and recovery, hosted a food waste and recovery convocation, and developed a food waste and recovery resource guide. Figure 15 highlights examples of the policy work of FPCs.

While healthy food access was a priority for a majority of FPCs of all ages, economic development was more often a priority for newer FPCs. Significantly fewer new FPCs, ages 1-2 years, prioritized land use planning (4% compared to 31-34% of other age groups). More FPCs over 10 years old prioritized food labor (8% compared to 0-2% of other age groups). Food labor is a complex issue that requires an FPC to be able to navigate an often-contentious space between business and community

interests.⁶ For newer FPCs, working on less controversial issues, like improving healthy food access and strengthening the local food economy, helps to build the trust amongst members and with the community that is necessary to tackle more complex issues, like food labor.

Healthy food access and economic development were two common policy priorities for every organization type of FPC (Table 4). Anti-hunger policy was also a priority for a significant number of FPCs embedded in government, embedded in a university, or housed in a non-profit organization. More FPCs embedded in a university reported natural resources and environment as a priority than any other organization type

Table 4: Top three policy priorities by organization type (n=270)

Policy Priority	Top Policy Priority				
	Embedded in a university	Embedded in government	Grass-roots coalition	Housed in another non-profit organization	Non-profit organization
Healthy food access	10 (67%)	52 (73%)	27 (52%)	60 (65%)	20 (61%)
Economic development	5 (33%)	32 (45%)	19 (37%)	41 (45%)	13 (39%)
Anti-hunger	5 (33%)	27 (38%)	14 (27%)	36 (39%)	9 (27%)
Food production	3 (20%)	13 (18%)	19 (37%)	34 (37%)	13 (39%)
Food procurement	6 (40%)	18 (25%)	10 (19%)	35 (38%)	8 (24%)
Land use planning	5 (33%)	21 (30%)	12 (23%)	21 (23%)	13 (39%)
Food waste reduction	0	15 (21%)	13 (25%)	18 (20%)	7 (21%)
Local food processing	1 (7%)	5 (7%)	3 (6%)	13 (14%)	6 (18%)
Transportation	2 (13%)	9 (13%)	5 (10%)	1 (1%)	1 (3%)
Natural resources and environment	3 (20%)	0	4 (8%)	2 (2%)	2 (6%)
Food labor	0	3 (4%)	1 (2%)	2 (2%)	0

6. To learn about how FPCs can advocate for food chain workers, see [Shining A Light On Labor: How Food Policy Councils Can Support Food Chain Workers](#) (2018) by Valerie Morrill, Raychel Santo, Karen Bassarab

(20% compared to 8% or less). Additionally, more than twice as many FPCs that are housed in a non-profit organization prioritized local food processing than any other organization type.

Healthy food access and economic development were two of the top policy priorities for FPCs working at all geographic levels (except those that work at both the city/municipality and county level). For FPCs that work at both the city/municipality and county level, healthy food access, land use planning, anti-hunger policy, and food production were the top reported policy priorities. FPCs working at a state/provincial level were the most likely to prioritize anti-hunger policy and FPCs working at the city/municipality level were the least likely (44% compared to 22%). Much work on anti-hunger policy focuses on strengthening access to federal nutrition programs, like SNAP or school breakfast. State governments have some flexibility in how eligibility for these programs is determined and how they are implemented.⁷ In 2015, at the recommendation of the Governor's Council on Food Security, Nevada passed a bill for a funded mandate requiring schools with a high rate of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals to serve breakfast after the bell. This requirement and subsequent funding to support schools in transitioning to a different model for serving breakfast has resulted in the largest percentage increase nationwide in participation in the school breakfast program among children who qualify for free and reduced meals.

Additionally, FPCs working at the state/provincial level were the most likely to prioritize local food processing (28%). FPCs working at the city/municipality level or at the city/municipality and county level were more likely to prioritize food waste reduction. FPCs working at the county level were least likely to prioritize food procurement (22% compared to 30-35%).

