

# **UC Cooperative Extension Study of California Food Policy Councils**

**September 2018**

Research team:

Clare Gupta, Public Policy Specialist, UC Davis

Julia Van Soelen Kim, North Bay Food Systems Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension

Jennifer Sowerwine, Metropolitan Food Systems Specialist, UC Berkeley

Gail Feenstra, Food Systems Coordinator for Food and Society, UC SAREP

Dave Campbell, Community Studies Specialist, UC Davis

Shosha Capps, Community Food Systems Analyst, UC SAREP

Kate Munden-Dixon, Ph.D. Candidate, Geography Graduate Group, UC Davis

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	3
Executive Summary.....	4
Introduction.....	6
Methodology.....	7
Summary of Descriptive Findings.....	8
Background Information.....	8
Year established.....	8
Geographic scope.....	9
Locale.....	10
Structure.....	10
Funding.....	11
Staffing/facilitation.....	13
Connection to local government.....	13
Membership composition and procedures.....	14
Decision-making process.....	15
Functional roles, priorities, activities.....	16
Achievements and challenges.....	20
Policy Priorities and Achievements.....	22
Specific policy achievements.....	26
Project and program achievements and their relationship to policy.....	27
Information Types and Sources.....	28
Information type.....	28
Information sources.....	29
Gaps in information sources.....	31
Key Takeaways and Strategies for Success.....	32
Findings Regarding Original Research Questions.....	37
Next Steps.....	41
Appendix 1. Food Policy Council Interview Protocol.....	42
Appendix 2. Respondent List of Needed Research, by Topical Area.....	44
Appendix 3. 2018 Food Policy Council Survey.....	46

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1. Year Case Study FPCs Established.....9  
Table 2. Survey Respondents’ Greatest Achievements.....20  
Table 3. Survey Respondents’ Greatest Challenges.....21

Figure 1. Year Formed.....8  
Figure 2. Geographic Focus.....10  
Figure 3. Funding.....12  
Figure 4. Decision-making.....16  
Figure 5. Organizational Priorities.....17  
Figure 6. Community Engagement Activities.....18  
Figure 7. Frequency of Engagement in Activities.....18  
Figure 8. Policy Priorities.....22  
Figure 9. Factors Influencing Policy Priorities.....23  
Figure 10. Relationships Needed to Accomplish Policy Priorities.....23  
Figure 11. Focus of Policy Work.....24  
Figure 12. Level of Government Engaged with Policy Activities.....25  
Figure 13. Frequency Information Types are Used.....29  
Figure 14. Information Sources.....30  
Figure 15. Frequency Information Types Influence Policy Decision-making.....30

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This research was supported by a competitive grant from the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The research team is grateful for the contributions to our work of the FPC leaders and stakeholders who shared their thoughts in interviews, responded to our survey, or provided other forms of support to our project. Their work at the local and state level is making a significant difference in our state, providing a venue to pursue food systems policy and change. UC Cooperative Extension is and will continue to be a key partner in that work.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes findings from a study of California food policy councils conducted by a team of University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) researchers from 2016-2018. The research draws on a survey which gathered data on 31 of California's 33 known food policy councils (FPCs), and on more than 60 interviews with FPC members to prepare in-depth case studies of 10 councils. The data provide: 1) background on the nature, structure, and functions of FPCs; 2) a summary of FPC policy priorities and achievements; and 3) insight into the types and sources of information FPCs use in their work. A particular focus of the research was examining the nature of relationships between FPCs and university researchers, including UC Cooperative Extension. The report concludes with key takeaways from our research, including strategies associated with successful FPC processes and outcomes.

### **Nature, Structure, and Functions of California Food Policy Councils**

- FPCs vary significantly in size, structure, funding, and approach to food systems change.
- The majority of California FPCs formed in the last decade and are county-based.
- Most FPCs are community coalitions or collaborations that are neither embedded in a government agency nor incorporated as their own nonprofit organization.
- Over half of California FPCs either currently receive funding (n=17) or have in the past (n=8); six have never received funding. Funding typically is small, \$10,000 or less/year.
- While a few large councils have multiple paid staff, most councils either have part-time staff or rely completely on volunteers. Frequently mentioned organizational development challenges are *securing funding* to support staff and *membership engagement*.
- The majority of councils have ties to local government; public agency representatives attend meetings, contribute meeting space, and provide facilitation.
- Public health and anti-hunger groups are the most common FPC participants; in general, the farming/production sector is under-represented. Only eight of 31 FPCs indicate that members represent the community's ethnic, gender, racial and economic diversity.

### **Policy Priorities and Achievements**

- All 10 case study councils engage in *some* activities aimed at influencing public policy; for most, however, direct policy advocacy is an infrequent activity.
- Just under half of FPCs surveyed seldom or never engage in policy advocacy. Importantly, however, our case studies found that FPC community engagement activities have the *potential* to influence policy indirectly, positioning FPCs as a kind of incubator or think tank for new policy ideas to emerge and gain community visibility.

- The information exchange, networking, and educational work that FPCs emphasize meaningfully contributes to “upstream” efforts to raise awareness about certain food system issues (i.e. policy agenda setting), and “downstream” efforts to implement policies.
- FPCs’ policy priorities include a wide range of topics from food production, distribution and transportation, to equity and social justice issues around food access; the most common policy priority for California FPCs is healthy food access.

### **Use of Research or other Forms of Information**

- FPCs rely less on university research than on community-generated information, compelling stories, and government data.
- They access information primarily by what members bring to the table from their own public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community-based organizations.
- Approximately a third of FPCs we surveyed indicated that they made use of scholarly information from the University of California or other research institutions.

### **Key Takeaways and Strategies for Success**

- Respondents see *information sharing* as the most valuable FPC activity; it facilitates collaboration and shifts participant thinking towards a systems-view of food policy work.
- Members who are “knowledge brokers”, including Cooperative Extension Advisors, are connected to many different knowledge sources and are able to draw on these myriad sources to serve their council’s data and information needs.
- FPCs cite the value of combining information from numbers *and* stories; they indicate that experiential data are often as compelling with policy-makers as statistics.
- Some FPCs view food system change as requiring a broad and inclusive consortium of stakeholders (e.g., ranging from production to food access) and seek to bring stakeholders with diverse values together. Other FPCs emphasize attracting allies who share core values and a commitment to advocacy on behalf of food systems change.
- Policy achievements often occur when a sub-group of the FPC (i.e. working group; task force, campaign) rallies around a particular policy priority, enlisting allies as needed.
- Effective FPCs have leaders with deep experience and connections in the community and a good feel for the nuances involved in effective political organizing.

Overall, the work of Food Policy Councils at the local and state level is making a significant difference in our state, providing a meaningful venue to pursue food systems policy and change.

## INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes key findings from a study of California food policy councils conducted by a team of University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) researchers with support from the UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR). The research provides data of interest to Food Policy Councils and food policy researchers.

A relatively new institutional form, food policy councils (FPCs) consist of representatives and stakeholders from many sectors of the food system who advise and work with city, county, and state governments to promote the social, economic, and environmental health of local and regional food systems (Harper 2009). Some local food policy councils develop close partnerships with county-based Cooperative Extension (CE), an organization well-known for its ability to provide research-based information to a variety of public audiences. While there is a growing body of research on the structure and overall effectiveness of FPCs (Fox 2010, Borron 2003, Harper et al. 2009), it remains unclear how FPCs engage with and leverage existing research institutions and their resources to inform their work. To fill this knowledge gap, our study sought to examine the current and potential future effectiveness of California food policy councils in leveraging agricultural, food and nutrition research to influence food policies; and second, to cultivate a dialog between researchers and food policy councils to improve the ways in which research and policy are informed by one another. Specifically, we set out to address UCANR's role as a knowledge broker—connecting the California public to meaningful data and information—by investigating the processes of information transmission between UC researchers and FPCs. Our key research questions were:

- What links to UC (or other) research institutions do FPCs currently have?
- How were these links established and how are they maintained?
- How and to what extent do FPCs currently leverage research (especially that of UC ANR) for their policy work and with what effects/impact?
- How do researcher-FPC relationships influence FPCs' impacts on policy-making?
- What are the best practices and lessons learned for FPCs, for research institutions, and specifically for UC ANR?

As our research questions suggest, we initially intended to pay particular attention to FPC's relationship(s) with UC ANR. As our study unfolded, we broadened our focus to examine FPC's relations with various research institutions and with informational resources beyond the University of California. To put this information in context, we compiled descriptive information to compare the nature of California FPCs, including survey data from 31 FPCs and in-depth case studies of 10. While food policy councils are only one channel for influencing agri-food policy,

we expect our findings also can inform other entities as they seek to promote effective translation of agricultural, food and nutrition research to local or state policies.

## **METHODOLOGY**

We used a comparative case study method to gather context-sensitive data on 10 local food policy councils that are affiliated with the statewide California Food Policy Council. Not every council necessarily calls itself a “food policy council”—in some places they are termed “food system alliances” or a similar name—but for the purposes of this report we refer to them collectively as “FPCs”. The sample was selected to take advantage of existing FPC links to UCCE Advisors—some on our project team and others not—who could provide connections and local background information useful to the project, while also reflecting the significant geographic and demographic diversity across California. We conducted fieldwork with FPCs in Kern, Los Angeles, Marin, Mendocino, Napa, Plumas-Sierra, Sacramento, San Mateo, Sonoma, and Yolo. Key methodologies employed for developing the case studies include semi-structured interviews with relevant FPC leaders and stakeholders, participant-observation at FPC meetings, focus groups, and document analysis (see appendix 1 for interview guide).

Over 60 interviews were conducted in 2016 and 2017, with approximately five to six for each council. Interviews were focused on the sources and types of information used by the council to inform decisions. To provide a larger context of understanding, we asked additional questions about council structure/composition, priorities, and policy-related achievements. Background information on the interviewee and the history of the food policy council was also gathered. Focus groups were held at one regional and one statewide California Food Policy Council meeting. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded using Nvivo software coding program. Codes were collaboratively identified by the research team using an iterative process. Content analysis of the transcribed and coded interviews was used to describe and analyze emergent, cross-cutting themes from the data. Using a grounded-theory approach, we allowed key concepts and themes to emerge from our body of data, in addition to tracking data that more closely “fit” our initial guiding questions.

After completing the case studies, we partnered with researchers at Johns Hopkins university to conduct a state-wide survey in early 2018. Using Qualtrics software, we distributed the survey through email to primary contacts of 34 Food Policy Councils in California. The contacts were identified through the Johns Hopkins database, the California Food Policy Council, and our own list of FPCs in the state. The purpose of the survey was to see the degree to which the findings from the 10 case studies were consistent with a larger sample. The survey collected information on the organizational structure, membership, information sources, connection to government, activities, and impacts (see appendix 3 for survey questions).

A total of 31 California FPCs responded to the survey (a 91% response rate), including 29 who are active (meeting multiple times a year) and two who described themselves as in transition (meeting infrequently, redefining the purpose and/or structure of the council). The survey results were gathered by the Johns Hopkins team as part of their national survey, and then provided to our team in an excel table format. Open-ended responses were coded thematically in the same manner we used in coding the case study interviews.

## SUMMARY OF DESCRIPTIVE FINDINGS

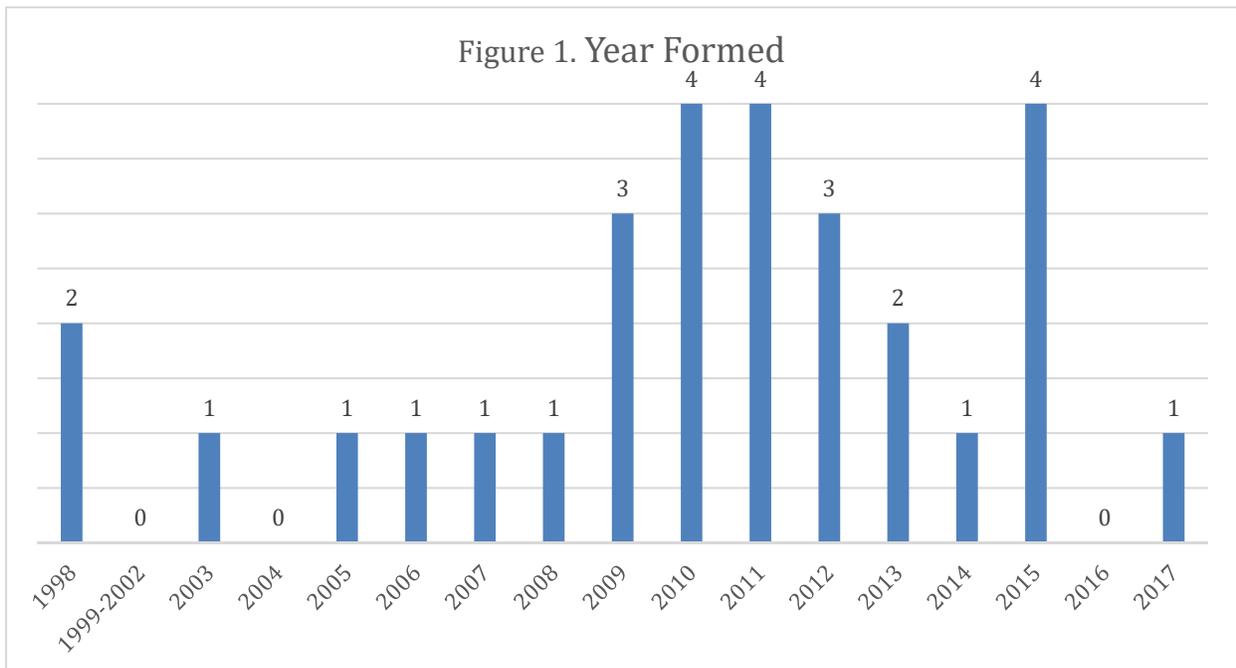
In each of the sections below, we begin by summarizing the results of our survey of FPCs, and then show how these results can be interpreted in light of the case study interviews. The findings cover three broad areas of our inquiry:

1. Background information on the nature, structure, and functions of the FPCs;
2. Policy priorities and achievements;
3. Information flows that influence the councils' work.

### I. Background information

#### *Year Established*

In general, food policy councils are a relatively recent phenomenon, with the majority of California FPCs forming in the last decade (Figure 1).



Among our 10 case study councils, all have been established within the last 5-10 years, although two of these (Marin and LA) are the second iteration of previous councils that formed as early as the 1990s, as seen in Table 1. The case study councils are therefore about the same age as others throughout the state.

