



**ECOLOGY  
CENTER**

**Oakland Food Policy Council  
Meeting #1 Report | March 20, 2018**

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Exploring Council Structure, Meaningful Engagement and Health  
Equity Goals

# MEETING OVERVIEW & DIALOGUE GUIDELINES

## Facilitation Formats Utilized

- Facilitated full group discussion
- Silent writing
- Self-directed small-group discussion

## Essential Question for this Meeting

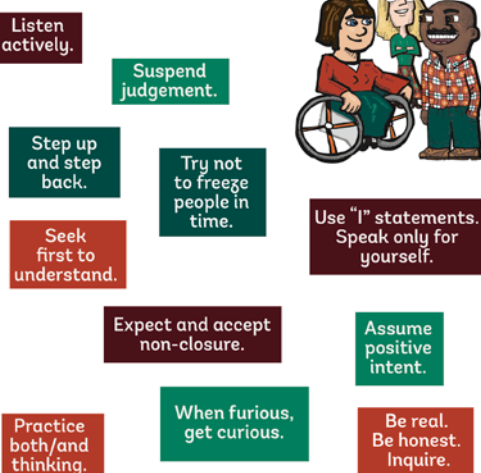
How can the OCFPC meaningfully and inclusively engage Oakland County stakeholders in policy advocacy toward a healthier, more equitable food system?

## Meeting Description

This working session engaged the Oakland County Food Policy Council members in a series of discussions and activities around the topics of health equity, meaningful and inclusive engagement of Oakland County stakeholders. We explored several frameworks to inform our approach and seed some thoughts for the next discussion in the series, which will focus on council structure and operation.

## Dialogue Guides

For this session and others moving forward, we will use the Zingerman's Diversity & Inclusion Dialogue Guidelines. Each session, we will review these and ask if anyone has any questions of clarification, or any additional guidelines to propose or change.



Zingerman's is thankful to the many people who taught us these guides. We do not take credit for authoring them.

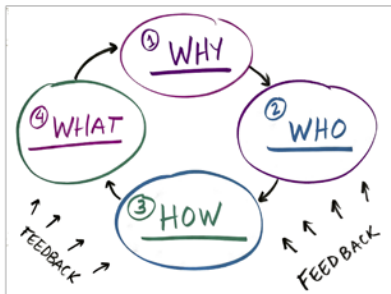
In no particular order, the guidelines are:

- Listen actively.
- Suspend judgement.
- Step up and step back.
- Try not to freeze people in time.
- Seek first to understand.
- Except and accept non-closure.
- Use I statements. Speak only for yourself.
- Assume positive intent.
- When furious, get curious.
- Be real. Be honest. Inquire.
- Practice both/and thinking.

## FRAMEWORKS REVIEW

Lindsey Scalera, the facilitator, went over each framework, explaining that these are models that help inform a practical and strategic approach to engaging various groups of stakeholders in policy and advocacy work.

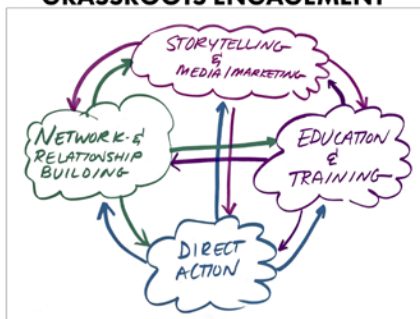
### GROUP DEVELOPMENT MODEL



### Group Development

The group development model, which Lindsey first learned about from our partners at [Michigan Food & Farming Systems \(MIFFS\)](#), is a practical approach and framework for engaging a group of people in a process, building their buy-in or sense of ownership and agency, and identifying meaningful steps toward reaching goals.

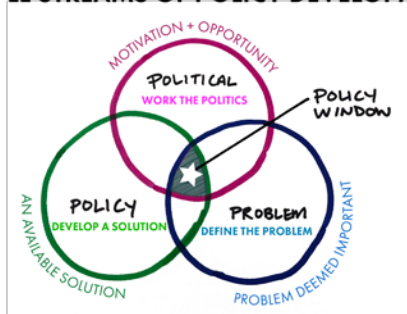
### GRASSROOTS ENGAGEMENT



### Grassroots Engagement

This model was developed by Lindsey Scalera, Qiana Mickie and Gabriela Lane through their respective organizing work on the 2014 Farm Bill process. Lindsey has continued to refine and share this model as a way to understand four essential strategies for engaging grassroots and grassroots stakeholders in advocacy.

