

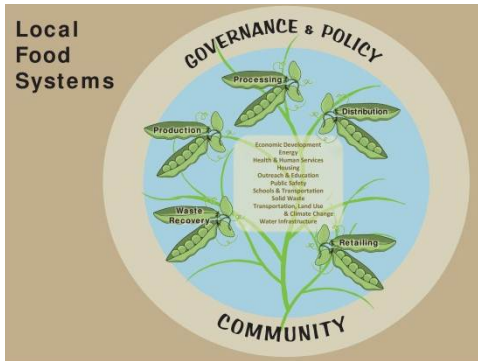
Creating Nourishing Food Systems:

A Policy Resource Guide for Local Governments in Washington State

Katie Potestio, MPH/Graduate Coordinated Program in Dietetics, Nutritional Sciences Program, University of Washington

Background

Individual food choices are strongly influenced by the food environment. Local governments can play a critical role in transforming local and regional food systems to support healthy eating, but many are just beginning to recognize this opportunity. For communities that are looking for guidance about policy changes that might influence the eating environment, I compiled a list of strategies for sectors of the food system (production, processing, distribution, access, consumption and waste management) using research and recommendations from state and national organizations.



Sustainable Thurston, *Local Food Systems Panel White Paper* (2012)

Using a Food Systems Approach

Creating healthier food environments in communities is best achieved using a food systems approach since food access and consumption is interconnected to the rest of the system. This guide provides local governments with a holistic approach to improve healthy eating by advancing a food system that supports health. A healthy food system is important for communities to meet the overarching goals of healthy people, healthy environment and healthy economy.

Local Food Systems Policy Resource Guide

Methods

- Researched recommendations, strategies and examples from state and national organizations. Many examples came from the Municipal Policies Database, compiled from the *Enabling Health in Washington Cities* survey and a systematic search of city websites.
- Solicited input from the target audience through key informant interviews.
- Compiled strategies, examples and resources for the Guide.
- Distributed to content experts for review and feedback.
- Health Promotion staff will format the document into a final publication.

Discussion

Employing these strategies, local governments can use the food system as a platform to improve community health, as well as environmental sustainability, local economic development and social inequality. Each community will require a unique policy assessment and development approach, so the strategies presented in this document can, and should be adapted to fit the particular needs of the community.

Short Term Outcomes: To increase awareness of policies that improve healthy eating among collaborating partners and increase capacity of local governments to implement healthy eating policies.

Long Term Outcomes: To increase consumption of healthy foods and decrease rates of overweight and obesity in communities across the state.

The Guide will be available on the *Washington State Department of Health* website on July 1, 2012. <http://www.doh.wa.gov/>

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Purpose

- To increase awareness of local government policies that create food systems that support healthy eating.
- To provide cities and counties in Washington State with a menu of local government strategies (planning, regulatory tools, fiscal incentives and institutional mechanisms) that promote nourishing food systems, as well as regional examples from Washington State.

Target Audience

This guide is intended for:

- Elected officials
- Local government staff
- Planners
- Public health professionals
- Food policy councils
- Health advocates