Table 1. Year Case Study FPCs Established

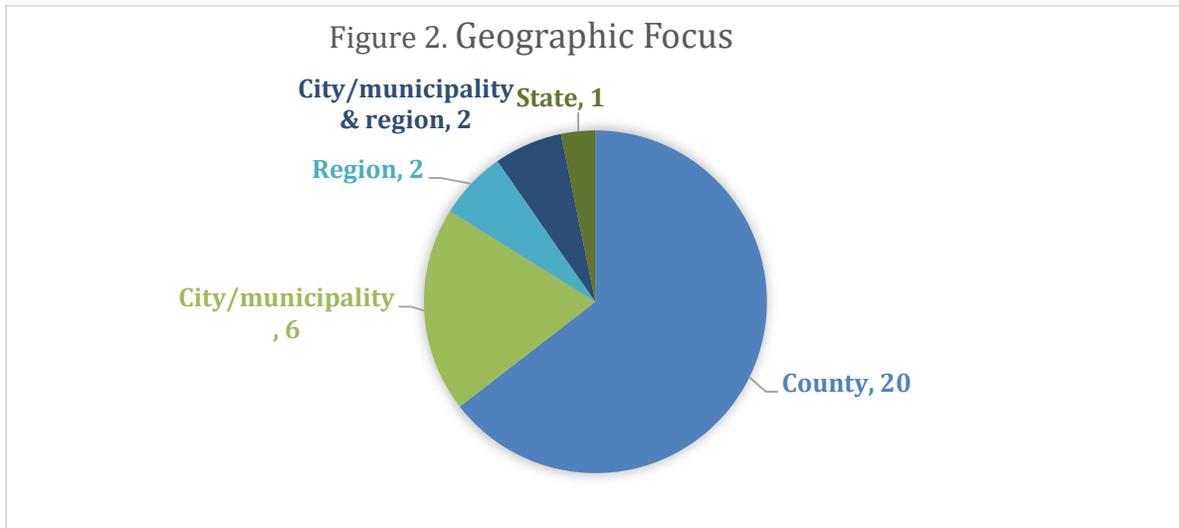
<b>Food Policy Council</b>	<b>Year established</b>
San Mateo	2006
Plumas-Sierra	2007
Sonoma	2009
Mendocino	2010
Los Angeles	2011 re-launch (previous council formed in 1990s)
Napa	2011
Marin	2012 re-launch (1998 original)
Kern	2013
Yolo	2013
Sacramento	2014

***Geographic scope***

Most California food policy councils define themselves using county-level boundaries (Figure 2). Other forms include city/municipality, region, and combined city/municipality with region. The California Food Policy Council is the single state-focused council. All but two FPCs in our case studies are single county-based (San Mateo, Marin, Sonoma, Mendocino, Napa, Kern, Sacramento, Yolo). Exceptions are:

- Plumas-Sierra, which includes two counties.
- Los Angeles, which is city-based. (The council, first called the LA Food Policy Task Force, was originally created by Mayor Villaraigosa of Los Angeles in 2009. While they are primarily LA focused in their work, interviewees do conceptualize food system issues in regional terms).

Programmatically, FPC boundaries are sometimes fluid. For example, even though Sacramento is organized at the county-level, interviewees describe a wider focus on the region, as well as state-focused work due to their location in the state capital.



**Locale**

The size and complexity of California counties tends to be much greater than that found in eastern states, making classification difficult using standard rural-urban definitions. Here we summarize locales for the 10 case study councils.

- Two of the 10 are clearly urban in scope and focus: Los Angeles and Sacramento.
- Two of the 10 are more clearly rural in scope and focus: Mendocino and Plumas-Sierra
- The remaining six FPCs are in counties in which there are both large urban populations as well as significant agricultural regions: Kern, Marin, Napa, San Mateo, Sonoma, Yolo.
- Kern has by far the largest agricultural production of any of the counties in our sample and is the only FPC representing the southern San Joaquin Valley where much of California’s large-scale agricultural production takes place.

**Structure**

When Food Policy Councils began to become more common in the 1990s, most were embedded in local government, usually structured as commissions or advisory bodies. Over time, they have tended to move to structural locations outside of government, although most are still tied to or embedded in another organization on which they rely for certain services. In our survey, we found that most of the 31 California FPCs tend to be housed in other non-profits (48%, n=15), with much smaller numbers embedded in government (n=3) or in a university (n=2). Other organizational types include grassroots coalition (n=5), other (n=5), and non-profit (n=1). Those responding “Other” (n=5) included grassroots coalitions in transition to becoming a formal

organization, a task force of a city/county (which might be considered as being embedded in government), and two who fit the definition of a less formal grassroots coalition (“informal association” and “collaboration of public and non-profit entities.”)

As this array of responses suggests, it can be difficult to characterize the structure of many FPCs, or to capture the nuances in a survey. Nevertheless, the survey findings generally appear consistent with our case study data, which found that nine of the 10 case study FPCs can be considered community coalitions that are neither embedded in a government agency nor incorporated as their own nonprofit organization (though three of the 10—Kern, Los Angeles, and Sacramento—are affiliated with a nonprofit fiscal sponsor). Many of the nine rely on other entities for in-kind services, even if they do not have a formal fiscal sponsorship arrangement or other form of embeddedness. Other key case study findings include:

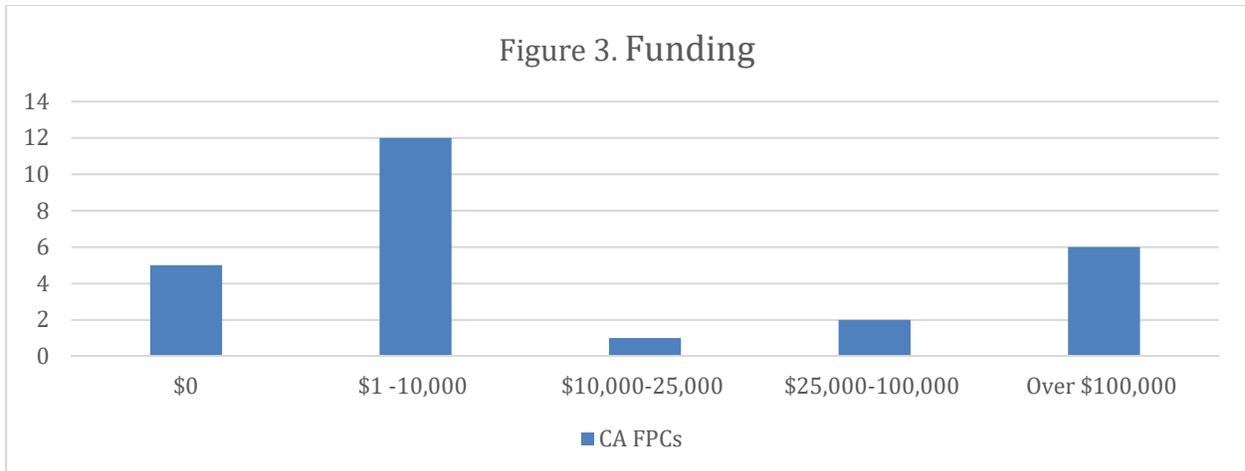
- Napa is the one case where the FPC is embedded in government, serving as a formal advisory board to the Agricultural Commissioner’s office within county government. As such, they must adhere to open meeting requirements that require posting meeting agendas 72 hours in advance, and related restrictions.
- The situation of the Los Angeles FPC is also unique. It was originally incubated in the mayor’s office, but quickly established its own identity as a multi-sector network devoted to food systems change, and now operates under the fiscal sponsorship of a nonprofit organization (Community Partners). It defines itself as a *collective impact initiative* and views the council as the “backbone organization... providing overall strategic direction, facilitating dialogue between partners, managing data collection and analysis, handling communications, coordinating community outreach, and mobilizing funding.”<sup>1</sup> The key structure is a leadership council of 40 representatives from different sectors of the food system, aided by hundreds of participants in working groups that work on specific issues.
- A subset of the councils are known as *Food System Alliances* (San Mateo; Sonoma and, previously, Yolo) that are/were facilitated and organized by Ag Innovations, a non-profit that serves as a backbone organization and facilitator.

### ***Funding***

Most California FPCs either currently receive funding (n=17) or have received funding in the past, but do not currently (n=8). Six of the 31 FPCs have never received funding. The most common budget for FPCs in the past fiscal year was \$10,000 or less (Figure 3).

---

<sup>1</sup>[http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-a-livable-future/\\_pdf/projects/FPN/startegic\\_plans/case-study-LA-FPC.pdf](http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-a-livable-future/_pdf/projects/FPN/startegic_plans/case-study-LA-FPC.pdf)



CA FPCs received funding from different sources, including,

- In-kind donations (e.g. office space, staff support) (n=11)
- Private foundation (n=10)
- Local, state or tribal government grant (n=8)
- Individuals (n=7)
- Local, state or tribal government agency budget (n=5)
- Corporate-sponsored foundation (n=4)
- Corporate giving program (n=4)
- Federal government grant (n=3)
- Earned income from goods and services (n=2)
- Membership dues (n=1)
- Public charity (n=1)

We did not collect comprehensive data on funding in our case studies, but interviews revealed that, similar to survey findings, most councils have had some funding at different points in time and that the amount and sources of funding are often intermittent and inconsistent. Key funding sources we identified in the case studies were:

- Local government (e.g. county Board of Supervisors, Ag Commissioner, Public Health department, or Cooperative Extension)
- Foundations (e.g. community foundations; United Way)

Five of the 10 case study FPCs reported having received funding from local government. In the case of Napa this is recurring funding that is part of the budget which the county Board of Supervisors provides to the Agriculture Commissioner's office. In three counties, Mendocino, San Mateo, and Sonoma, county funding went either a) to the Health Department to support FPC activities, including staff support or b) to facilitation services provided by the consultant group

Ag Innovations. In Marin, funding from the Board of Supervisors is provided through the county Cooperative Extension office.

### ***Staffing/facilitation***

Staffing arrangements vary considerably among our 10 cases:

- Los Angeles has multiple full-time and part-time paid staff.
- San Mateo, Marin, Mendocino, Napa, and Sacramento have a part-time paid staff with responsibility for coordinating, administering, and/or facilitating the FPC (among other responsibilities). For example, San Mateo pays Ag Innovations to organize and facilitate meetings. In most cases, these arrangements are built on temporary funding streams that can change from year to year.
- The remaining FPCs rely solely on volunteer staffing, typically provided by local government agency staff who use their paid time to do FPC work that converges with their primary job responsibilities.
- In some FPCs, particularly those that operate more informally, members take turns planning and facilitating meetings.

### ***Connection to local government***

Of the 31 FPCs responding, 39% (n=12) indicated that they have no formal connection to government. However, the majority of CA FPCs surveyed and all 10 of our case study participants have some sort of government involvement. The survey finds the following forms of involvement, from most to least common:

- inclusion of government employees as members of the council or participating in meetings (N=19, 61%)
- Government seeks advice or recommendations from the FPC (n=9; 29%)
- Local, state or tribal government supports the FPC (e.g., in-kind donation of meeting space, staff support with research or data, provision of letter of support for a grant) (n=5; 16%)
- FPC was created by legislation (e.g., county resolution, city bylaw) (n=2; 6%)
- Members of the FPC are appointed by government officials. (n=1; 3%)

All 10 case study FPCs have local government employees among their membership. Typically, these are mid-level and/or front-line staff from various public agencies who use paid time to attend FPC meetings and events, or to work on FPC projects that overlap with their existing job duties. These agency staff often are critical to the ability of the FPC to function, especially in community settings where there are few nonprofits or community-based organizations with the capacity and infrastructure to support collaborative work. Their contributions include serving as catalysts for setting agendas and identifying immediate opportunities, offering support and resources such as meeting space or facilitation, and providing connections to agency resources.

The most frequently represented agencies include Cooperative Extension, public health, environmental health, and Agricultural Commissioners, though this can vary significantly across cases and over time, depending on whether a good match exists between the FPC's strategic priorities and those of the public agencies. Often, FPCs forge short-term, strategic relationships with specific elected officials or agency staff to advance mutual priorities.

In only a few cases are members of the county Board of Supervisors or their staff regular attendees, and even then it is typically more to stay informed about what is happening than to play leadership roles. In Los Angeles, the FPC was originally closely tied to the Mayor's office, and got a significant early boost in legitimacy from this connection. They have built on that start to be one of the only FPCs in our sample to engage higher-level public officials, including the heads of the county's large government agencies.

### ***Membership composition and procedures***

The survey asked respondents to characterize their members using pre-set categories. The data reported includes the number of FPCs that had at least one representative of that category, and the percentage of all FPCs responding that the number represents.

- Food production (farming, ranching, aquaculture) (n=30; 97%)
- Community (n=29; 94%)
- Public health (n=29; 94%)
- Anti-hunger/emergency food (n=29; 90%)
- Government agency staff (n=22; 71%)
- College/university/community college (e.g. Extension) (n=22; 71%)
- Social justice (n=22; 71%)
- Natural resources and environment (n=19; 61%)
- Elementary and secondary education (n=17, 55%)
- Food waste/disposal (n=17, 55%)
- Health care (n=17, 55%)
- Faith-based organizations (n=14; 45%)
- Food retail (n=14; 45%)
- Farm/food industry workers (n=13, 42%)
- Elected officials (n=12; 39%)
- Youth (n=12; 39%)
- Food processing/distribution (n= 11; 35%)
- Economic development (n=10; 32%)
- Philanthropy (n=8; 26%)

Our case study evidence is not entirely consistent with the survey data, likely reflecting differences in how survey categories were interpreted or perhaps the difference between more active participants and those who show up episodically. On the one hand, both the survey and case study data concur that public health and anti-hunger groups are major participants in FPCs. This includes representatives of County Health and Human Services Departments, Food Banks, school food services personnel, etc.

