



New Haven Food Policy Council

2013 Annual Report to the Board of Aldermen

OVERVIEW

The New Haven Food Policy Council (NHFPC) is a volunteer advisory council of the City of New Haven. The NHFPC was created by City Ordinance Number 1384, 6-6-05, in June of 2005, and officially convened its first meeting on January 22, 2007.

The NHFPC addresses issues concerning our local and regional food systems and their connection to individuals, communities, businesses, the environment and local government.

NHFPC Mission

The mission of the New Haven Food Policy Council is to build and maintain a food system that nourishes all people in a just and sustainable manner.

NHFPC Goals & Strategies

To improve New Haven's food system by:

1. Advocating and advising on food policy and implementation;
2. Building community around food through coalitions, and fostering cooperation between community groups, residents and city offices to improve all aspects of our food environment;
3. Establishing strategies that effectively address food access, availability, hunger, obesity, economic development, urban agriculture, food waste and nutritional and food education;
4. Developing strategies to enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of the City of New Haven;
5. Educating residents and community leaders about our local food system and food related issues in our communities.

Current NHFPC Members

By ordinance, the NHFPC may have up to eleven members who are appointed by the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen. All members must reside in the City of New Haven and be registered voters. The Council consists of New Haven residents who represent various aspects of the local food system; however, there are currently two open seats on the Council. Members of the community participating in the New Haven Food Policy Council during 2013 are listed in the following table:

Monique Centrone-Stefani	Sociologist – Secretary	Resigned 7/2013
Fred Cofrancesco	Urban Gardener, Community Member	Resigned 7/2013
Frank Douglass	Aldermanic Representative	
Tagan Engel	Community Food Systems Coordinator, CitySeed; Chef – Immediate Past Chair	Term expires 7/1/2014
Roberta Friedman	Director Food Policy, Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity	Resigned 11/2013
Anika Thrower	Cornell Scott-Hill Health Center, WIC Site Nutritionist – Vice-Chair	Term expires 7/1/2015
Frank Mitchell	Board Chair, Common Ground High School	Term expires 7/1/2015
Caty Poole	Executive Director, Massaro Community Farm	Term expires 7/1/2015



Diana Richter	Executive Director, Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen – Treasurer	Term expires 7/1/2016
Alycia Santilli	Director of Community Initiatives, CARE - Chair	Term expires 7/1/2016
Dawn Slade	Founder, Nuts About Health, Inc.	Term expires 1/1/2014
Maria Tupper	New Haven Land Trust; New Haven Bioregional Group	Term expires 7/1/2015

Please note: The three Council members who resigned this year moved from the City of New Haven and were therefore no longer eligible to serve.

In 2011 the NHFPC expanded its knowledge base and collaborations by creating Affiliate Memberships and a Youth Coalition. The NHFPC formalized its roles of membership through the adoption of formal bylaws in March of 2013. Affiliate member organizations have a voice in all NHFPC work but do not vote. With the support of a new CT Food Justice Youth Corps AmeriCorps VISTA, the NHFPC is developing a Youth Internship program to more effectively engage youth in the Council and food system work in New Haven. Youth Interns will serve as affiliate members of the NHFPC. Council meetings are open to the public and we welcome everyone to participate in our work.

Following are the Council’s 2013 Affiliate Member Organizations:

- CitySeed
- Common Ground School
- Connecticut Food Bank
- Massaro Community Farm
- New Haven Health Department
- Yale Sustainable Food Project

Meeting Times: The New Haven Food Policy Council meets on a monthly basis (with the exception of August) on the third Wednesday of each month from 8:00 AM to 9:45 AM in a designated meeting room of City Hall. As a result of the Food Summit in the fall of 2012, several working groups were formed as working subcommittees of the Council. These working groups generally meet monthly (meeting times are listed on our webpage) and report back to the Council.

Staffing: The NHFPC currently employs one part-time staff person who provides approximately 5-10 hours per week of administrative support to the Council and its working groups, and serves as general coordinator and record-keeper of the Council’s activities. This position reports to the chair of the NHFPC and is currently funded through money made available to the Council from the Mayor’s discretionary fund.

Funding: The NHFPC has historically received \$7,000 of annual funding from the Mayor’s discretionary funds. In addition to financing the staff person’s salary, this funding is used to subsidize minimal printing costs and expenses for fiduciary responsibility taken on by CitySeed.