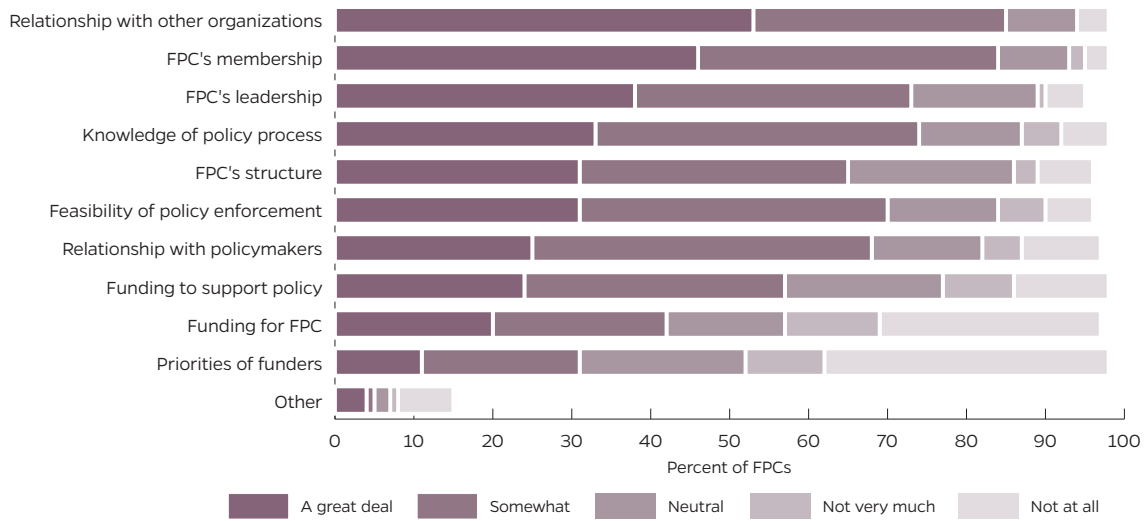
Influences on Policy Priorities

The policy priorities of FPCs can be determined through a formal process like employing a prioritization metric, gathering data through a community food assessment, or developing a food or strategic plan. They can also stem more informally from member interests or relationships with community members, a partner organization, or a local policymaker. There are a number of factors that can influence an FPC's decisions about policy priorities. These include the composition of the FPC's membership, the FPC's structure or leadership, members' knowledge of the policy process, the FPC's relationship with policymakers, feasibility of a policy's enforcement, and funding (Figure 16).

When asked about which factors their FPC considers when making decisions about policy priorities, most FPCs reported that their relationships with other organizations in the community and their membership matter the most. An FPC's leadership was also a significant consideration for 38% of FPCs. To a lesser extent, the feasibility of

7. To learn about how food policy councils can influence the way SNAP works in their states and local communities, check out [Understanding the SNAP Program: For Food Policy Councils](#) (2016) by Kate Fitzgerald, Anne Palmer and Karen Banks.

Figure 16: Factors that influence an FPC’s policy priorities (n=207)



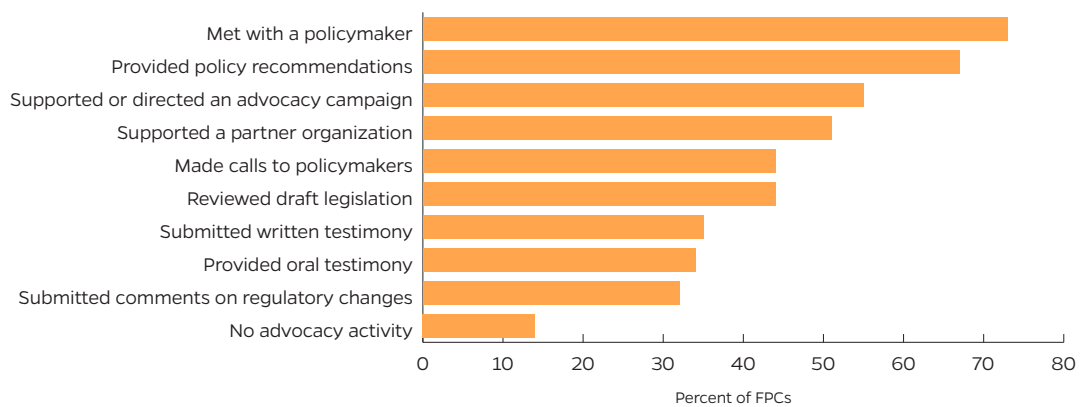
enforcement of a policy, relationship with policymakers, and the funding available to support a policy impacted FPCs’ decisions about policy priorities.