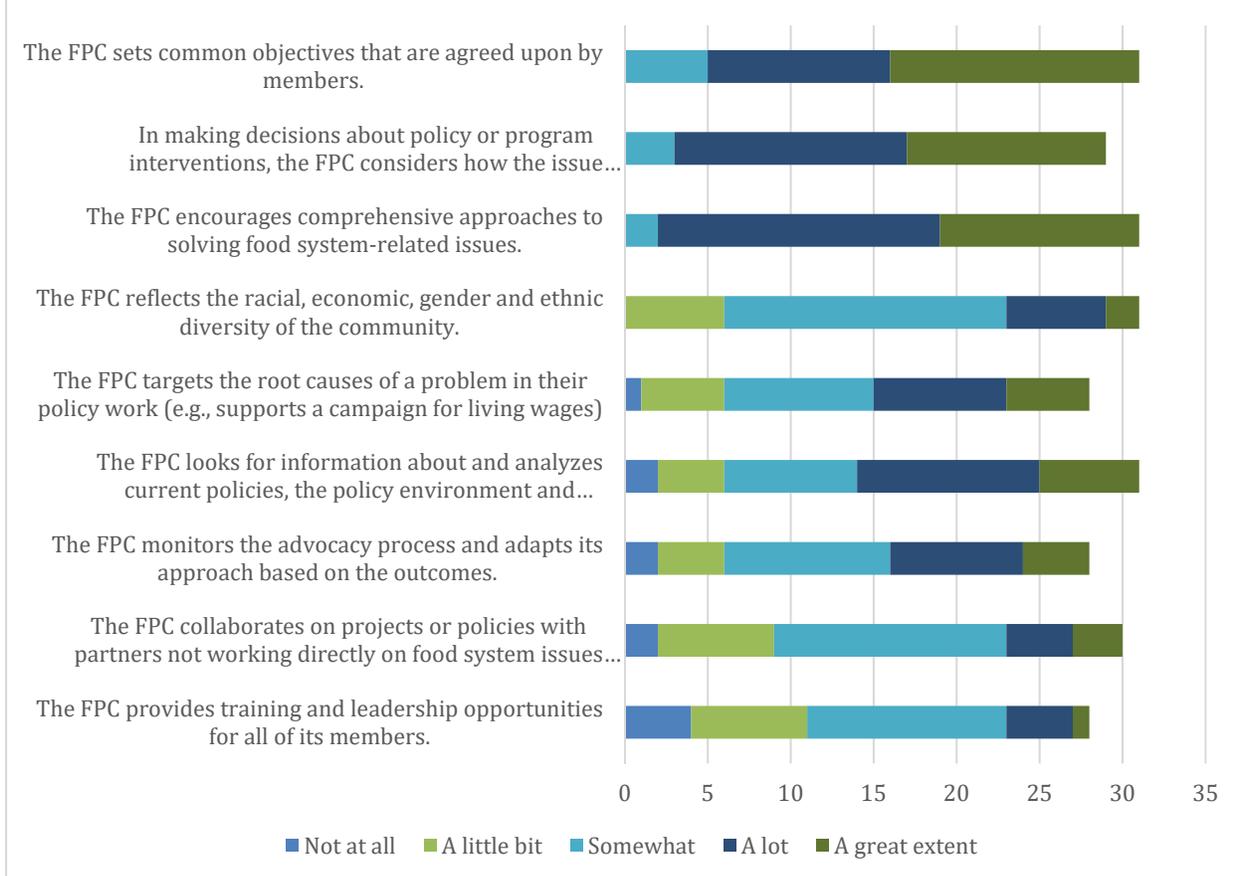
On the other hand, our case studies suggest that FPCs have struggled to get and keep farmers at the table, which might appear otherwise in interpreting the survey data alone. While our case study FPCs have some representation by staff from the Agricultural Commissioner's office, the Farm Bureau, and agriculture-related non-profits (e.g. Community Alliance with Family Farmers), the general sense was that the farming/production sector was under-represented, including farmworkers. In some cases, including Sonoma, San Mateo and Napa, we learned that that specific segments of the farming community such as *conventional* agricultural producers were absent.

The process for determining membership in the councils was not captured in the survey, but in our case study FPCs there were examples of both open and closed membership. With open membership, any interested person can join regardless of their affiliation. With closed memberships, potential members are recruited and/or must submit a formal application to represent a certain component of the food system or certain geographic area of the county. Even those that have formal memberships typically open their meetings to the public.

### ***Decision-making process***

In the survey, FPCs were asked to indicate how well a series of process-statements fit their council, from “not at all” to “a great extent.” The top three statements most food policy councils agree on in terms of how their FPC operates include, a) setting common objectives agreed upon by all members, b) considering the health, environmental, social and economic well-being of the community in decision-making, and c) encouraging comprehensive approaches to solving food system-related issues (Figure 4). In contrast, very few food policy councils indicated that they a) provide training and leadership opportunities for their members, b) collaborate on projects or policies indirectly related to the food system (e.g. racial equity, housing), and c) represent the ethnic, gender, racial and economic diversity of the communities they serve “to a great extent”. Notably, while 26 councils indicated that they consider the well-being of their community in decision-making “a lot” or “to a great extent,” only eight indicated that their members represent the ethnic, gender, racial and economic diversity of the communities they serve.

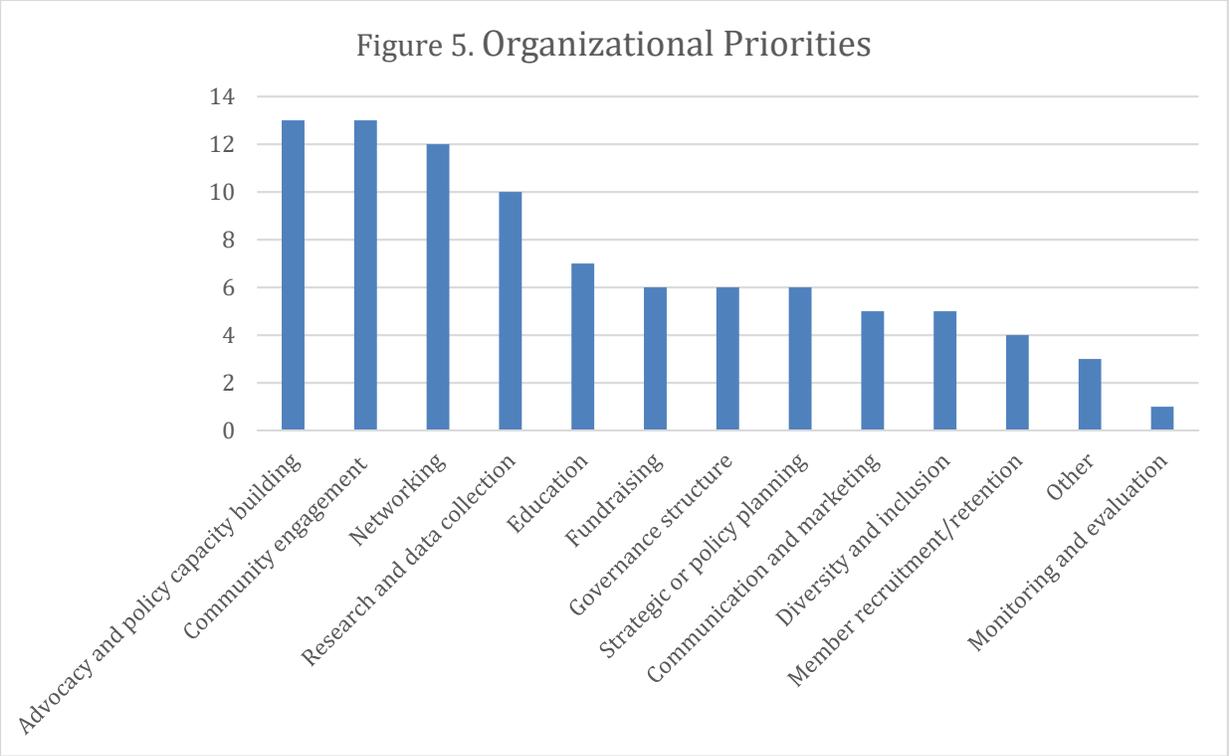
Figure 4. Decision-making



While the survey didn't examine the ways in which food policy councils make decisions, our case studies illustrate a wide range of styles, spanning from very informal (typically in councils with few members) to having formal procedures (where numbers are larger). Similar to the survey results, most of our case study FPCs seek a broad consensus among members before taking any major actions. In a couple of cases, including Los Angeles and Sacramento, there are provisions for majority votes.

**Functional Roles, Priorities, Activities**

FPCs engage in a wide and varying range of activities and can be differentiated in terms of their organizational priorities, community engagement activities, and the frequency by which they pursue different priority activities. Survey respondents were asked to select their top three organizational priorities out of 13 pre-set options, with an opportunity to select “other” and write-in a response. Advocacy and policy capacity building (41%, n=13), community engagement (41%, n=13), networking (39%, n=12), and research and data collection (32%, n=10) were the most commonly mentioned organizational priorities (Figure 5).



Survey respondents were also asked if their FPC has engaged in any of nine community engagement activities, or others not listed. Out of 30 total responses to this question, the most commonly mentioned community engagement activity was cross promoting resources and events (90%, n=27), followed by hosting or co-hosting educational events related to topics about the food system (53%, n=16), and holding a single event to highlight a successful food systems program (37%, n=11). Two food policy councils did not indicate any community engagement activities (Figure 6).

A separate survey question asked about the frequency with which the FPC engages in a variety of community engagement activities. As we had discovered earlier in our case studies, the survey found *information exchange and networking* to be the top activity, following by *educating members*. In contrast, direct policy advocacy was a far less frequent activity, with just under half of FPCs surveyed say they seldom or never engaging in policy advocacy (Figure 7). Importantly, however, our case studies found that most if not all of these community engagement activities have the *potential* to influence policy indirectly, positioning FPCs as a kind of incubator or think tank for new policy ideas to emerge and gain community visibility.

Figure 6. Community Engagement Activities

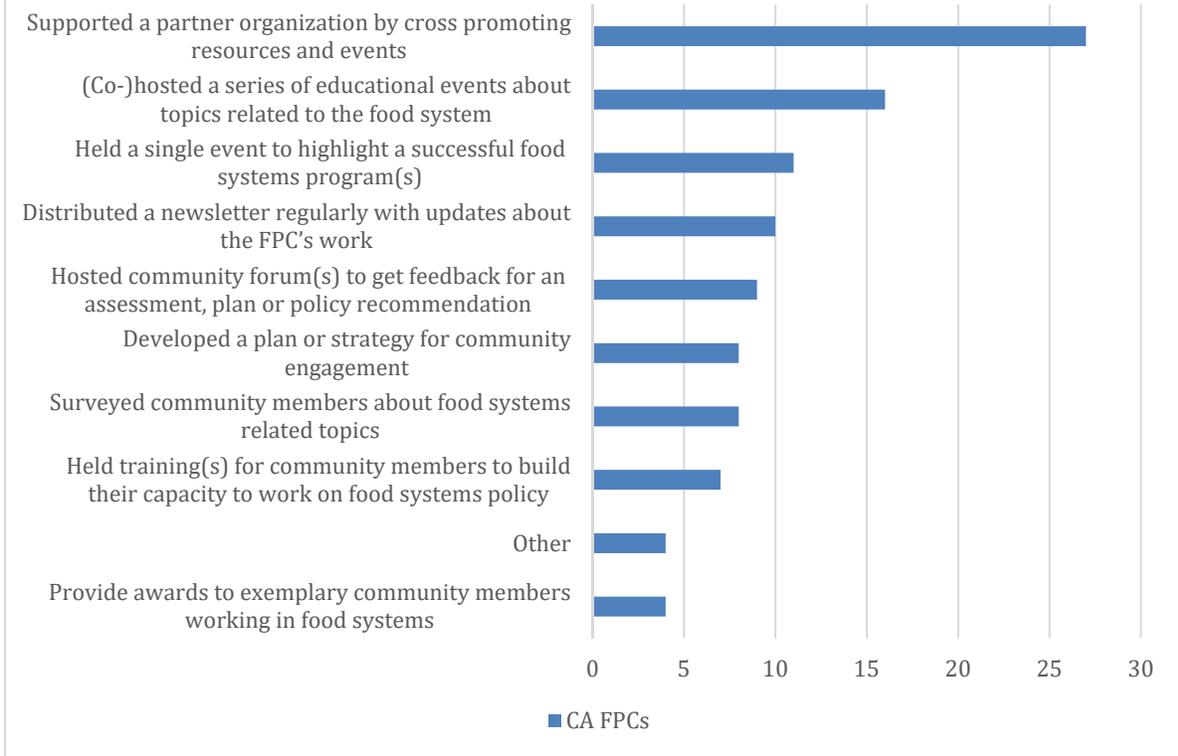
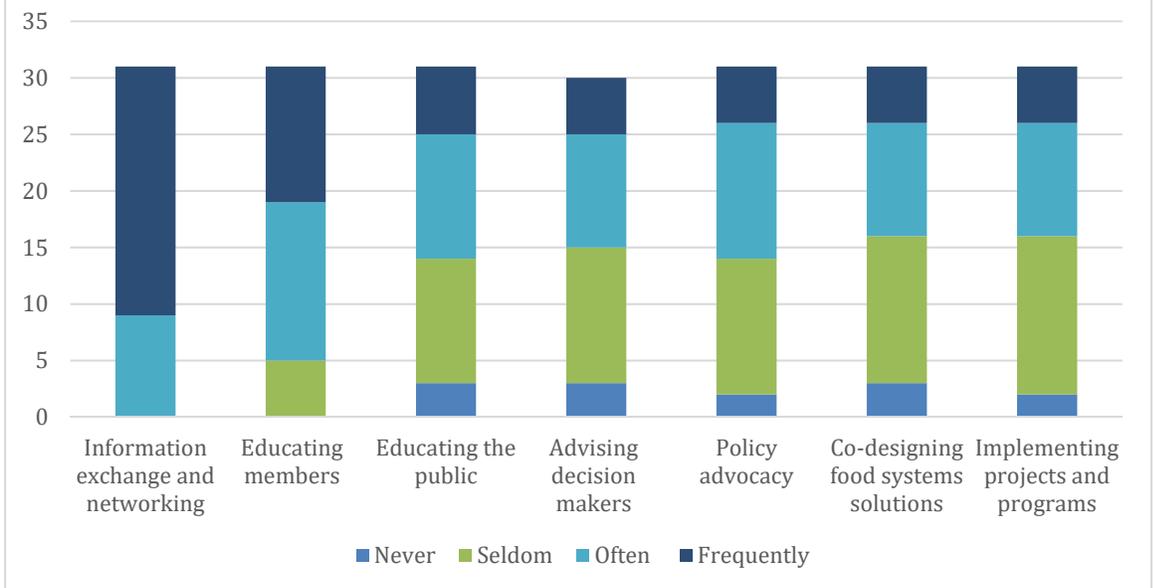