The NHFPC serves as a crucial hub of cross-sector work on food issues for New Haven. The funding received from the Mayor’s discretionary fund is essential to the support of this work, and we would greatly appreciate the continuation of funding for the work we do to serve the City by building partnerships across departments and between community organizations, residents and the City to address critically important food and health issues.



In 2013 the NHFPC received a \$5,000 grant from the New Haven Health Department in partnership with CitySeed and Global Local Gourmet to conduct free cooking classes and cooking teacher trainings in 2013/14.

In 2012 the NHFPC received two-year funding in partnership with CitySeed from the CEIO grant program in the amount of \$100,000 to support the Council and CitySeed in performing community engagement, diversity and mission effectiveness work, as well as funding a Community Food Systems Coordinator position housed at CitySeed. This grant comes to a close on March 31, 2014.

2013 ACTIVITIES AND FOCUS

Using the momentum achieved at the Food Summit held in October 2012, the NHFPC formed a series of on-going Working Groups in early 2013 focusing on areas in which citizens had expressed the greatest interest during 2012 community meetings. The working groups identified are:

- Cooking & Food Education
- Economic Development
- Food Assistance
- School Food
- Urban Agriculture

The Working Groups, comprised of community members, categorized the strategies outlined in the Council's *Food Action Plan* and are taking steps to implement them. The Working Groups provide a forum to engage the broader community in the Council's work and food system change. As Working Groups identify challenges and opportunities for change related to their specific topic, they develop solutions and work with the larger Council to determine how to best implement these solutions. Often, these solutions include recommendations for City Departments and the Council has proved successful in working collaboratively across departments to work towards food system change.

The Council also formed a Policy Advancement Committee this year to engage with specific city departments and agencies to advance the goals and strategies set forth in the Food Action Plan. Our primary policy priority is the creation of a Food Systems Director position for the City of New Haven. We believe that a staff position dedicated to working for healthy, affordable food for all city residents has the potential to positively impact neighborhoods, job growth, education and reduction in crime. We wish to work with the City to help create and sustain such a position. Other policy priorities for 2014 are listed on page 6.

To improve its sustainability over time and allocate its responsibilities among a leadership group, the NHFPC developed and formally adopted its first set of governing by-laws and elected its first full slate of officers in March of 2013.



A summary of the NHFPC's recent efforts includes:

New Haven Food Action Plan

A comprehensive set of policy recommendations for the city of New Haven to improve access to healthy food, the food business economy, and cooking and food education. A final draft released in March 2013 and the plan was officially endorsed by the New Haven Board of Alders in October 2013.

Community Engagement

Food Summit: Over 125 participants attended the October 2012 Food Summit, the final phase of community outreach and *Food Action Plan* development.

Community Engagement Grant (CEIO): In partnership with CitySeed, awarded \$100,000 over two years (2012-14) to support community engagement for NHFPC organizational development and diversity training.

Youth engagement: Awarded a three-year AmeriCorps VISTA Food Justice Youth Corps service member (2013-2016), collaborating with CitySeed as site partner. New Haven is one of five sites statewide for 2013/14.

Connecticut Food System Alliance: Participated in gatherings of the new state-wide alliance of food groups and food policy councils to examine potential for state-wide actions and initiatives.

Connecticut Food Policy Council Network Building: Working with the CT Food Policy Council to build a network of Food Policy Groups in Connecticut to better address serious food issues across the state.

Advocacy Efforts

Mayoral Candidate Forum on Food and Health: Over 160 residents attended the July 31, 2013 forum, raising awareness about the importance of the next administration to address food and health issues in New Haven.

Disaster planning: Successfully advocated for changes to the New Haven Office of Emergency Management's Preparedness Plan to include emergency food providers as a priority for restoration during large-scale power outages to support the needs of the city's most underserved population.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program: Met with Rosa DeLauro's office to advocate for the implementation of this program, which reaches CT seniors and WIC recipients; in active discussion with her office.

Urban Agriculture proposal: Submitted formal recommendations to the Mayor's Office for expanding food growing across New Haven, including the creation of a community farm. The Urban Agriculture Working Group was designated by then-current Mayor John DeStefano as the City's hub for urban agriculture projects in New Haven. Concurrently Mayor DeStefano also stated his support for the group's effort to establish an Urban Agriculture Resource Center, a resource for people who want to produce food in the city, whether in personal gardens, community gardens, or for a food-growing business. The UARC will promote collaboration and resource sharing between non-profit organizations and educational groups.