A few FPCs identified additional factors that influenced their decisions, including their organizational capacity and human resources to work on policy, community needs and interests, equitable outcomes, and internal politics around a particular policy issue.

Advocacy Activities

For the first time, the census also asked FPCs about their advocacy activities. The majority of FPCs reported to have met with a policymaker, provided policy recommendations to a policymaker, supported or directed a campaign to advocate for a specific policy change, or supported a partner organization’s policy agenda by signing onto a letter or providing testimony (Figure 17). Just shy of half of FPCs (44%) also made calls to policymakers and reviewed and commented on draft legislation, while a

Figure 17: Advocacy Activities (n=243)



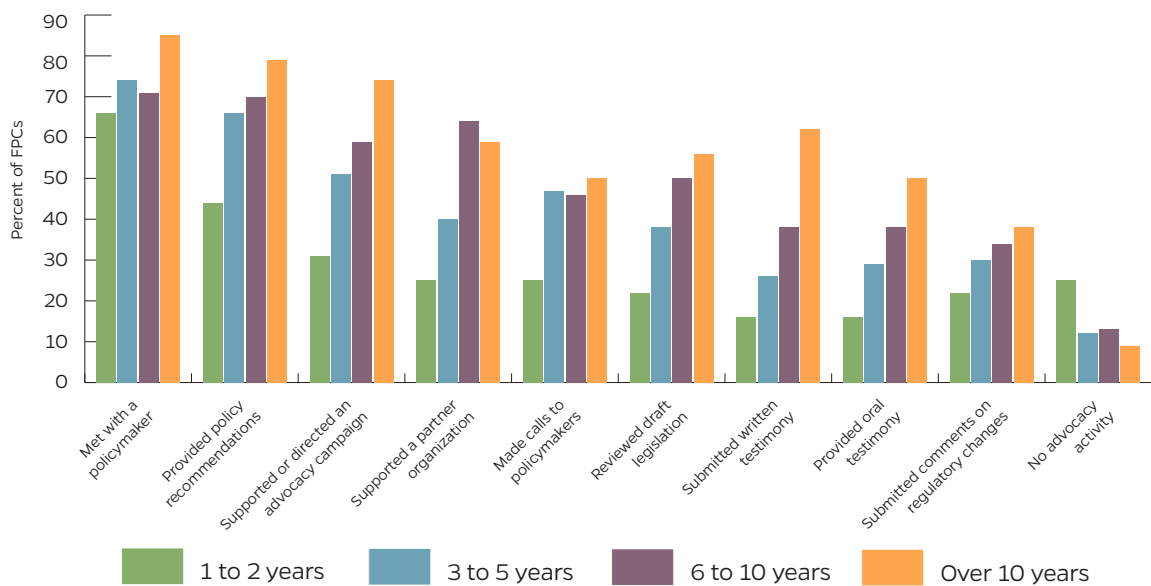
third of FPCs submitted written testimony, provided oral testimony, or submitted comments on regulatory changes. Out of 243 FPCs that responded to this question, only 14% (33 FPCs) reported to not have engaged in any advocacy activities in the last 12 months.

As FPCs age, a greater proportion engages in advocacy activities (Figure 18). With the exception of submitting comments on regulatory changes, 50% or more of FPCs over 10 years old reported to have engaged in all of the other advocacy activities within the past 12 months. The only advocacy activity that a majority of FPCs ages 1-2 years reported to have engaged in during the last 12 months was to meet with a policymaker. A quarter of new FPCs reported to not have engaged in any advo-

cacy activities. These FPCs were either in transition, setting up their council, working on developing policy priorities, or focused on community engagement or communication and marketing.

The Greater Kansas City Food Policy Council (Kansas/Missouri), formed in 2008, used a unique approach of surveying its network members to help determine its policy priorities and learn about their advocacy activities. The survey asked members about their comfort level in contacting elected officials, ways that they advocated for policy change, and what would help them to engage more in advocacy. Results indicated that 65% of those that attended coalition meetings were motivated to contact their elected officials.

