ADVANCING A LOCAL FOOD COUNCIL NETWORK IN MICHIGAN

Tuesday, December 16 10:30am
Welcome!
Speakers

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The phrase “local food council” is used throughout this presentation to refer to groups that convene around a defined sub-state geographic area to assess and recommend practices or policies that impact one or more aspects of the food system.
Background

- **Michigan Food Policy Council**
  - Local Food Policy Council Taskforce
  - 2012 Report: Michigan Food Policy Council Network – A survey of local food policy councils and collaboration potentials in Michigan
In the spring of 2014 the Center for Regional Food Systems at Michigan State University CRFS commissioned an assessment of the potential of a statewide local food council network.

- Conducted phone interviews
- Two in-person meetings (July and October)
- Review and analysis of prior local food council network work
Common Themes from Interviews

- The formation of Food Policy Councils in Michigan is relatively new.
- Councils struggle with how to keep community members engaged.
- There is no one way for a council to get started in a community.
- Councils struggle with identity.
- The majority of councils surveyed are volunteer based.
- There is a lot of concern surrounding the word “policy”.
- Council members and leaders are passionate about their work.
- Nearly all councils have used the Good Food Charter to influence their work.
Statewide Network

Interviews and meetings with council members identified the following six key functions for a statewide network:

- Provide a space for local councils to network with one another;
- Connect local councils to statewide policy information, issues and actions;
- Help local councils build capacity;
- Provide hands-on training to local food councils;
- Connect local policy information, issues and actions to other parts of the state;
- Connect local councils to national policy information, issues and actions.
Network Functions

- Provide a space for local councils to network with one another
Connecting local councils to state level policy work was identified as an important function of a statewide network.
Network Functions

Help local councils build capacity
Local council leaders desire hands-on training on a variety of topics that can be taken back and applied at the local level.
Network Functions

- Connect local policy information, issues and actions to other parts of the state
Network Functions

- Connect local councils to national policy information, issues and actions
A statewide network can provide guidance to local food councils on ways utilizing the Charter and associated resources and connecting to other groups and networks through the Charter can support their work.
CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

- Identify a network coordinator
- Confirm network membership with council representatives
- Determine network structure and logistics
- Set-up web platform for sharing network resources
- Clarify distinct role of the network and how it provide synergy with other existing networks
- Determine first-year priorities for capacity building and networking topics
New Releases: Report & RFP

Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems
Request for Proposals
Local Food Council Network Coordination

Background
In 2012, the Michigan Food Policy Council (MFPC) commissioned a state-wide survey of local food councils and conducted a survey of groups engaged in food system work. Over the course of 2014, the Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems (CSU-FC) contracted with a consultant to determine the level of interest in a state-wide network as well as the distribution of information (e.g., newsletters, websites, etc.) that local food council networks maintain. A December 2014 report, "Advancing a Local Food Council Network in Michigan: An Assessment," recommends that the state conduct an online survey to identify interest in a state-wide network and should be shared in conjunction with requests for proposals.

Project Description
We are seeking proposals to implement a new network to bring together representatives from local food councils, other groups, and others interested in the food system in Michigan to work on policy and programs to engage their communities. This effort would be focused on developing a state-wide network of local food councils to identify the following issues and network-related activities:

- Provide a space for local councils to network with one another;
- Connect local councils to statewide policy information, issues, and actions;
- Help local councils build capacity;
- Provide hands-on training to local food councils;
- Connect local policy information, issues, and actions to other parts of the state;
- Coordinate local councils to coordinate information, issues, and actions.

Scope of Work
The consultant(s) or team will work with leaders and members of local food councils, as well as other interested partners, to develop a state-wide local food council network that will serve the aforementioned needs. The consultant will work with network members, stakeholders, and networks to identify the needs of Michigan to help develop strong relationships between the local food council network and other networks and initiatives across the state, to facilitate sharing and collaboration throughout the network on regional, state, and national policy issues and actions. The consultant will also work with CSU staff coordinating the Michigan Food Systems Collaborative to identify ways to connect to networks and other efforts.

December 2014
Host meetings every other month
- 3 times/year virtually; 3 times per year in person
- Plan in person meetings around other meetings/events

Facilitate communication among councils

Facilitate connections to other networks

Compiling and sharing relevant resources
RFP: Parameters

- Budget: $15,000 - $20,000
- 12 months, possibility of annual renewal through 2017
- Due January 16, 2015
- Posted on CRFS website
CRFS Support

- Page on the CRFS website for resources
- Listserv or contact database
- Assistance making connections with other networks and initiatives
- Provision of available CRFS meeting technologies
- Provision of meeting space and food and beverage within predetermined budget
- Support for trainings on policy engagement and racial equity
CRFS Support

Proposals sent to:
Liz Gensler
MSU Center for Regional Food Systems
517-353-1914
gensler@msu.edu
Next Steps

- Help share RFP and report
- Request to be added to contact database
- Award contract in early 2015
- First network meeting targeted for April 2015
CONNECTING ACROSS MICHIGAN

Thank You!

Advancing a Local Food Council Network in Michigan