### MULTIPLE STREAMS OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT



### Multiple Streams of Policy Development

This model from John Kingdon explains how policy issues enter the policy agenda through three streams. Cary Hiblar summed up the in a previous meeting:

- A) Problem: Issues float in this stream until an indicator, feedback or focusing event push it to the surface.
- B) Policy: Proposals, alternatives and solutions float in this stream and are routinely discussed and revised.
- C) Political Stream: Public mood, interest group campaigns, election results, composition of the legislature.

We reviewed how understanding where these three streams intersect can reveal an approach to opening a window for policy action.

## WHY, WHO, HOW & WHAT

Lindsey designed the facilitation around the group development process to make use of it as a tool and to model how it can be used to engage people in a collaborative process.

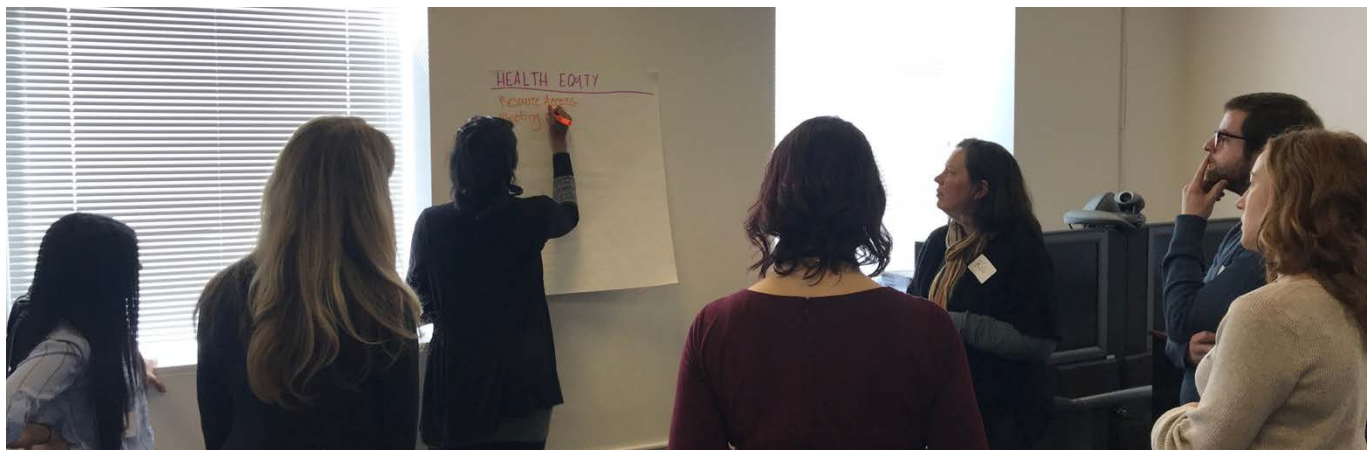
### *[WHY] Definitions Activity*

In this session, we began with exploring the definitions of some important concepts that are foundational to the organization. We can find these terms in the mission, vision, and other related documents that reflect the intentions behind forming the council.

The goal of this exercise was to express what is most important about these concepts and ensure current members are on the same page about what they mean. Below is a summary of what the group came up with, how the group indicated the most important aspects of each definition (using dot voting), followed by some notes & observations.

HEALTH EQUITY		INCLUSIVE FOOD SYSTEM		FAIR & CULTURALLY SENSITIVE FOOD ACCESS	
3	Resource access	2	The Availability and access to consumers	2	Equal access to various cultures of food
	Meeting needs	2	Waste - recapturing and repurposing	7	Food assistance offers ethnic/cultural food
7	Opportunity (everyone has the opportunity to be healthy, has everything they need)	1	Capital for capacity building(in all areas of the system)	1	Integration of a wide diversity of food, E. G. Tortilla shells and bread section, gluten-free integrated versus own section
5	Eliminating barriers	1	Culturally sensitive	3	Balancing needs of community and their access need
	Reimagining the system	8	Policy that supports access and availability	2	Changing the conversation
	Equity does not = equality	5	Grassroots input: feedback and decision-making	8	Everyone having a fair and equal access to healthy foods
6	Health is not isolated. Need to address social determinants of health (transportation, access, economics, et cetera.)	3	Accountability of policymakers	8	Fair: - Convenient - Variety of choices(cultural culturally sensitive) - Affordable
6	Addressing social justice issues	10	Incentivize human centered a food system versus capital centered food system		[POST IT NOTES]
1	Inclusivity	5	Incentivize community centered localization of food systems		Fair also includes growers & producers, food workers, considers worker safety