Figure 18: Advocacy activities by age (ages 1-2 = 32, ages 3-5 = 73, ages 6-10 = 104, over 10 = 34)



Meeting with policymakers and providing policy recommendations were two advocacy activities that a majority of FPCs of all organization types engaged in during the last 12 months. A majority of FPCs that are non-profit organizations or housed in a non-profit organization also reported to have supported or directed a campaign to advocate for a specific policy change,

supported a partner organization's policy agenda by signing onto a letter or providing testimony, or made calls to policymakers. Notably, FPCs embedded in a university were least likely to engage in an advocacy activity compared to the other organization types. As mentioned above, this is likely due to restrictions on lobbying for government-funded institutions.

Systems Thinking

The Food Policy Networks project works with FPCs focused on igniting change in their food systems. Little is known, though, about what it means for FPCs to work on food systems. Does having a vision for the food system and including people from across the food supply chain qualify as working on the food system? Or does it entail taking a systems approach to an FPC's work? Food systems and systems thinking are two related but different concepts. Food systems include the people, infrastructure, and processes involved in the food supply chain (e.g., production, processing, distribution, preparation, consumption, and disposal) as well as the broader health, environmental, social, and economic contexts and effects of these activities.⁸ Meanwhile, systems thinking can be defined as “an enterprise aimed at seeing how things are connected to each other within some notion of a whole entity.”⁹ Complex issues, such as those that affect the food system, are best understood when using systems thinking approaches.¹⁰

Most FPCs organize to address the activities and people involved in food systems but they might not always employ systems thinking approaches. Systems thinking acknowledges that solutions will require collaborative engagement from more than one sector or organization; considers long term, short term, and unintended consequences; targets the root causes of an issue; identifies leverage points that could lead to change; and monitors how things change over time and adapts its process accordingly. Such comprehensive approaches may even involve working on issues outside of the traditional food supply chain that impact the health, environmental, social, and economic well-being of a community's food system (e.g., racial equity, affordable housing, living wages).

To start to understand how FPCs apply elements of systems thinking in their work, we included a multi-component question in the 2018 survey asking respondents how well different elements of systems thinking applied to their FPC. The question included nine statements:

1. The FPC encourages comprehensive approaches to solving food system-related issues.
2. The FPC targets the root causes of a problem in their policy work (e.g., supports a campaign for living wages)
3. The FPC sets common objectives that are agreed upon by members.

8. IOM. (2015). A framework for assessing effects of the food system. Retrieved from Washington, D.C: <https://www.nap.edu/read/18846/chapter/1>

9. Peters, D. (2014) 'The application of systems thinking in health: why use systems thinking?' Health Research Policy and Systems, vol 12, no 51.

10. Clancy, K. (2014) 'A different way to approach policy change', Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development, vol 4, no 4, pp9-11.

4. The FPC looks for information about and analyzes current policies, the policy environment and opportunities for advancing its advocacy or policy goals.
5. In making decisions about policy or program interventions, the FPC considers how the issue involves the health, and environmental, social and economic well-being of a community.
6. The FPC collaborates on projects or policies with partners not working directly on food system issues (e.g., racial equity, housing).
7. The FPC reflects the racial, economic, gender and ethnic diversity of the community.
8. The FPC provides training and leadership opportunities for all of its members.
9. The FPC monitors the advocacy process and adapts its approach based on the outcomes.

Almost all FPCs (272) responded to one or more of the statements in the question, with 217 responding to all of the statements in the question. Councils most frequently reported setting common objectives agreed upon by members (3), working on comprehensive approaches to food-system issues (1), and considering how an issue involves the health, environmental, social, and economic well-being of a community when making decisions about policy or program interventions (5). Meanwhile, councils were least likely to provide training and leadership

opportunities for all members (8); reflect the racial, economic, gender, and ethnic diversity of their communities (7); and monitor the advocacy process and adapt their approaches based on the outcomes (9).

There were only nine FPCs that responded saying that they applied all of the systems thinking approaches either “to a great extent” or “a lot” in their work. One of those was the Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC) in Ontario, Canada. The TFPC was formed in 1991 as a subcommittee of the Toronto Board of Health. The mandate of the TFPC was to advise the Board of Health (and ultimately City Council), access community experience and expertise, and develop systemic solutions to the problem of food insecurity. Today, the TFPC works with citizen stakeholders, City staff and municipal councillors on a variety of food policy issues including increasing access to healthy food, procurement, land use, regional planning, and economic development.