Figure 7. Frequency of Community Engagement Activities



The following examples from our case studies provide a glimpse of some of the varied activities that FPCs engage in:

- **Information exchange/networking:** The major function played by FPCs is to facilitate information sharing, expand professional contacts/social networks, and build relationships in ways that improve the coordination of ongoing efforts. Examples include formal information sharing sessions during meetings, informal conversations, and electronic communications.
- **Member education:** FPCs seek to educate themselves, decision makers, and the broader public about the food system, often by hosting guest speakers, holding film screenings, or publishing or sharing resources. For example, the Sonoma FPC hosted a panel discussion on food waste and the Kern FPC worked with researchers at UC SAREP to publish a food systems assessment of the county. Educational work tends to avoid advocating for specific policies, but can be policy relevant in many cases, such as Napa’s efforts to compile relevant local food policies into a Frequently Asked Questions resource guide housed on the Ag Commissioner’s website.
- **Advisory body:** FPCs are sometimes asked by a government entity, such as the Board of Supervisors, for advice on specific food system issues. For example, the Mendocino Council of Government asked the Mendocino FPC for help in designing language for an urban agriculture ordinance, and the Sacramento FPC is currently advising Sacramento County on how to implement new environmental justice requirements in the upcoming General Plan update.
- **Policy advocacy:** Although less frequently observed than the other activities, FPCs do, on occasion, support or oppose local or state policies through actions including letter writing, meetings with policy makers, public testimony, and producing policy position papers.
  - A number (but not all) of the local FPCs in our case studies participate in the California Food Policy Council and advocate collectively for or against proposed *state-level* legislation pertaining to food and agriculture. For example, the Sacramento FPC advocated for passage of a state-level urban agriculture incentive zone bill and a nutrition incentives matching grant program.
  - Some FPCs also advocate at the *local-level*—for example Yolo advocated for a local “Right to Farm” ordinance, and Sacramento FPC advocated for passage of urban ag ordinances in both the city and county of Sacramento in partnership with the Sacramento Urban Ag Coalition (SUAC), and also for the passage of a city minimum wage proposal (City of Sacramento \$12.50 by 2020 for food service workers).
  - None of the 10 councils described advocacy work at the federal level.

***Achievements and challenges***

The survey asked California FPCs to provide open-ended responses describing their greatest achievements and greatest challenges. Responses were thematically coded to identify patterns in the data (Table 2). Most FPCs listed tangible *project, program* or *policy* successes as their greatest achievement. A variety pointed to *internal* achievement related to organizational development. Included are comments about creating organizational structures, developing governance documents, and securing funding. Respondents also pointed to information sharing that improves inter-organizational collaboration, and to policy work that has yet to achieve a tangible outcome, including issue advocacy and creating spaces for policy makers and advocates to share ideas.

Table 2. Survey Respondents’ Greatest Achievements

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of FPCs</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Projects and programs	11	“Creation of two pilot program sites for food waste recycling/recovery”
Policy: Tangible policy relevant work	8	“We saw the Urban Agriculture Incentive zones policy passed and implemented at the city level, alongside sweeping land use changes that expanded the potential for urban agriculture in multi-family residential areas as well as commercial and light industrial zones.”
Internal: General	7	“Developing sound meeting and communication practices as funding and staff support ended.”
Internal: funding	4	“Secured additional city funding towards ending hunger in city x.”
Internal: Info sharing and networking	4	“Providing a venue for networking, information exchange, and relationship-building”
Policy: Intangible or in-process work	3	“Reinitiated communication with key School District members to explore advances in the school nutrition services including consideration of a Good Food Purchasing Policy.”  “Participated in the California Food Policy Council producing the 3rd Legislative Scorecard and Report.”

While survey respondents listed multiple achievements, most councils only wrote about one type of challenge. These were thematically coded into six separate themes (Table 3).

Table 3. Survey Respondents' Greatest Challenges

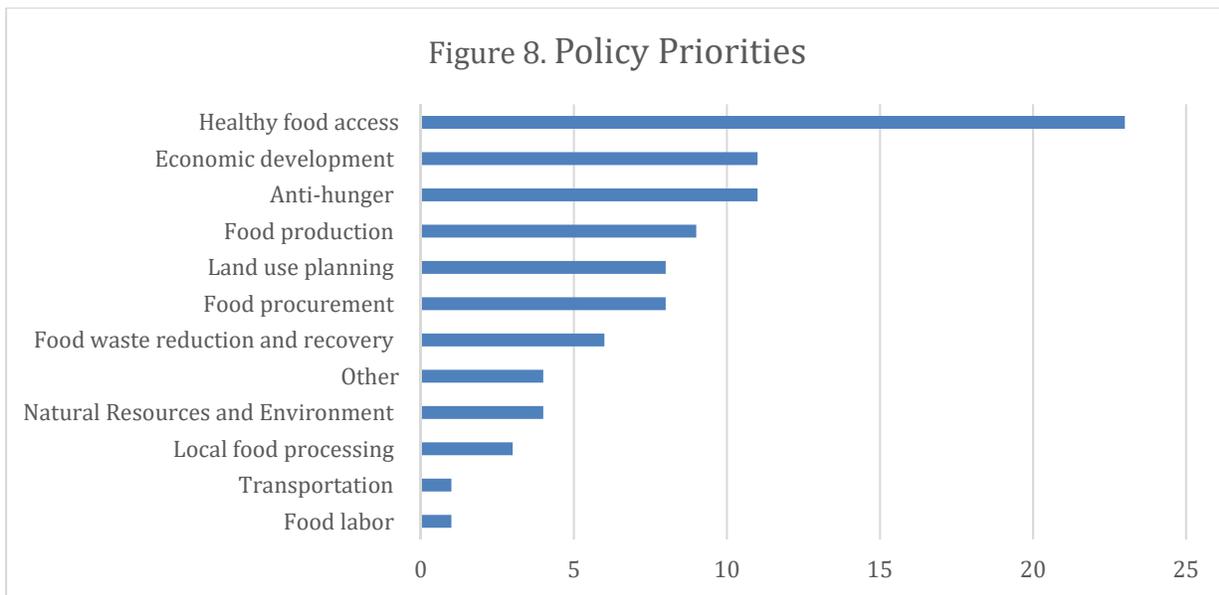
Theme	Number of FPCs	Comments
Funding or staff	11	"We do not have any dedicated funding or staff to keep group moving."
Membership engagement	11	"We are a volunteer organization, so available time of our coordinators and general membership is our greatest limitation."
Organizational structure	4	"Developing sound meeting and communication practices as funding and staff support ended."
Projects and programs	4	"Developing food systems maps has been laborious and many have been discouraged by the lack of action while this process has been accomplished."
Policy information	3	"We struggle to keep up-to-date on relevant state and federal legislation."
Community engagement	1	"We are working hard to communicate and inform the public."

Organizational development challenges predominate, specifically around *funding to support staff* (n=11) and *membership engagement* (n=11). FPCs who responded that funding or staff was their greatest challenge often lacked the capacity to pursue policy change or implement programs. FPCs who responded that membership engagement was their greatest challenge discussed the difficulty of recruiting a diversity of members and retaining members.

The *internal organizational structure* of the FPC as a limiting factor was listed by four councils, and included developing strategic plans, meeting and communication norms. Four listed *programmatic challenges*, such as programs taking longer than expected or external partners pulling funding or support. Three mentioned the challenge of staying up-to-date on *policy information* at different levels and having the capacity to shift the council from programmatic goals and activities to policy advocacy.

## II. Policy priorities and achievements

This section examines FPCs’ policy priorities, policy-relevant projects, and the factors affecting how policy priorities are shaped. FPCs’ policy priorities encompass a wide range of topics related to food systems, from food production, distribution and transportation, to equity and social justice issues surrounding who is able to access food. Survey data (Figure 8) indicate the most common policy priority for FPCs in California is healthy food access, followed by economic development and anti-hunger. Likewise, our case studies overwhelmingly highlighted the priority of healthy food access and anti-hunger efforts.



Survey respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which 10 different factors influence their policy priorities. FPCs’ membership and community relationships have the greatest impact on their decision-making, a finding echoed by our case studies. Relationships with stakeholders and decision-makers are often the key factor when advocating for or against policies (Figure 9).

Survey respondents were also asked what types of relationships they need in order to accomplish their policy priorities. Not surprisingly, local level relationships are the most important, including those with leaders in nonprofit or community organizations, local government employees, local elected officials, and community members or the general public. Relationships with state or federal officials, university researchers, and cooperative extension were seen as less important to accomplishing policy priorities (Figure 10).

Figure 9. Factors influencing policy priorities

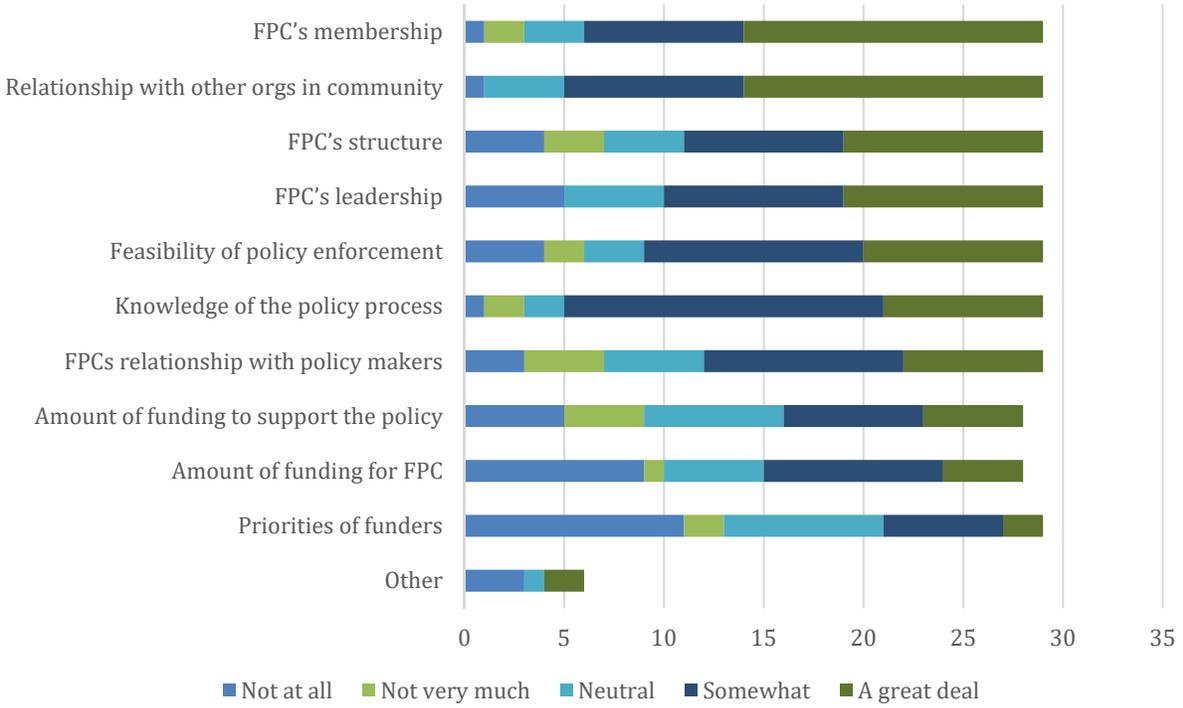
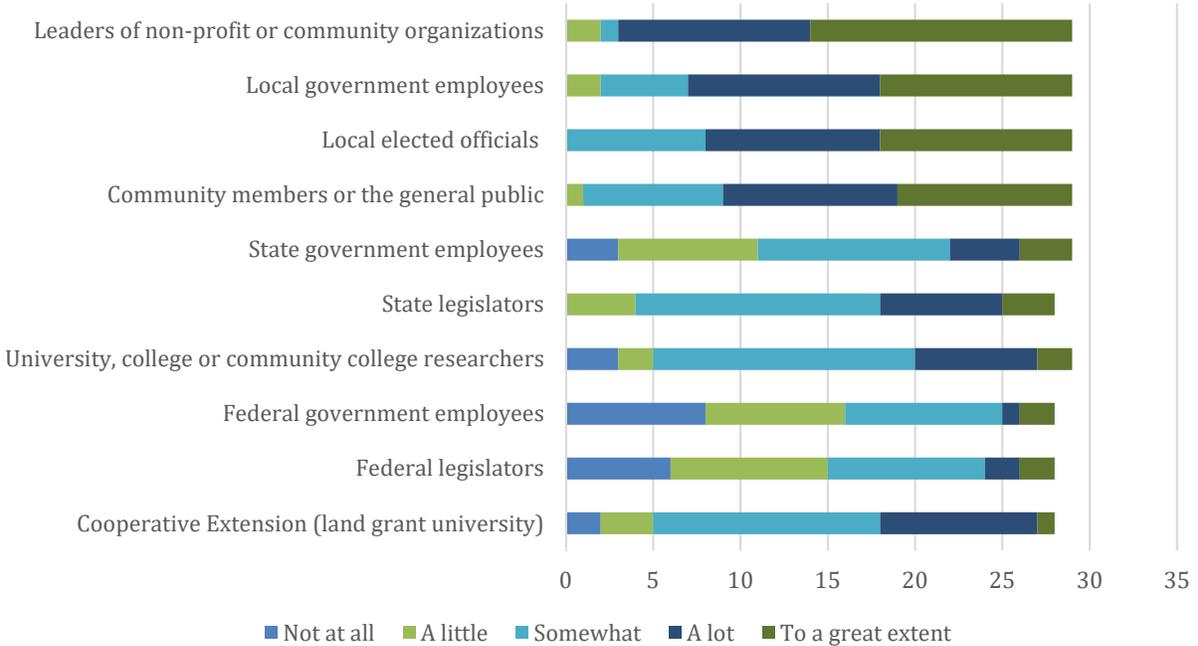
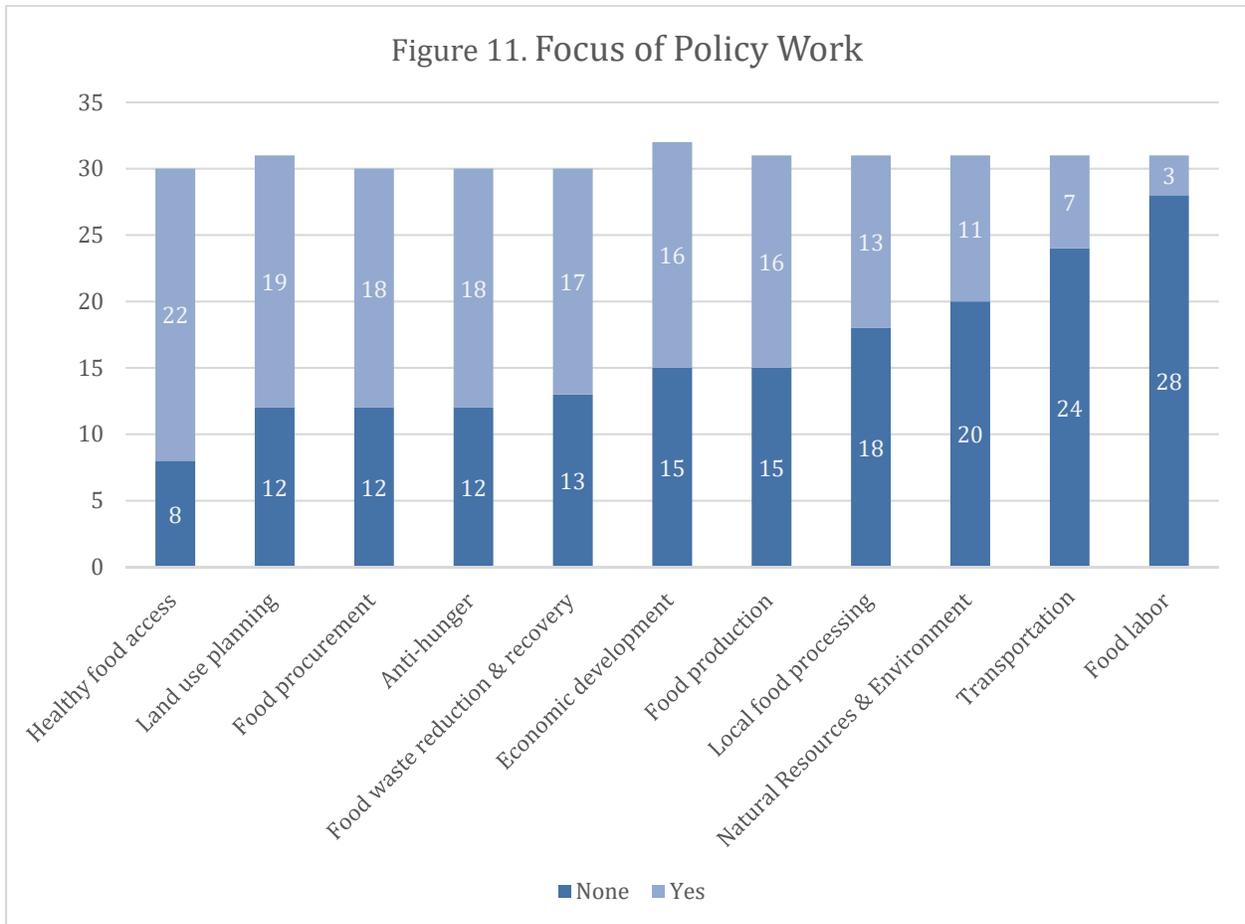


