

Good Food Council of Lewiston-Auburn

Background

2008 - 2013 Community Food Assessment (CFA)

- St. Mary's Nutrition Center – fiscal agent for CFA & Council

2012 Council Formed, 18 members “Comfortable with messy”

- Monthly 2hr Council Meetings; Hired 10hr/wk Coordinator

2013 Council published & distributed CFA

- Hired facilitator for abbreviated “You Get What You Measure” process, determining short-term goal areas for Council
- At the end of first year, hired facilitator for a deep evaluation

2014 Council Projects Include:

Presentations to L-A Public Health Committee and local City Councils, Strengthening the network of local Nutrition Education Classes, L-A Farm to Institution research

2015 Goals Include:

Voting in New Members, Fundraising Strategies, Briefing Local Legislatures, Setting a Policy Agenda

If you moved 100 miles from home next week, and started a new food council, what are some of the key lessons learned that you would use to inform your new project?

- Get sense of the readiness of community to engage these issues, which will help determine the strategy
 - Community Food Assessment, extremely valuable data and engagement
- Development team – 6 months in advance of Council
- Thoughtful evaluations with a facilitator at key junctures



How are you engaging the community and getting their input? How has community input impacted the direction of your council's work?

- CFA was designed to be driven by the community
 - Community Action Researchers, Charettes, Good Food Gatherings
- Help an open event to Introduce Council (Dec. 2013) and talk about where it is headed.
- Future: Create new public events and a process for additional community input



What was one of your most unexpected successes and how did it come about?

At the end of the first year, all councilors wanted to stay on again for a second year!

- Development Team
- Process people, slow approach
- Unusual suspects, building out network of supporters



Bangor Community Food Council Assessment

Food AND Medicine

- Funding and support to assess the CFC model in the Bangor area

Core group has self-selected

- Food AND Medicine
- Bangor Community Health and Public Services

First Steps

- 1 on 1 interviews with local stakeholders
- Informational meeting and brainstorming session
- Next: Stakeholder focus groups: “bringing the table to those who should be at it”



Key Players

- Food AND Medicine
 - Social justice and workers rights organization
 - Solidarity Harvest and local food incentives
 - Farmer connections
 - Involved members and volunteers
- Bangor Public Health and Community Services
 - Healthy Maine Partnership
 - Provides wide array of services to our region
 - Connections in health care, municipalities, food pantries, etc.
- Finding the people in your community that are already interested and active

Cu	Opportunities and Hopes	Barriers and Fears
•	Streamlining	Time
	Stakeholder Focus Groups	
	Farmers	
	Food Retailers	
•	Restaurant Owners/Operators	
	Downtown Businesses	
	Economic Development Professionals	
	Food Service Providers	
•	Teachers	
	Health Care Practitioners	
	Municipal Leaders	
involved		
	Greater local security	Support of Community

Partners for a Hunger-Free York County



Background

- Broad-based coalition formed 3 years ago to address hunger and malnutrition in York County, Maine
- Monthly meetings with featured topics/speakers
 - Form basis of group learning and create space for conversation, trust-building and cooperation.
 - Working-groups form to pilot specific projects
- Priorities are to:
 - Increase access to fresh, healthy foods;
 - Improve education and awareness about how to use these; and
 - Maintain and sustain the coalition as a vibrant resource in the community.
- We “lead with the heart” and have a “bias towards action”



If you moved 100 miles away and started a new food council, what are key lessons learned for a new project?

- Use a broad frame for your issue – which allows more people to feel “invited” to participate
- Individual champions are critical for building momentum, meet everyone and find their tie-in to the issue
- Hands-on projects are where the trust-building pays off and is also tested. Choose low-hanging fruit in order to get early “wins”
- Identify activities/issues that dovetail with partner organizations’ or community’s agendas and interests
- Communication, communication, communication



Who was a key champion. How did you connect with that person/group?

- Influential leaders of key regional organizations were passionate about food and justice.
- Original Planning Committee included:
 - United Way of York County
 - York County Shelter Programs
 - York County Community Action
 - Coastal Healthy Communities Coalition (HMP)
- Key project partners have included:
 - University of Maine Cooperative Extension
 - Healthy Maine Partnerships
 - Southern Maine Agency on Aging
 - Nutrition and public health professionals,
 - Farmers, gardeners and volunteers
- Funders are partners –
 - The Virginia Hodgkins Somers Foundation
 - The Sam L. Cohen Foundation
 - The Elmina B. Sewall Foundation AND coalition partners have provided sustaining support



How are you engaging the community and getting their input? How has community input impacted the work?

- Monthly meetings feature speakers that aim to attract new participants to the coalition and bring them into our conversation(s)
- Intentionally seek input from those who cannot attend our regular meetings – either going to their location/meetings/events, creating surveys, calling on the phone, holding “special interest” events
- Pilot projects get us in the communities and in contact with people and feedback is used to adapt our work – for example: Farm Fresh Foods for Seniors – more shares available through farmers’ market based on senior preference

Capital Area Food Council

Background

- Had a series of community gatherings to assess interest in a Food Council.
- Once a month meetings. A project of Healthy Communities of the Capital Area.
- Still gathering information from community to prioritize projects/issues.

What are your current challenges?

- The biggest current challenge is re-engaging folks and getting them back to the table.
- Finding meeting times that are most convenient for folks.
- Engaging Farmers.
- Moving folks from interest to engagement.

Key Lessons Learned (and still learning) that would inform a new project

- Educating folks about what a Food Council is takes time.
- Balancing the process piece and the action piece can be challenging
- Continuity of funding and leadership determining effectiveness

Phases of Project

- HCCA Initiative
- Grant funded coordinator
- Assessment of community interest through events
- Kickstart Guide
- Another round of funding
- Regular meetings
- Define mission/vision