The guiding documents for the work of the TFPC are the Toronto Food Charter, adopted unanimously by City Council in 2001 and the Toronto Food Strategy developed for the City of Toronto in 2010. These documents outline common goals and objectives that help to center food as an important issue across the city. As the food strategy identifies, “cities have more influence over how food systems work than many suppose, and could have even more influence if they started to identify, name and intentionally leverage what they

can do in support of a healthy, sustainable food system.”¹¹ The food strategy team and the TFPC work to identify these levers of local government. In the 2018 update of the Toronto Food Strategy of 2010, the food strategy team mapped the relationship of food to the work of every division in the City, drawing further connections to the impact of food on the health, environmental, social, and economic well-being of the community.

The partnership between members of the TFPC and the local government are key to influencing how the food system works in Toronto. The TFPC is comprised of leaders from the community whose knowledge and expertise help to inform the strategy and work of the local government. The work of the TFPC is carried out by a policy specialist and administrative assistant who are public servants employed by the City of Toronto. These staff are part of a team of public servants working towards implementation of the Toronto Food Strategy, while the TFPC itself serves as a reference group for the Toronto Food Strategy. The relationship between the TFPC and the local government creates a feedback loop to share information and knowledge and to ensure that the efforts to transform the food system are realistic and cutting edge.

Moving forward, the Toronto Food Strategy team and the TFPC are working to align their food systems efforts with other cities around the world. By signing the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact in support of poli-

cies that promote more equitable, resilient, and sustainable food systems, the City of Toronto recognizes that it is part of a global food system. The food strategy team is currently engaged in an initiative to study the impact of climate change on the local food system and develop action plans to make it more resilient. The food strategy team also works to support newcomers immigrating to Canada from around the world through the Community Food Works program, which provides food handling certification and other skills necessary to work in the food sector in Toronto.

These initiatives are part of an “action research” approach. This approach means championing innovations by supporting projects that have the potential to be scalable and/or replicable. This approach also allows new initiatives to be tested before widespread implementation. The Toronto Food Strategy team, with support of the TFPC, works where there is energy and interest, and is not afraid to fail. For example, a project to increase the availability of fresh foods in corner stores was tried but eventually discontinued due to the complexity of such an alternative retail model and a lack of resources to provide sufficient technical assistance.

The TFPC has also launched initiatives of its own. The Food By Ward Project is an interactive map of community food initiatives in each ward of the city that is publically accessible through the TFPC’s website. Food By Ward showcases Toronto’s food assets

¹¹ City of Toronto Public Health (2010). Cultivating Food Connections: Toward a Healthy and Sustainable Food System for Toronto, p16.

and opportunities across all wards, and calls for greater attention to food as an integral element of the urban system. The Food by Ward initiative aims to grow the City of Toronto's appetite for using food assets to solve city problems; make it easier for City staff and officials to see and use community food assets strategically; and inspire, support, and guide a cadre of community food champions to identify and promote food priorities in their wards.

Not all community members experience the food system in the same way. Through its Food Justice Working Group, the TFPC is forming strategic relationships to explore inequities in the food system. In 2017, the City of Toronto created an Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism. TFPC members met with the Confronting Anti-Black Racism (CABR) Unit of the City to explore opportunities for partnership. CABR Unit staff are now regularly attending TFPC meetings and will be providing anti-black racism training for TFPC members. The TFPC plans to meet next with the City's newly formed Indigenous Affairs Office.

This summary is only a snapshot of the work of the TFPC and the food strategy team, but it highlights the ways that the FPC applies a systems approaches to its work. The TFPC works across sectors - both directly and indirectly related to food - to address food systems issues, analyzes the policy environment before initiating ef-

forts, integrate community members into its work, is intentionally working to advance racial equity, and monitors and adapts its approach when appropriate.

Another FPC that responded saying that they applied all of the systems thinking approaches either "to a great extent" or "a lot" in their work is the Healthy Native Foods Network, a project of the American Indian Cancer Foundation. The Healthy Native Foods Network (HNFN) acts as a convener of FPC-like entities in tribal communities. HNFN works closely with around 20 tribal communities across the United States on public health policy and environment changes to address inequities in health and chronic diseases. The communities they work with tend to have a small coalition of tribal staff, public health representatives, and community members, including elders and youth, who are concerned about the health of the next generation. These members recognize the role that food plays in the high rates of obesity and diabetes in tribal communities. The Network concentrates on providing technical assistance to these coalitions working to improve healthy food access. They provide a variety of capacity building resources, including trainings, webinars, data, and research on healthy food access and policy, advocacy, and environmental change processes. The ultimate goal for the Network is to foster tribal food sovereignty—whereby indigenous people have access and the ability to eat regionally and culturally appropriate foods—through the reclamation of indigenous foodways.