Figure 10. Relationships Needed to Achieve Policy Priorities



Both the survey and case study data concur that healthy food access and anti-hunger work are top priorities. Many FPCs are also involved in land use planning such as urban agriculture land use, while relatively few councils focus on labor or transportation issues (figure 11).



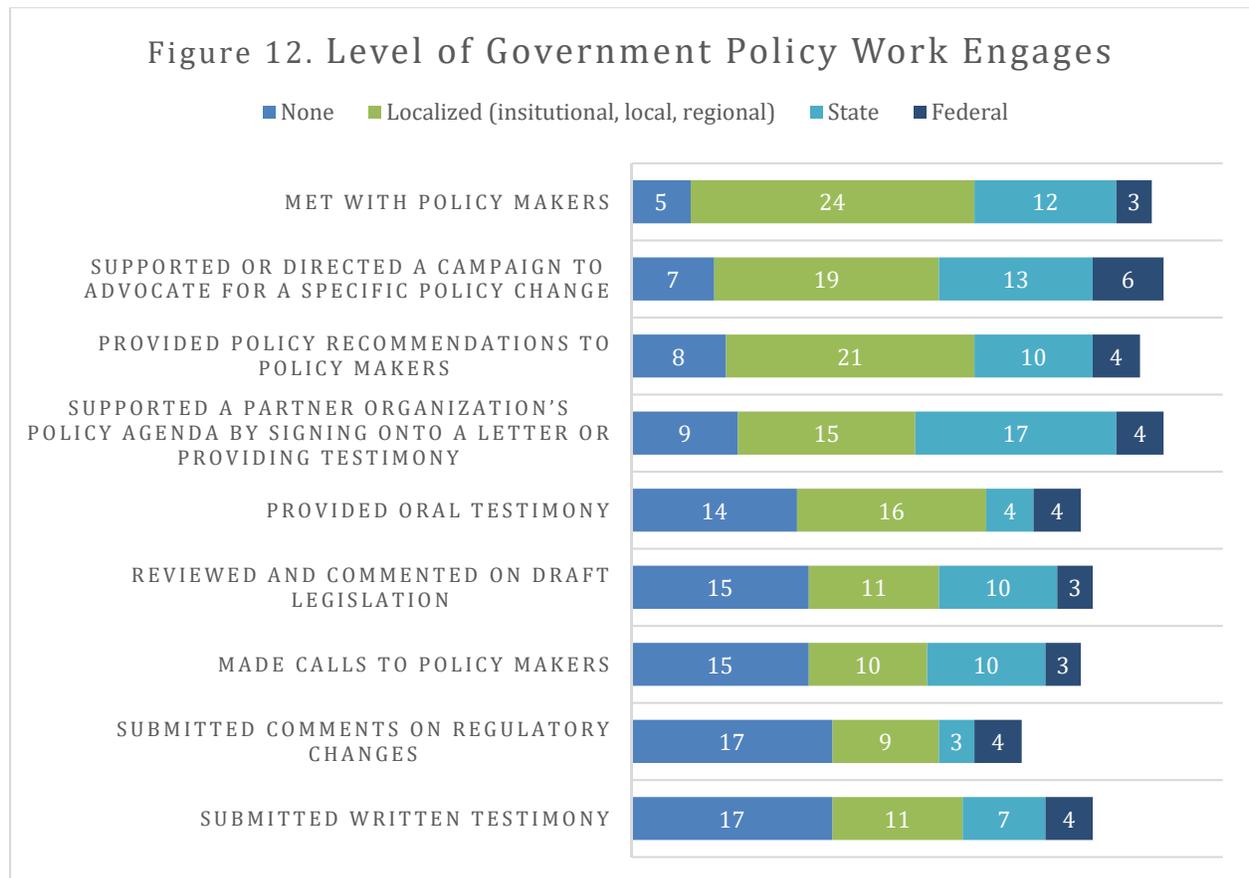
Specific FPC policy activities within these priority areas include the following:

- Healthy food access: healthy food financing, healthy vending, SNAP incentives at farmers markets, soda tax;
- Land use planning: urban agriculture zoning, farmland protection;
- Food procurement: farm to school, institution or hospital;
- Anti-hunger: SNAP outreach, food banks, summer feeding programs, senior hunger;
- Food waste reduction: tax incentive for food donations, date labeling, food recycling;
- Economic development: food hubs, food business promotion, food and farm financing;
- Food production: farming, ranching, aquaculture, gardening, beekeeping;
- Local food processing: cottage food industry, community kitchens, local slaughter;
- Natural resources: water, climate change, soil quality, pesticide regulation;

- Transportation: access to healthy food retail;
- Food labor: minimum wage standards, sick leave, working conditions.

Both the case study and survey data suggest that FPC priorities shift as membership composition shifts, or new policy issues arise. For example, in Yolo the focus shifted from agricultural production to food access when farmers and producers stopped attending council meetings frequently. Later, their FPC became engaged with shifting land use regulations due to the recent state legalization of cannabis production.

California FPCs surveyed were asked to indicate at which level (local, state, or federal) of government their policy work is directed. The most common levels are local and state, with only a small level of involvement at the national (federal government) level (Figure 12). This is in line with our case study findings, which found FPCs are focused locally, while some engage with state policy, often through the California Food Policy Council.



### *Specific policy achievements*

In general, our case studies provided relatively few examples where the influence of a FPC led directly to the passage or implementation of a given policy. This is not too surprising given that FPCs are not full-time advocacy or lobby groups with staff dedicated to writing or supporting bills and other legislation. In a number of cases a workgroup within a FPC, as opposed to the whole council, takes on a policy issue and pursues it (e.g. Urban Ag working group in LA worked on the issue of legalizing gardening in medians). Among the more direct policy achievements we encountered are the following:

- **Urban agriculture policy**
  - Development of local urban ag land-use and other policies (Mendocino, Sacramento, Napa)
  - Beekeeping ordinance (Napa, San Mateo)
  - Urban chicken ordinance (Napa)
- **Influence on county general plans**
  - Insertion of food and agriculture language into county general plans (Marin, Mendocino, Plumas-Sierra, Yolo, pending in San Mateo)
- **Influence on other local-level plans and/or policies**
  - Inserted language into county Crop Report (San Mateo)
  - Urban ag goals inserted into City of Los Angeles Sustainability Plan (Los Angeles)
  - Food Day Resolution (Marin)
  - Good Food Purchasing Policy (Los Angeles)
  - Approved source language adopted by county (Mendocino, Napa)
  - Right-to-farm ordinance (Yolo)
  - Shift county budgetary priorities to support the local food system (e.g. creation of a farm ombudsman position in Yolo)
  - Passage of minimum wage bill for food service workers with other partners (Sacramento)

While these are locally-based achievements, it is also worth noting that in some cases councils also have assisted counties in passage or implementation of state policies, such as the Cottage Food Law or state urban agriculture legislation AB 551 (Los Angeles, Sacramento).

In many of our case studies, it is the work of a member organization rather than the FPC as an entity itself that influences or leads to a policy win. The member organization's success can be in part attributed to the support they received from the FPC. In other cases the FPC's role in information exchange facilitates coalition-building and raising awareness that ultimately leads to policy change.

“Policy” is often thought of as the formal processes of passing new laws or regulations, yet the policy process begins much earlier in agenda setting and continues much later in implementation and evaluation (Jones, 1984). Our respondents spoke to policy activities at multiple stages of the policy process, beginning with the early conversations that set the stage for policy priorities to emerge. As noted earlier, local government personnel participate in regular FPC meetings as part of their existing responsibilities, sharing information from their own work and learning from other FPC participants. This mutual education function is one of the key roles FPCs play. The knowledge, trust, and social capital built in FPC settings indirectly influences policy agendas by altering the perspectives of key decision-makers, identifying potential policy allies, or bringing to light previously hidden issues.

### ***Projects and program achievements and their relation to policy***

We tend to think of projects or programs as the *result* of policy changes, rather than their cause, and this is often the case. But it is equally true that projects and programs can indirectly influence policy by serving as pilot demonstrations that can later be scaled up, by building constituencies who can advocate for ongoing policy support, or by raising awareness and putting new ideas on the policy agenda. While the project-based work of FPCs was not the original focus of our study, many case study interviewees discussed projects/programs as one of their key activities. Projects range from conducting food system assessments, to educating the community about food system topics through forums and events, to creating resources that meet community needs. Examples of project-based work linked to tangible outcomes of public value include:

- **Kern**
  - Food System Assessment
- **Los Angeles**
  - Healthy Neighborhood Market Network enables corner store market conversions to healthier products
- **Marin**
  - Mobile market, map of community and school gardens, support for UCCE garden coordinator position, CalFresh enrollment Application Assisters training, Marin City grocery store initiative, convening/facilitating stakeholder gatherings, Food Resource Guide, Equitable Access Report
- **Mendocino**
  - Food Action Plan completed and adopted, slaughterhouse feasibility study, hosting events (e.g. to increase CalFresh usage at Farmers Markets)
- **Napa**
  - Community garden pilot project under planning review by county, promoting home food production (i.e. created resource guides, FAQ of local food policies/regulations on county website), genetic engineering labeling forum, creation of website NapaLocalFood.com, Food System Assessment RFP

- **Plumas-Sierra**
  - Farm tours, agritourism events, garden education, gleaning, seed banking, food preservation, creating food regulatory map, bringing stakeholders to the table
- **Sacramento**
  - Central kitchen for Sacramento City Unified School District campaign, implementing SB1000 (Environmental justice food access component of land use planning); School Food Forum, Roundtable on Food Justice and Equity
- **San Mateo**
  - Resource Conservation District stock pond conservation project executed; creation of Master Beekeeper program and school farm, farm to school, garden based education, California Thursdays (school lunch), on-farm ponds project, Ag/land use feasibility study, creation of a food/ag network
- **Sonoma**
  - Food Action Plan completed and adopted, Food Forum event held
- **Yolo**
  - Projects/programs: Ag tours (for Supervisors), educational forums (i.e. medical marijuana, food insecurity in Knights Landing)

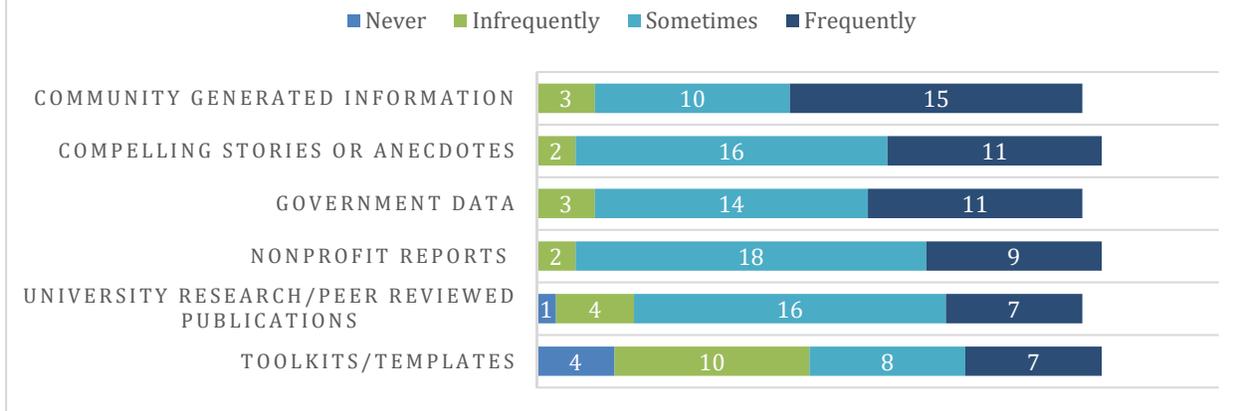
### **III. Information Types and Sources**

A central purpose of our research project was to determine the current and potential effectiveness of California food policy councils in leveraging UC ANR agricultural, environmental, and food and nutrition research in their policy work, in order to improve the ways in which research and policy are informed by one another. We therefore sought to learn about both the types of information that FPCs draw on to inform their work, as well as the sources of information. In particular, we wanted to understand the extent to which FPCs use university research in their policy work, including that produced or disseminated via UC ANR. What we found was that FPCs relied less on research and more on community-generated information, compelling stories, and government data to inform their work. Only a quarter relied frequently on university research or information in peer-reviewed journals. The primary sources of information came largely from local nonprofit organizations, colleagues, peers, and member organization representatives.