	Recognizing intersectionality	3	<b>Generational sustainability of food system careers</b>	Education an introduction of what is fair and culturally sensitive by US institutions
	Balancing act	1	<b>Scalability(of the food system) to meet local demand</b>	
11	<b>Understanding the origin of inequities, recognizing in equities and being willing to talk about them</b>			
	<b>[POST IT NOTES]</b>		<b>[POST IT NOTES]</b>	
			Who's at the table– Community voices, bottom up not top-down	
	Ensuring equal treatment when providing various cultures of people Healthcare Services		Generative vs. extractive approach, e.g. sustainable	
	Prescriptions (food) for Health			



### *[WHO] Meaningful Engagement Activity*

In this session, Lindsey asked the group to look at three different audiences that the food policy council interacts with and, from the lens of our frameworks and with our values for health equity, an inclusive food system, and goals for fair and culturally appropriate food access, discuss the question: ***what do our different audiences need to be meaningfully engaged?***

Engagement looks different for each population we’re working with, we discussed; Council Members, key organizations & businesses (i.e. those identified in the resource assessment) and individual stakeholders (i.e. those who answer the surveys, or people whose lives we hope to improve through policy advocacy). Note that we did not discuss the engagement of policymakers as we plan to revisit those audiences as “targets” in a later session dealing with advocacy.

The sections below summarize what the group came up with for each audience.

## COUNCIL MEMBERS

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*What do council members need to be meaningfully engaged?*

### **DEFINED ROLES & DECISION-MAKING**

- Council members should:
  - Have shared involvement in decision-making processes
  - Have specific, well-defined roles with clear goals and objectives
  - Understand their role in improving the food system; a greater sense of their role in the bigger picture
  - Be activated in their areas of expertise for sustainable engagement
- Decision-making processes should reflect a sense of partnership and balance
- There should be definitive projects to work on and well-defined processes

### **CAPACITY FOR ADVOCACY**

- Council members should have the knowledge, skills and tools to effectively advocate
- A good understanding of our resources in the council, regionally, and how we fit into larger networks and systems
  - We might want to request that everyone take the online food council course from MSU Extension

### **VOICE & REPRESENTATION**

- The needs of the community should drive the process
- The council members should be representative of and reflective of the community
- Council members should have equal voice and involvement in the planning process
- It is crucial for to engage with stakeholders outside of normal meeting spaces, after work; make engagement more accessible
- Council members should have an investment in the wellbeing of the people they work with

### **DATA, INFORMATION-SHARING & TRANSPARENCY**

- Transparent data & information sharing to better understand the key issues impacting our
- Consistent and interactive communication
- An effort to follow up and evaluate how things are going

### **SUPPORT & ACCOUNTABILITY**

- Members should feel accountable to the council to show up, attend meetings, be prepared and share materials
- Supports like a team attitude and a safe space to learn and share.
- When possible, support other council members related events and campaigns
- Report back to our respective organizations/community leadership and keep track of action items to bring back to the council

## KEY ORGANIZATIONS & BUSINESSES

*What would it look like to meaningfully work with other organizations and businesses?*