FPCs in Native American and First Nations communities grapple with many complex layers of political oversight between tribal and national governments. The governance of an individual tribe can also vary greatly. Given the diversity among different tribal communities, the Network focuses on meeting communities where they are at. Culture is at the center of everything they do. Keeping this at the forefront, the

Network tailors its approach to each native community, starting its journey with a new tribe by listening to their wisdom and knowledge. This helps them to identify context-appropriate solutions that address the root causes of chronic disease inequities, including social determinants of health and adverse childhood experiences related to food.

Conclusion

This report is part of FPN’s ongoing effort to build the capacity of FPCs of all types and geographies to advance equitable, healthy, and sustainable food systems change. We hope that by documenting the number, capacities, processes, priorities, and accomplishments of FPCs in the United States and Canada we can support their efforts in driving local, regional, state, and tribal food policy work.

Methods

The CLF began its annual survey, or census, of FPCs in 2013 with the aim of maintaining the work of documenting and supporting FPCs started by the Community Food Security Coalition. The survey also serves to inform our understanding of the similarities and differences among FPCs and to reduce duplicative information requests of FPCs. Over the years, the survey questions and collection techniques have evolved to reflect a greater knowledge of FPCs and stronger relationships with FPCs. At the outset, the census gathered basic information about an FPC: jurisdiction level, primary contact, webpage and social media links, year formed, governance structure, top priorities, and notable accomplishments. We have since expanded it to include questions that explore if and how FPCs take a systems approach in their work; how relationships, funding, and other factors impact an FPC's policy work; and the types of policies that FPCs have helped to enact (administrative, institutional, legislative), and in what policy areas. To disseminate the survey to FPCs, a contact list was created based on contact information provided by an FPC in the previous year's survey, information gathered from a state/provincial or regional food council convener, direct contact with an FPC, and an extensive online search.

The survey was sent out to 380 food policy councils and state food policy council conveners across the United States and Canada in January 2018. Survey responses were received from 321 FPCs between January and April 2018. Responses from 278 of them were analyzed in the report, including 40 responses from FPCs in Canada, 236 responses from FPCs in the United States, and two Native American FPCs. To our knowledge, there are at least five active FPCs working in Native American/First Nations communities in the United States and Canada but only two filled out the survey. So as not to generalize all Native American/First Nations FPCs based on two surveys, we excluded the responses of these FPCs from the analysis of FPCs across nations, by geographic focus and by funding source. The

number of FPCs in Canada included in this report likely undercounts the total number of active FPCs in Canada due to our more limited understanding of and connections to the food policy landscape there.

Of the responses that were not analyzed, ten were from FPCs that submitted duplicate responses (the duplicates were merged for the purposes of not over-representing individual councils); two were from councils that started the survey but did not provide enough answers to be analyzed; one was excluded due to our determination that it did not qualify as an FPC; and 30 councils reported themselves as inactive. An FPC is determined inactive if it self-reports to be inactive on the annual survey, or it fails to fill out the survey and we are unable to

confirm their activity with a viable contact or partner organization and we do not find activity online within the past year. Additionally, state conveners of local FPCs were excluded from the survey analysis because of their unique function bringing together local FPCs to share experiences, provide training and technical support, and occasionally offer funding.

The figures portraying the status of FPCs in 2018, age of active councils, age of active councils by nation, year of formation, active FPCs since 2000, and FPCs by state/province charts used 2018 survey data,

historical data maintained by CLF, as well as data gathered from online searches. Charts that include data collected outside of the 2018 survey are noted. All other figures included in this report were based only on 2018 survey responses. Participants were able to skip survey questions at their discretion, thus a varying number of FPCs answered each question. The n= attached to each chart reflects the total number of councils who responded to that question. When possible, the number of responses is broken down by nation, age of FPC, organizational structure, or geographic focus.