#### ***Information type***

Survey results indicate that California Food Policy Councils use a diversity of information types. Most frequently mentioned are community generated information, compelling stories, and government data, while toolkits and templates are being used least frequently (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Frequency Information Types are Used

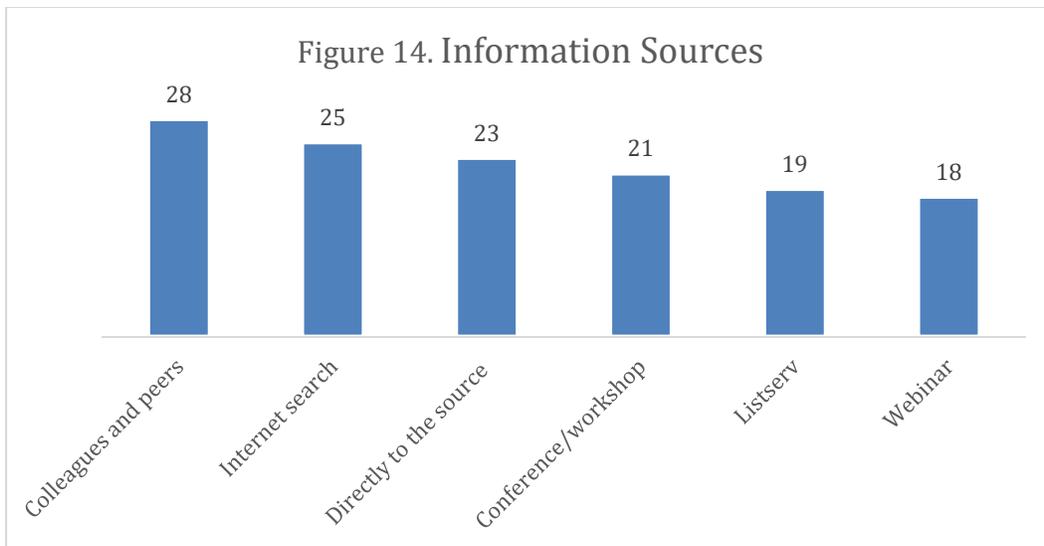


Information types identified through our case studies were similar to the survey categories with one exception: data that is self-generated by the Food Policy Council itself. Information types identified in our case studies include:

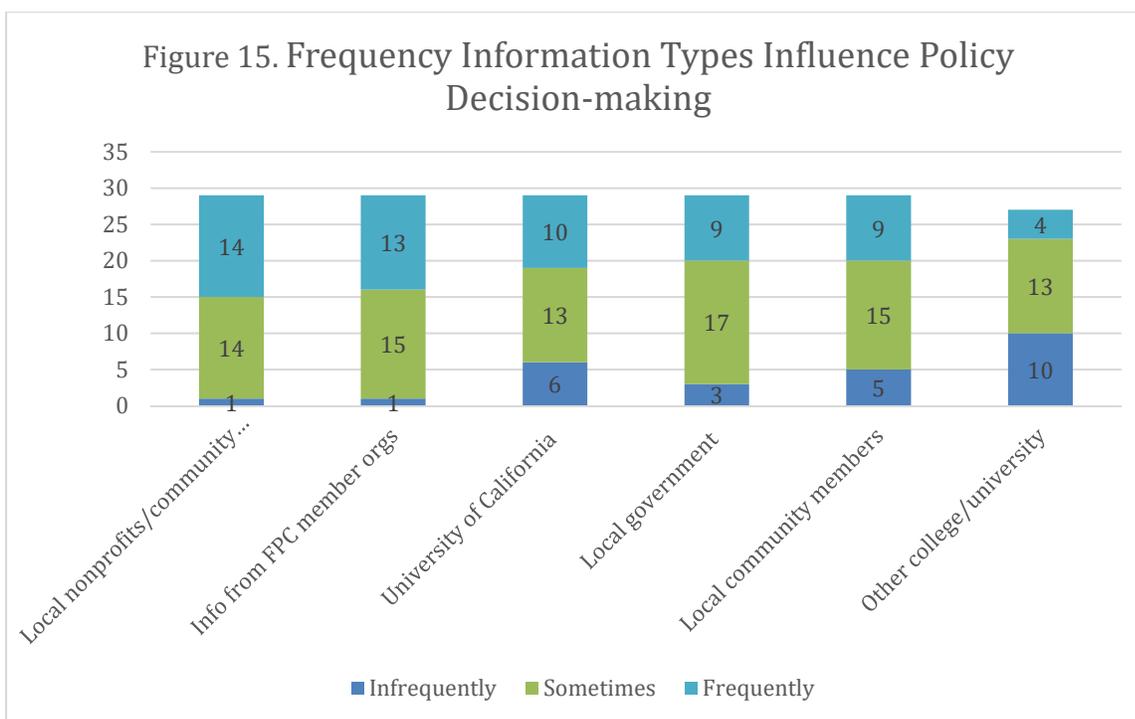
- **Self-generated information** is data collected by the FPC itself, often as a first step to assess an issue. For example, in Plumas-Sierra, FPC members went to local grocery stores, schools, hospitals, and summer camps to identify the demand for local agriculture by conducting an informal, face-to-face survey.
- **Government data** and statistics range from sources such as the California Department of Food and Agriculture or local Ag Commissioners (e.g. Crop Report data) to social services data on food insecurity (usually from the Dept. of Health). The Yolo FPC used information from researchers at Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG).
- **Scholarly research** includes information produced by universities, often from the University of California, but we heard mention of Johns Hopkins and other national institutions as well.
- **Community-based organizations/reports** are often an important source, such as the Los Angeles FPC using information from groups such as Policy Link, Community Health Councils, and the Food Chain Workers Alliance.
- **Community knowledge** is the information type that is used in all of the councils and is solicited through guest speakers, community forums, and members bringing to the table the experiences of communities they represent.

### *Information Sources*

California FPCs tend to access information from a number of different sources. As in our case studies, CA FPCs access information most commonly from colleagues and peers (Figure 14).



All California Food Policy Councils use multiple sources of information to inform their policy work, with nearly all relying frequently or sometimes on information from local non-profits/community organizations and FPC member organizations (Figure 15).



Data from our case studies is consistent with the survey data in that the information sources that FPCs rely on predominantly and most directly are the council members and their social

networks. But these in turn are often rooted in their pre-existing organizational affiliations. The three largest categories of information sources mentioned in our interviews are government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and university researchers or research centers. Other frequently used sources are community voices, and the California Food Policy Council.

- **Public agencies** (15 mentions)
  - Department of Health, Public Health, Health and Human Services (including WIC and CalFresh programs), Ag Commissioner
  - Boards of Supervisors or City Councils
  - Community Action Agency
- **Nonprofit organizations** (14 mentions)
  - Food Access related (e.g. Feeding America)
  - Farmer related
  - Health related
- **University researchers/research centers** (14 mentions)
  - University of California Cooperative Extension
  - University Research Centers: Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program/Agricultural Sustainability Institute, Berkeley Food Institute
  - Individual researchers
- **Community Voice** (7 mentions)
- **California Food Policy Council** (5 mentions)
- **Other:** Non-university experts, list servs, EPA, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)

The University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) is seen by many respondents as providing valid, fact-based information, and is valued also for its wealth of organizational and community connections. Having UCCE on the FPC helps council members know about relevant UC research and projects and about what is going on beyond the local area. Other government agencies can also play the role of knowledge broker, navigating between the FPC and elected officials.

Those citing community voice indicated how useful it was to have FPC members or invited guests from different parts of the food system share information at meetings. This information can then be relayed via member social networks and connections.

### ***Gaps in information sources***

Both the interview data and our observations revealed noticeable gaps in information sources, which, as we have stated, are closely tied to which groups are at (or not at) the table. Given that community voice and membership representation are important sources of information, our

interview respondents noted the relative absence of agricultural voices, including farmers, ranchers, and farm workers. More specifically, Sonoma, San Mateo and Napa talked about the lack of *conventional* agricultural producers on the council and as information sources. Likewise, because under-represented minorities including farm and food system workers are often not at the table, their voice as a source of information is absent.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS AND STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Our study followed a grounded-theory approach in which we allowed key concepts and themes to emerge from our body of data, in addition to tracking data that more closely “fit” our initial guiding questions. Using this approach, we have identified the following key takeaways regarding the activities, operations, outcomes and successful strategies of California FPCs.

**A key FPC function is information sharing to build trust and promote systems thinking**  
Information and knowledge sharing is the key role of FPCs, drawing from members and their social networks. Respondents point to information sharing as the most valuable FPC activity, as it facilitates collaboration and shifts participant thinking from a sectoral-based approach towards a systems-view of food policy work. Despite their name, relatively little of the overall activity of the FPCs in our sample is *directly* aimed at influencing public policy. More frequently, their work involves information exchange, and establishing community connections via meetings or projects. FPC act as what Schiff (2008) terms “link tanks,”<sup>2</sup> based on their recurring role in connecting diverse actors. The act of sharing information builds trust and relationships between members, which can serve as a precursor for future policy and systems change. One interviewee described how an informal group of people began coming together when they heard the county general plan was being revised and began building relationships. “The conversation was more general and project-oriented in the beginning, but when the county-wide process started to pick up, the group really became focused on the agricultural element of the county-wide plan. There were many long and deep discussions about that. It did result in a series of very specific recommendations for the county plan.”

“Regardless of the outcome of our policy recommendations, the process has been so valuable, in some cases in **establishing relationships** and in other cases **strengthening relationships**. That's been a really amazing tool for galvanizing and bringing awareness.”

- Marin FPC

---

<sup>2</sup> Schiff, R. (2008). The role of food policy councils in developing sustainable food systems. *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*, 3(2-3), 206-228.

A public health advocate spoke of how her view of the process for effecting change shifted based on conversations at the FPC. In order to increase urban agriculture, she would have previously taken a more top-down approach and identified vacant parcels of land to target for urban agricultural development. However, from her involvement in the FPC, she realized they had to first build capacity through community development techniques, which resulted in hiring a full-time staff person to perform community outreach and technical assistance.

A FPC member who works on resource conservation spoke of the benefits of having diverse members come together to see the food system as a whole, which can then lead to more meaningful and holistic policy work. She commented, “The Public Health Officer is an advocate for regulatory streamlining of farm ponds, right? It’s because of this network that he understands that regulatory streamlining is essential to water supply, is essential to ag viability, is essential to local food, is part of public health.”

### **Knowledge brokers play an important role in sharing important food/farm information**

All council members bring knowledge/information to the table, but some individuals also play the role of what we term ‘knowledge broker.’ These members are connected to many different knowledge sources and are able to draw on these myriad sources to serve their council’s data and information needs. Having an active and able knowledge broker (or more than one) at the table is more important to FPC operations than it is to have a clear pipeline to a particular university or researcher. Examples of knowledge brokers include Cooperative Extension Advisors who know how to access research and data from the university context and distill relevant and meaningful information for the council.

Knowledge brokers sometimes help provide and interpret quantitative data or statistics, but other types of community knowledge are also important. A founding member of one FPC had been previously employed in city government and was able to share “insider” information about local politics and how municipal government worked so that the council could be more strategic in its activities.

Knowledge brokers leverage their organizational connections and their political and social capital to support FPC goals. Examples we heard include:

- FPC members who previously worked at California Department of Food and Agriculture or went to school at a UC campus know who to call to obtain data and are familiar with how the government/research organization is structured.
- A nonprofit member is able to use contacts to bring in farmers’ perspectives.
- Members who sit on multiple local organizations facilitate knowledge sharing and coordination.

- A farm ombudsman acts as liaison between the FPC and the concerns of farmers in the area.
- UCCE personnel communicate farmer and rancher perspectives, along with relevant agricultural data.

### **FPCs found value in combining information from numbers and stories**

Formal data and experiential data are two types of information that food policy councils use to make decisions and to advocate for or against policies. Formal data includes quantitative information, such as government statistics or some forms of university research, and is often used to support priority areas. Experiential data can take the form of narratives about people’s lived experiences, and is often a key driver when setting food policy council priorities. Members feel that experiential data are often as compelling with policy-makers as statistics. One cited the example of how narratives enhanced work on a CalFresh Resolution and Equitable Access Report.

“They go **hand in hand**, the **data and the community experience**. You have to have those stories, and you have to have that data [to back it up].”

- Marin FPC

### **Successful FPCs use working groups or other short-term entities to promote policy change**

Respondents from across all 10 FPC cases engaged in some activities that were directly aimed at influencing public policy. Often these involve a sub-group of the larger membership that rallies around a particular policy priority, enlisting allies as needed, whether organized as a formal working group or more loosely as a coalition of interested members and their allies. For example, in Los Angeles, the urban agriculture working group was successful in the passage of an ordinance to allow gardening in parkways in the city of Los Angeles. Sacramento now uses the model of a “campaign” to focus their policy work, finding it allows allies to join for a short-term commitment based on shared agendas, rather than needing to buy-in to the larger, long-term agenda of the FPC.