Composting proposal: With support from CT DEEP, developed a set of recommendations for implementing small-scale composting facilities for New Haven; project is currently in start-up phase.

Select Working Group Highlights

Cooking Class Development: Recruited a pool of community-based teachers to offer free cooking classes and “Pop-Up” cooking sites around New Haven, resulting in 350 community members learning new healthy cooking skills. Classes funded through a \$5,000 grant from the New Haven Health Department with support from the Cooking & Food Education Working Group and CitySeed, Inc. Portions of this grant work will continue in 2014. In 2013, supported the expansion of the Cooking Matters’ program in partnership with Cooking Matters and the United Way Women’s Initiative.

How to Grow Food: Developed bilingual flyers containing a comprehensive list of gardening workshops and events taking place in the New Haven area from May through September 2013. Made available in hard-copy and on city website.

SNAP (Food Stamp) Outreach Expansion: New efforts initiated and coordinated through the Food Assistance Working Group and CARE to expand the number of community sites offering application assistance for enrolling into SNAP.

Food Advocate Training: Received funding from the Community Foundation of Greater New Haven to offer a stipend training program, empowering residents who have received food assistance to become advocates for better policies and services. Launched program in October 2013.

Food Assistance Street Sheet: Developed a comprehensive food assistance-focused “street sheet” to address hunger issues by providing information about soup kitchens, food pantries, and other services in New Haven neighborhoods.

NHPS Wellness Committee Manual: Collaborated with the Committee to complete the Wellness manual and disseminate it to schools. Wellness information now included in all parent-orientation packets.

Food Business Start-Up Basics: Compiled data to create info-graphics to assist emerging food businesses; awaiting funding for design work.

Get Healthy CT - The NHFPC, one of three work groups along with Physical Activity and Support Systems, came together in September of 2013 in support of the *Get Healthy CT: New Haven* initiative. This new collaboration aims to remove the barriers to healthy eating, nutrition and physical activity and the negative impacts of obesity in our community.



NHFPC POLICY PRIORITIES FOR 2014

Priority Action: Food Systems Director and Funding for the Council

- Create a Food Systems Director position for New Haven based in the Mayor's Office or other key city department and supported, in part, by dedicated city funds to ensure long-term sustainability. (Refer to the Food Action Plan, Critical First Steps; pg 7)
- Increase General Fund allocation to the Council.

Develop Comprehensive Zoning Changes to Increase Access to Healthy Foods

- Establish zoning regulations to improve access to healthy foods.

Healthy Food Procurement

- Mandate that foods or beverages procured using city funds, for sale or serving on city-owned property or during city-sponsored meetings or events, must meet strict nutrition standards.

Breastfeeding Ordinance

- Increase awareness and implementation of state and federal laws that give women the right to breastfeed in public and to pump at work, by passing an identical New Haven resolution.

Support Action Areas Being Addressed By Working Groups

- Task city departments to engage with relevant Working Groups to communicate with residents and community organizations to create collaborations and effective solutions:

FOOD ASSISTANCE /HUNGER

- Develop and regularly update a list of local food pantries and soup kitchens, including food donation safety requirements, and distribute to local food businesses, institutions, and individuals to encourage donations. Provide institutional support for updating and printing maps of Neighborhood Food Assistance Guides.
- Advocate for the USDA Commodity Supplemental Food Program.

URBAN AGRICULTURE

- Formalize Urban Agriculture Resource Center: Work with the coalition of urban agriculture groups, the Parks Department and LCI to develop and source funding for the Urban Agriculture Resource Center to assist residents in growing food in New Haven.

COOKING & FOOD EDUCATION

- Create more institutional support for new cooking programs and expand existing ones.
- Expand community-level capacity for cooking education through the development of a community cooks "train the trainer" program to be launched in 2014.

SCHOOL FOOD

- Ensure that the nutrition standards outlined in the District Wellness Plan are maintained and the quality of school food is continuously improved.
- In conjunction with End Hunger CT!, work to improve the scope, reach and quality of New Haven's Summer Food Program in preparation for the 2014 program launch this spring.