

Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council

Working Policy Recommendations Document
Last updated December 19, 2006

***CFPAC Mission:** The Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council (CFPAC) will facilitate the development of responsible policies that improve access for Chicago residents to culturally appropriate, nutritionally sound, and affordable food that is grown through environmentally sustainable practices.*

The Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council (CFPAC) is network of organizations and individuals sharing their experiences and concerns about food security in the Chicago region in order to influence policy makers to make informed decisions motivated by the goals of community food security.

The CFPAC at the 2006 Chicago Food Policy Summit pulled together policy recommendations from the attendees and has been refining the suggestions for the past year. Presented below is a condensed version of the recommendations. The policy ideas are categorized into three areas, **Food Access, Food and Sustainability, Food and Economic Sustainability.**

Food Access:

Access to healthy and locally produced food is an issue in many communities of Chicago. There are several approaches that can target the multiple outlets for where food is made available. Access can be improved by ensuring grocery stores and farmer's markets are in communities that are underserved. Corner stores can be provided incentives to stock healthier foods. City food procurement can be directed to purchase from local and regional producers.

- A. Farmer's markets** should be located in underserved communities and at sites where multiple services are accessible like Hospitals, WIC centers, Churches, & Community Centers. Markets should also provide access for consumers using electronic LINK food stamp benefits and WIC and Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program vouchers. Engage multiple city departments including Mayor's Office of Special Events, Department of Health, Department of Human Services, and Department of Aging.
- B. Regional farmers** could receive opportunities to sell more products in Chicago. Procurement opportunities within the City can be developed in Departments such as Children and Youths Services, Aging, and the Park District. Provide increased support for a permanent public market and wholesale market with cooler & storage space for local farmers.

- C. **Chicago Public Schools** should create procurement opportunities from local growers and serve more fresh foods. Develop internal systems that allow CPS and/or individual schools to order, process, and serve ingredients/produce from local growers.
- D. **Public transportation** connections to farmer's markets and supermarkets can be supported and promoted from communities that have low access to healthy food. Signage and guides can be developed to markets for public transportation customers.

Funding and Economic Sustainability:

These approaches increase access to healthy, fresh, safe food while providing economic benefits to the larger community, especially low-income, food insecure residents. Local food system development has economic benefits for the entire region.

A. Small businesses/grocers can be given support to provide healthy, fresh, local, sustainable foods. Assistance can be given to businesses that begin to provide healthy, fresh foods with educational tools, materials, resource guides, business planning, referrals, assistance with inspections, etc. Explore mechanisms for providing capital improvements to smaller stores such as tax incentives. Assist with relationship building: identify wholesalers who can serve small businesses/grocers. Connect local growers (regional/rural and neighborhood/urban) directly with local grocers.

B. Emergency food agencies should be supported to improve storage and refrigeration for handling fresh foods. The quality of healthy food will be improved that they are able to provide to communities.

C. Small food businesses and processors (restaurants, bakeries, delis, etc) have incentives and resources to purchase from local producers. This can include providing a directory of producers, tax credits, fee waivers, and training in handling fresh product. The development of incubator kitchens will encourage the creation of other small food businesses.

D. Grocery stores should be brought into communities that are underserved by healthy food options. The City can provide incentives and assistance to attract both local and national grocers to these areas.

Food and Sustainability

These recommendations focus on anti-hunger, food security and urban food production issues. A food literacy campaign can improve the health of families and young people who are struggling with diet related issues and diseases. The City can address Chicago's soil contamination, the composting of food and yard waste, and support local urban agriculture farmers and gardeners.

A. Food and Sustainability Literacy Campaign as a comprehensive approach to promoting healthy food consumption needs be implemented. The Campaign can include the publicizing of farmers markets, a buy/eat local campaign, and a focus on youth and food.

B. The environmental safety of land for growing food can be assured by a program that creates a how-to guide to safe growing practices and certifies providers of "clean" soil and compost for growers and gardeners. City-wide free/low cost soil testing for organizations and communities should be provided.

C. Compost sites for large-scale and small-scale donations should be established. The creation of a compost pick-up system for both residences and businesses is desired.

D. Land for urban agriculture should be planned for by the City. The Park District and their landscaping partners can provide spaces and materials for food production. Direction can be provided to builders and developers to integrate food production into plans for green space. The City's open space plan should reserve a percentage of open space for food production.

E. Urban Agriculture and peri-urban sustainable food production certification can be developed that ensures products are sustainable and safe.

F. Local/regional farmers should be supported by working with regional and state organizations and governments to protect and preserve agricultural land, support training and resources for transitioning and beginning farmers, and develop resources for getting products to market.

G. Chicago's Urban Agriculture initiatives should be supported and promoted, which network home-growers, community gardeners and urban farmers, such as the Advocates for Urban Agriculture.