“It’s creating **opportunities for dialogue** that has been really, really important...sometimes just in making sure that policy is rolled out in a way that’s workable for people”

- Los Angeles FPC

In a number of cases, FPCs were able to influence their county’s General Plan. In Marin, the FPC inserted food system language into the General Plan after being alerted that a planner was interested in sustainability. They focused their energy for a year on attending meetings related to the plan. Their “inside” partner coached them on how to write language that eventually was inserted into the plan. Similarly, in Plumas-Sierra, the FPC successfully inserted food and agriculture language into the General Plan, drawing on a FPC-generated food security

assessment, food bank data (gathered where a member worked), the concerns of a ranching organization, and sample language from the Marin General Plan.

FPCs also contribute to policy by influencing members to make changes in their own organizations or by sparking collaborations between members who pursue change independently of the FPC. The latter is sometimes a preferred strategy when government employees are members on the council, and are put in a difficult position if the council attempts to directly advocate. In the case of Marin, council members who were advocates wanted to draft an ambitious Board of Supervisors resolution on Equitable Access to Healthy and Local Food, while council members who were county employees wanted a softer and more general Resolution to meet people where they were. The resolution that was eventually approved by the Supervisors sparked many internal county departmental discussions on how to improve CalFresh application rates and client experience. Ultimately, this led to focusing local efforts around implementing a state law, AB 402, Sharing School Meal Applications with CalFresh.

### **FPCs are rethinking what counts as policy work**

The limited and indirect nature of most FPC's policy work confirms earlier findings (Schiff 2008) that FPCs tend to be more project-focused than policy-focused, but also opens up the question as to what actually counts as "policy work." "Policy" is sometimes equated with the formal processes of passing new laws or regulations; yet, the policy process begins much earlier in agenda setting and continues much later in implementation and evaluation. Our findings suggest that FPCs engage meaningfully in "upstream" efforts to raise awareness about certain food system issues (i.e. agenda setting), and "downstream" efforts to implement policies already in place. Councils also work not only on "big P" (i.e. formal governmental policy) but also "little p" (institutional or organizational policies, e.g. at companies or schools) issues, both of which can yield important public policy outcomes. The knowledge, trust, and social capital built in FPC settings indirectly influences policy agendas by altering perspectives of key decision makers, identifying potential policy allies, or bringing to light previously hidden issues.

### **FPCs Adapt Contrasting Approaches to Food Systems Change**

The makeup and composition of FPCs, and their policy strategies, can be influenced by their approaches to how food system change best occurs. These choices pose a number of difficult tradeoffs and different councils or even different council members may have conflicting ideas on how to best navigate these. In addition, approaches may change over time in response to changes in the local context.

A key tradeoff involves how inclusive to be in attracting members. Related to this is the degree to which it is expected that members share core values about the type of food system change that is being sought. Some FPCs view food system change as requiring a broad and inclusive

consortium of stakeholders (e.g., ranging from production to food access) and seek broad buy-in from all sectors. These councils see a key purpose as bringing stakeholders with diverse and sometimes opposing values together, even if that slows the pace at which they can pursue food systems change. Other FPCs may seek out cross-sector alliances, but do so with an eye on attracting allies who share core values and a commitment to advocacy on behalf of those values. This holds the promise of being able to mobilize on specific policy agendas in the short-term. It may also allow the council to go deeper in changing the local conversation about the type of food system that is being envisioned, and in analyzing the power structures that might stand in the way. A potential drawback of this approach is alienating other food system actors, preventing broader alliances from forming, or limiting the number of diverse perspectives which inform action.

One FPC member explained their choice to deliberately involve representatives of large agricultural interests who might not see eye to eye with other FPC members:

We started out as a more homogeneous group. We realized that we weren't doing anyone a service by being homogeneous. For us, the conversation regarding food systems was going to look really different than the conversations that are happening where there is more homogeneity, where there is more common ground around what is just, what is appropriate, what is healthy. We don't have that consensus here. That really affects the conversation.

By contrast, the FPC in another area finds it beneficial that some groups are not at the table, making it easier to build an agenda around shared values rather than needing to be continually navigating value differences.

Another tradeoff stems from the degree to which FPC members are comfortable with conflict and with the kinds of public activities that are associated with political organizing for change. As one respondent puts it: "For many FPCs that rarely engage in direct policy, it's easy to avoid these issues and to regularly find common ground...but that doesn't address issues of effectiveness and what changes are actually being made." Another respondent noted how being in a small-scale community discouraged some conflicts from being discussed: "It's such a small town...I think that people are afraid of ruffling feathers and stepping on toes...we're not anonymous here." By contrast, still another rural respondent finds that social bonds created a basis for being open to conflict:

We have a really tiny community, and we all perform many, many tasks to help each other out and to make things happen. And so you get really close to people. Some of these people are some of my best friends....being open enough to having differences of opinion come to the same table and feeling safe and feeling like, even though we practice different things, we can still come to the table, using the strengths to create those bonds.

### **Community Context Influences FPCs**

Underlying all five of the previously mentioned emerging themes, it is important to understand how community context shapes FPC operations and priorities. This finding is consistent with past studies of FPCs, which note the wide range of forms which food policy councils take, their different historical trajectories, and the difficulty in finding any specific set of best practice recommendations that might apply across all settings. Across our 10 cases we found significant variations influencing how a council operates, including: size/scale of the community, the degree to which it is rural or urban or “mixed,” the type of dominant industry in the county and its political influence, and physical/geographic barriers. The latter takes on a particular role in many large California counties, where long distances or mountain ranges can make getting to a central meeting location difficult, especially during winter months.

These community differences, and the complex issues FPCs are tackling, make it even more important that FPC leaders have deep experience, connections in the community and a good feel for the nuances involved in effective political organizing.

### **FINDINGS REGARDING ORIGINAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In this section we return to consider our original research questions, summarizing data from across our 10 case studies. In general, we found scant direct examples of FPCs drawing on research from University of California or other research institutions. Instead, councils rely heavily on community-based knowledge (e.g. lived experience of local farmers, food-insecure residents, etc.) and in the cases where they do seek quantitative data, then tend to use government statistics provided by agency members (e.g. Dept. of Health, Dept. of Agriculture Crop Reports). However, we did find that the links between UCCE and FPCs are highly valuable in cases where local UCCE personnel play the role of knowledge broker, and throughout the course of our interviews, FPC members identified numerous opportunities to broaden and deepen these relationships.

#### **What links to UC (or other) research institutions do FPCs currently have?**

Since it was a key criteria for creating our sample, it is no surprise that all 10 FPCs in our sample include Cooperative Extension (CE) Advisors and/or other university-based personnel as members. In Marin it is the CE advisor who facilitates/convenes the FPC, but more often, these academics provide content area expertise related to their disciplinary focus. For example, in San Mateo the former local UCCE county director, an entomologist by training, was instrumental in helping develop the FPC’s proposed beekeeping ordinance rules. In Los Angeles, the urban agriculture advisor participates on the leadership board and helps two different work groups develop policies—the urban agriculture work group and the food waste working group.

### **How were these links established and how are they maintained?**

Relationships between UC academics and Food Policy Councils evolve in many different ways, with UC sometimes directly involved in helping form the FPC. In other cases, UCCE Advisors take the initiative to join a FPC as part of their community engagement responsibilities or as content experts. Relationships ebb and flow over time as circumstances of the Advisor or the FPC change.

### **How and to what extent do FPCs currently leverage research (especially that of ANR) for their policy work and with what effects/impact?**

We found few if any examples where there was a direct link between a specific research article or data set and the policy work of a Food Policy Council. On the other hand, some FPC's invite academic researchers to address their meetings, sharing up-to-date research findings. For example, Napa included a UC Davis scholar in a panel on GMOs, and Los Angeles works closely with public health scholars from UCLA, one of whom is a member of the council. Respondents indicated that these encounters often lead to a shift in thinking on the part of FPC members, which is difficult to measure or assess but significant in influencing the course of a FPC's trajectory. Many FPC members are part of organizations that regularly scan for data and research that can inform or aid their work. It is not uncommon for this type of information to be shared at FPC meetings. For example, we found that data from local food banks is useful to numerous FPCs. Marin used food bank data for advocacy efforts around CalFresh enrollment and Plumas-Sierra used it to advocate for food issues to be included in the county General Plan. Below is a list of the primary examples we found in which FPCs use research-based information directly for policy work as well as more indirectly in terms of educating themselves and others about key food system issues.

- **Los Angeles**
  - Los Angeles FPC advocated for urban agriculture goals to be included in the City of Los Angeles sustainability plan and baseline data is from the Cultivate Los Angeles map, created through a partnership between the FPC's Urban agriculture working group and UCLA/UCCE.
- **Marin**
  - Farmer and Marin FPC founder Janet Brown was introduced to idea of "community food security" by academic scholars at the Eco-farm conference
  - A UC scholar on food security gives presentation to FPC and shifts members' approach to food insecurity from "hand-out" model to building community capacity to grow food (i.e. urban gardens)
- **Mendocino**
  - Presentation by food system analyst Ken Meter on local food and economic opportunity at a community meeting spurred the creation of the Mendocino FPC

- **Napa**
  - Current council chair attended a conference on farm-to-school that broadened her thinking to include the entire food system as opposed to its discrete components (e.g. production vs consumption), leading to a shift in her priorities for the council
- **Plumas-Sierra**
  - Feeding America research data used to inform food summits which informs community priority setting and identification of policy allies.
- **San Mateo**
  - Council worked with Community Alliance of Family Farms to conduct feasibility study for a food hub/consolidation facility in county; the report's conclusion about lack of viability led them to drop this as a council priority
  - Has partnered with students from Stanford design school to work on food and farm bill project
- **Sonoma**
  - Used US Census data, USDA Farm Census data and research findings from the Department of Health to write the county Food System Assessment
  - Incorporates UCCE local food system advisor's knowledge of community food systems to inform direction of work
- **Yolo**
  - Research from USDA Director of Nutrition on links between food assistance enrollment and economic multiplier effect in local food system sparked creation of Yolo Food Connect (a precursor to the FPC)
  - UCD scholar's presentation on CSAs led to proposal of Assembly bill 224
  - UC and Ag Futures Alliance (a precursor to FPC) worked together to survey local growers to determine their research/data needs
- **California Food Policy Council (CAFPC)**
  - Used data from UCD/UCCE study on economic impacts of local food purchasing to advocate for and receive funding for Market Match in 2016 (AB 1321)

### **How do researcher-FPC relationships influence FPCs' impacts on policy-making?**

A key discovery of our work is that at the local level FPC's do relatively little direct work on policy advocacy, as a council. Thus, our initial question presumed a reality that in most cases does not exist. Many FPCs do have a more indirect role in sharing information and building relationships that helps support policy initiatives that are being led by member organizations or by others in the community. At the state level, the coordinating body for all local FPCs (CAFPC) has been more active in policy advocacy by supporting bills that like-minded partners are sponsoring, but the degree to which research is directly informing those efforts appears limited.

## **What are the best practices and lessons learned for FPCs, for research institutions, and specifically for UC ANR?**

This section provides a roadmap for future opportunities that interested UCCE personnel could pursue in order to strengthen linkages between UCCE and local food/agriculture policy-making. Below we list the types of additional support from UCCE that FPC members would like to receive, as articulated in their interviews.

### ***Training***

- Would like more UCCE support in FPC's outreach/education activities, such as urban agriculture; school gardens; consumer food waste; and food preservation
- Training food policy advocates on how to use research or approach researchers - possibly via webinar

### ***Clearinghouse***

- Create a repository of information that relates to FPCs, such as an online resource which is specific for food systems/food policy councils
- UC bringing a statewide perspective to local FPCs
- "Dynamic" exchange of information: share workshops and speakers happening in the region, not just county

### ***Data/Research***

- Would like a person who can fact check and provide information/resources to FPC
  - Unbiased data to reality check on different perspectives and opinions
  - Data to support anecdotal info to convince policy makers
- UC as data aggregator at different scales
- Share best practices of FPCs (in-person or via webinars)

### ***Facilitator***

- UCCE providing forums for information-sharing—i.e. in person at regional gatherings—particularly to provide examples of what has worked (i.e. 'success stories'), using this as a mechanism for becoming aware of others' success (e.g. how rural communities have addressed food desert issues, etc.).
- Provide a point person for FPCs to contact at UC and perhaps once to twice-yearly meetings to facilitate research-policy connections with FPCs
- Having UCCE at the table is useful as they act as gatekeepers for research and resources.

## **NEXT STEPS**

This report has presented findings from a UC ANR research project which concluded in June 2018. In addition to this report, products of the research will include peer-reviewed journal articles and information briefs geared to FPC and Cooperative Extension audiences. Appendix 2 provides a list of research-related topics that FPCs expressed interest in learning about from UCCE. These potential research projects will be shared with graduate students, faculty and Extension personnel. In addition, many FPCs were interested in co-learning opportunities with other FPCs, which we have begun to provide.

## **Appendix 1. Food Policy Council Interview Protocol**

### **About you**

1. What positions do you hold in your home organization (or in the broader community)?
2. About how long have you been involved with the FPC and why?
3. What unique perspective does your organization bring to the table?
4. What are you hoping your FPC can accomplish in the long term? What would success look like?

### **Background on the FPC**

5. What are some of the priority issues your food policy council currently focuses on? Have these changed much over time?
  - a. Probe: specifically what policy issues does your council address (by understanding the issues, analyzing them, exploring options, or acting on them in some way)?
6. Is there anything unique about this community that you feel is important to understanding how your FPC works? (e.g. particular challenges, historical legacies, environmental or social conditions, etc.)
  - a. Probe, only if not already known: How is the FPC organized? Is it a non-profit, government associated or other?

### **Mapping exercise: Relationships, information sources, use of systematic data**

7. We are interested in where your FPC might get policy relevant information (particularly from research or other systematically collected data). It could be from academics or other sources. Help us get a picture by drawing a map of the organizations and people who provide information or knowledge to the FPC, and talk about how it's shared with the council members.
8. Are there any noteworthy examples of how this flow of knowledge/information changed your thinking/approach to your work with the FPC? If yes, please tell us the story.
9. You've talked about current information flows. Are there kinds of information or sources you feel are missing from your food policy council?
10. Are there examples of how your FPC has partnered with a research organization to answer specific policy questions, evaluate policy impact, or provide other policy relevant information? How has this gone? Have any particular policy successes resulted?
11. Probes: (if not already mentioned):

- a. What about policy related partnerships or information sharing with other FPCs or the state FPC?
- b. What ties are there to UCCE, UC, or other researchers/research institutions? How have these come about and what value have they brought?

**Lessons learned and future suggestions**

12. Have you learned any lessons you might share about working with researchers or research institutions?
13. Do you have specific ideas or ways you would like to more effectively engage UCCE and/or other research institutions in food policy work?
14. If you had access to researchers to research and collect data on topics that would be helpful to the work of the FPC, what would you have them do? What would be your ‘wish list’?
15. Is there anything else you think we should know?

## Appendix 2. Respondent List of Needed Research, by Topical Area

Agricultural production	Food systems	Food access
How can cities/counties encourage diversification of ag production (includes policies)	Food systems assessment that includes both conventional and sustainable ag. (Sac, Regional)	How to encourage low-income families to cook
Long-term climate change planning for ag production for Plumas-Sierra.	Food hub feasibility research	Strategies to increase participation by those in extreme poverty in nutrition assistance programs.
Patterns of crop conversions over time in county; relationship of those to broader environmental and food access goals	How to make farm to institution happen more broadly—tell success stories and share practices?	How to define hunger
Housing and land use policies - comparative between cities and how it affects farmworkers, farm land, etc.	Connecting gardening/farming by kids and long-term cognitive effects	Data on number of children receiving subsidized lunch
Farmworker housing	How to get over the chicken and egg problem in growing the local market: farmers don't sense a market big enough to warrant planting food; consumers would buy it if it was there.	Studies of Farm 2 School programs
Mapping cannabis links to different medical conditions; info on pesticide residues on marijuana	Showing how systems change	Research related to reasons for poverty
Local livestock processing feasibility	How to promote/show transparency in the food system	Developing metrics/indicators to measure social equity and underrepresented communities in political process.
Food waste - Tools to calculate trade-offs between transporting food and keeping it out of landfill—are there are formulas anywhere?	Lifecycle analysis of decentralized food pantries, transporting it to a centralized food bank facility and landfilling extra food.	Connection between investment of municipalities and increases in family income
Where are the opportunities for small farmers?	Consumers needs/demands and how much are they willing to pay	Consumption of different food items, i.e. % greens, %fish, etc.
Economic externalities of ag—how can we determine impact of those externalities?	Impacts of policies (i.e. Good Food Purchasing Program). Include economic impact.	Impact of funds or policy (i.e. impact of increasing distribution of food to low-income K-12 students through LCAP funds)

Best plant varieties for climate change, esp. for home gardeners.	How urban ag water use compares to other urban water uses. Does urban ag make sense in a drought?	
How a farmer can be economically sustainable	Food systems - how to connect data on all aspects of food systems in a digestible format/approach	
Soil health	Social impact of FPCs towards policy change	
Best practices on topical areas (farm labor, farm worker housing issues, off-stream water storage)		
Immigration		
Environmental impacts of sustainable ag		
Impact of preserving ag land (include Williamson act)		

## Appendix 3. 2018 Food Policy Council Survey

*\*required*

- 1. Official name of FPC\*:**
- 2. State/Province/Territory\*:**
- 3. What is the current status of the FPC\*?**
  - a. Active (meets multiple times a year) → *go to Q6*
  - b. In development (formed within the last 12 months) → *go to Q6 (skip Q22-25)*
  - c. In transition (meets infrequently, redefining the purpose and/or structure of the council) → *go to Q6*
  - d. Inactive → *go to Q4*
- 4. When did the FPC become inactive? → *go to Q5***
- 5. If you want to share, please briefly describe what led the FPC to become inactive. → *go to End***
- 6. What is the geographic focus of the FPC\*?**
  - a. First Nations or Native American Council
  - b. State or Province/Territory
  - c. County
  - d. City/Municipality
  - e. Region (multi-county or multi-state)
  - f. Both City/Municipality and County
- 7. What year was the FPC formed formally?**
- 8. FPC Primary Contact\***
  - a. Name:
  - b. Email address:
  - c. Phone number:
- 9. FPC Secondary Contact\***
  - a. Name:
  - b. Email address:
  - c. Phone number:
- 10. FPC Website:**
- 11. FPC Facebook:**

**12. FPC Twitter:**

**13. FPC Instagram:**

**14. What type of organization is the FPC? (select the option that best describes the FPC):**

- a. Non-Profit (e.g., certified 501(c)3 or other 501(c) category)
- b. Housed in another non-profit (e.g., non-profit serves as fiscal agent or FPC is a project of a non-profit)
- c. Grassroots coalition
- d. Embedded in government (e.g., county or provincial organization)
- e. Embedded in a university/college or Extension office
- f. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**15. Which statement(s) describes the FPC's connection to government? (choose all that apply):**

- a. Government employees are members of the council or participate in the meetings.
- b. Members of the FPC are appointed by government officials.
- c. Local, state or tribal government supports the FPC (e.g., in-kind donation of meeting space, staff support with research or data, provision of letter of support for a grant).
- d. FPC was created by legislation (e.g., county resolution, city bylaw or state act).
- e. Government seeks advice or recommendations from the FPC.
- f. The FPC has no formal connection to government.
- g. Other (please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

**16. Which of the following sectors are represented by the FPC's membership? (choose all that apply)**

- a. Government agency staff
- b. Elected officials
- c. Anti-hunger/emergency food
- d. College/university/community college (e.g. Extension)
- e. Community
- f. Economic development
- g. Elementary and secondary education
- h. Faith-based organizations
- i. Farm/food industry workers
- j. Food processing/distribution
- k. Food production (farming, ranching, aquaculture)
- l. Food retail
- m. Food waste/disposal
- n. Health care
- o. Natural resources and environment
- p. Philanthropy
- q. Public health
- r. Social justice
- s. Youth

**17. Does your FPC receive funding? (multiple choice)**

- a. Yes, currently
- b. In the past, but not currently
- c. Never

**18. What was the FPC's approximate annual budget for the last fiscal year?**

- a. \$0 → go to Q19
- b. \$1 -10,000 → go to Q18
- c. \$10,000-25,000 → go to Q18
- d. \$25,000-100,000 → go to Q18
- e. Over \$100,000 → go to Q18

**19. From what sources did the FPC receive funding for the last fiscal year? (choose all that apply)**

- a. Local, state or tribal government agency budget
- b. Local, state or tribal government grant
- c. Federal government grant
- d. Corporate-sponsored foundation (*Definition: A separately-administered private foundation set up by a corporation that is subject to the same rules as other foundations and must file IRS documents that disclose their giving. It is more likely to have a webpage or website, outlining what they will and won't fund, and how to apply and can choose to only support pre-selected organizations. Adapted from: <http://grantspace.org/tools/knowledge-base/funding-resources/corporations/corporate-giving>*)
- e. Corporate giving program (*Definition: Corporate giving programs are administered by the company itself, often through a dedicated department such as Community Relations or CSR. It may be difficult to find information about an in-house corporate giving program, such as what they support, who they've given to and how much, unless the company chooses to publicize it. Source: <http://grantspace.org/tools/knowledge-base/funding-resources/corporations/corporate-giving>*)
- f. Private foundation
- g. Individuals
- h. Membership dues
- i. In-kind donations (e.g. office space, staff support)
- j. Crowdfunding (e.g., GoFundMe)
- k. Earned income from goods and services
- l. Public charity (*Definition: An entity that derives its funding primarily from grants from individuals, government, and private foundations and conducts direct service or other tax-exempt activities but may also engage in grantmaking activities*)

*Note: For the following question, our definition of policy is broad. It includes laws and ordinances; how policies get administered, funded or implemented at local, state, tribal/First*

*Nations, or federal levels of government; as well as changes in institutional practices. 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.*

**PROCESS**

**20. For the following, please indicate how well each statement describes the FPC:**

	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
a. The FPC encourages comprehensive approaches to solving food system-related issues.				
b. The FPC targets the root causes of a problem in their policy work (e.g., supports a campaign for living wages)				
c. The FPC sets common objectives that are agreed upon by members.				
d. The FPC looks for information about and analyzes current policies, the policy environment and opportunities for advancing its advocacy or policy goals.				
e. 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.				
f. The FPC collaborates on projects or policies with partners not working directly on food system issues (e.g., racial equity, housing).				
g. The FPC reflects the racial, economic, gender and ethnic diversity of the community.				
h. The FPC provides training and leadership opportunities for all of its members.				
i. The FPC monitors the advocacy process and adapts its approach based on the outcomes.				

**21. What are the FPC's current top three (3) ORGANIZATIONAL priorities?**

- a. Advocacy and policy capacity building
- b. Community engagement
- c. Communication and marketing
- d. Diversity and inclusion
- e. Education
- f. Fundraising
- g. Governance structure
- h. Member recruitment/retention
- i. Monitoring and evaluation
- j. Networking
- k. Research and data collection

- l. Strategic or policy planning
- m. Other (*please explain*): \_\_\_\_\_

**22. In the past 12 months, did the FPC organize any of the following community engagement activities? (*choose all that apply*)**

- a. Hosted community forum(s) to get feedback for an assessment, plan or policy recommendation
- b. (Co-)hosted a series of educational events (speakers bureau, film screenings, book club, etc.) about topics related to the food system
- c. Distributed a newsletter regularly with updates about the FPC's work
- d. Held a single event to highlight a successful food systems program(s)
- e. Provide awards to exemplary community members working in food systems
- f. Held training(s) for community members to build their capacity to work on food systems policy
- g. Surveyed community members about food systems related topics
- h. Supported a partner organization by cross promoting resources and events
- i. Developed a plan or strategy for community engagement
- j. Other  
(*please describe*): \_\_\_\_\_
- k. Did not organize any community engagement activities

**23. What are the FPC's current top three (3) POLICY priorities?**

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

**24. Please indicate how often your FPC pursues the following activities.**

	Frequently	Often	Seldom	Never
a. Information exchange and networking				
b. Educating members				
c. Educating the public				
d. Advising decision makers (i.e. bringing diverse individuals and organizations together to advise local government on formal and informal policies)				
e. Policy advocacy				
f. Co-designing food systems solutions				
g. Implementing projects and programs				
h. Other ( <i>please explain below</i> ):				

## OUTCOMES

25. [Only display to Active and In Transition councils] In the past 12 months, what types of policy changes has the FPC worked on and in what issue areas? (*choose all that apply*)

Issue Area	Type of policy change			
	1. Regulatory ( <i>deals with the development, implementation and enforcement of rules and procedures to comply with a law</i> )	2. Legislative ( <i>enactment of a law or ordinance by Congress, state legislature or municipal authority</i> )	3. Institutional ( <i>voluntary or mandatory rules or procedures that direct the internal practices of a public or private organization or corporation, like a school district, hospital, university</i> )	4. Did not work on policy changes in this issue area
a. Food procurement (e.g., farm to school, institution or hospital)				
b. Healthy food access (e.g., healthy food financing, healthy vending, SNAP incentives at farmers markets, soda tax)				

c. Food waste reduction and recovery (e.g., tax incentive for food donations, date labeling, food waste recycling)				
d. Anti-hunger (e.g., SNAP outreach and enrollment, food banks, summer feeding programs, senior hunger)				
e. Land use planning (e.g., urban agriculture zoning, comprehensive planning, farmland protection)				
f. Food production (e.g., farming, ranching, aquaculture, gardening, beekeeping)				
g. Local food processing (e.g., cottage food industry, community kitchens, local slaughter)				
h. Food labor (e.g., minimum wage standards, sick leave, working conditions)				
i. Natural Resources and Environment (e.g., water, climate change, soil quality, pesticide regulation)				
j. Economic development (e.g., food hubs, local food business promotion, food and farm financing)				
k. Transportation (e.g., access to healthy food retail, last-mile food distribution from wholesale suppliers to consumer food retailers)				
l. Other ( <i>please explain</i> ):				

**26. [Only display to Active and In Transition councils] In the past 12 months, what advocacy activities has the FPC engaged in and at what level of government? (*choose all that apply*)**

	Institutional	Local	Regional	State	Tribal	Federal	International	None
a. Provided policy recommendations to policy makers								
b. Supported or directed a campaign to advocate for a specific policy change								
c. Submitted written testimony								
d. Submitted comments on regulatory changes								
e. Provided oral testimony								

f. Met with policy makers									
g. Made calls to policy makers									
h. Reviewed and commented on draft legislation									
i. Supported a partner organization's policy agenda by signing onto a letter or providing testimony									

**27. [Only display to Active and In Transition councils] How much does the FPC take into consideration the following factors when determining its policy priorities?**

	A great deal	Somewhat	Neutral	Not very much	Not at all
a. Amount of funding for FPC					
b. Priorities of funders					
c. FPCs relationship with policy makers					
d. Relationship with other organizations in the community					
e. FPC's leadership					
f. FPC's structure					
g. FPC's membership					
h. Knowledge of the policy process					
i. Feasibility of policy enforcement					
j. Amount of funding to support the policy					
k. Other ( <i>please explain below</i> ):					

**28. [Only display to Active and In Transition councils] To what extent are relationships with the following groups needed for the FPC to accomplish its policy priorities?**

	A great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
a. Local elected officials				
b. State legislators				
c. Federal legislators				
d. Local government employees				
e. State government employees				
f. Federal government employees				
g. Leaders of non-profit or community organizations				
h. Community members or the general public				
i. University, college or community college researchers				
j. Cooperative Extension (land grant university)				

**29. Describe your FPC’s greatest achievement in the last 12 months.**

**30. Describe your FPC’s greatest challenge in the last 12 months.**

**31. What types of information does your FPC most frequently use?**

	Frequently	Sometimes	Infrequently	Never
a. University research/peer reviewed publications?				
b. Government data				
c. Nonprofit reports				
d. Community generated information				
e. Compelling stories or anecdotes				
f. Toolkits/templates				
g. Other ( <i>please explain below</i> ):				

**32. Where do your FPC members go to access information for the FPC? (check all that apply)**

- a. Internet search
- b. Conference/workshop
- c. Webinar
- d. Directly to the source
- e. Colleagues and peers
- f. Listserv
- g. Other (*please specify*):

**33. How often does your FPC use the following sources of information/research to inform policy and programmatic decisions?**

	Frequently	Sometimes	Infrequently	Never
a. University of California				
b. Other college/university				
c. Local government				
d. Local nonprofits and community based organizations				
e. Local community members				
f. Information from FPC member organization				

g. Other ( <i>please explain below</i> )				
--	--	--	--	--

**34. The names, email addresses and phone numbers for the primary and secondary contacts will be made publicly available in the Food Policy Networks online directory. Do you want to share this information?\*** (*Yes/No*)