- **Engage as Partners:**
  - Co-marketing with programs that align with our goals (i.e. summer meal programs)
  - Share examples of resolutions, policies and educational materials.
- **Engage as Champions: Offer technical assistance, peer-to-peer mentoring, and educational opportunities that help them better understand their impact on the system and on individuals, and help them become advocates for change.**
  - Create a process to identify training needs
  - Provide information on how they can benefit from various changes in the food system (ie. for businesses - how it benefits their employees or builds their customer base; for healthcare - how it benefits patients).
  - Council members serve as liaisons, supporting feedback from their field or community.
- **Engage in Outreach & Listening: Reaching out within the community to raise awareness, gather and consider different perspectives**
  - Community meetings
  - Town halls
  - Farmers markets
  - Surveys
  - Make speakers available to present
  - Campaigns
- **Engage as Network of Collaborators: Build a diverse and representative network with shared goals.**
  - Get to know the Food Policy council (our mission, goal, how to link to our activities, our policy priorities)
  - Invitation to contribute to the discussion and implementation of food system decisions
  - Help promoting their campaigns, services, overlapping policy priorities
  - Link them and others to local resources (summer meals, farmers, farmers markets, community gardens, organizations, etc.)
  - Provide/sharing actions and opportunities (policy briefs, factsheets, action alerts, tools, etc.)
  - Ensure it's an in-person network, a way for people meet each other; more like a coffee hour
- **A few organizations mentioned:**
  - Michigan Association of Counties
  - Michigan Association of Chambers of Commerce



## INDIVIDUAL STAKEHOLDERS

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*What would meaningful engagement with individual stakeholders look like?*

- Inclusivity: Stakeholders know about our efforts to include them and we foster participation in decisions.
  - Stakeholders feel heard, are represented, and have trust.
  - Relationship is at the core of our engagement and we create multiple ways to include community members.
  - They feel part of a community or family.
  - Puncture privilege blindness by creating spaces for other ideas and stories.
  - Create processes to include diverse voices, including those who can't always make it to a meeting.
  - Stakeholders should feel empowered to take action and access tools to help them do it.
  - They tell us what they need and what issues mean to them; they are engaged in the conversation.
  - Have official voting representation → choice of who represents them on the council.
  - Honesty about our goals and our expectations for outcomes (setting realistic goals).
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### *[HOW] Strategies for Meaningful Engagement of Stakeholders*

For this activity, we identified ways -- methods, strategies, outlets, or structures -- we can utilize to reach out to or engage our key stakeholders.

## EXISTING: ALREADY USING

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*What methods and strategies are we already using to engage people?*

- Word of mouth
- Surveys (online and on-paper)
- Regular in-person meetings with time for Updates from participants
- Working groups, each with a work plan
- Bulk delivery service (for mailings)
- Members, participants, and partners, each serves as a Knowledge resource
- Online Engagement, including: email mailing list & e-newsletter, Health Department website for the council and social media accounts.
- Health Department serving as backbone org with support from the County Executive.
- Current council resources, structure and partners, including ECHO Team, building from CHIP/CHNA processes, and the Healthy Oakland Partnership (HOP) network.

## CHANGES: MAKE IT BETTER

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*What could we add or change to make existing methods more meaningful, inclusive or equitable?*

- Work towards developing group identity (members start to feel part of a larger group, movement)
- Communication (outward/public)
  - Strengthen - make it more regular and consistent
  - A way for everyone to stay connected with each other
  - Provide/keep developing an info sheet - keep developing our talking points, info on how to get involved
- Continue to explore the alignment of Good Food Charter and CHIP.



## EXISTING: NOT YET USING

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- Social media - Facebook groups and events
- Alternative methods of communication - engaging in dialogue
- Network of food system access points
  - Know them, outreach to them, engage them
  - How do we turn the people and resources on the MAP into ACTION

## WHAT WE SHOULD CREATE

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- Have a group of speakers/ambassadors available throughout the county; create a toolkit
  - Business card, one-pager - things to leave behind
  - Talking points
  - Elevator pitch (Sam has a process for developing this)
- Scotland example (shared by Trevor Johnson)

Community Association – NFA: The New Findhorn Association links individuals and organisations who are part of the community and provides a structure for some aspects of community-wide decision-making. The NFA was set up in 1999 to give coherence to our rapidly growing and diverse community of businesses, charities, healers, artists and individuals. All members of the NFA agree to abide by our shared statement of values, the Common Ground.

Two listener-convenors head the NFA Council, listening to Community Association members, identifying key issues, focusing community attention on them, and calling meetings to address them. The aim of the Council is not to undertake functions on behalf of the community, like normal local government, but rather to empower members at the grassroots level to resolve problems themselves, and come up with innovative development projects. The Association finances itself through member subscriptions, donations and fundraising events.

- Mentorship (peer-to-peer) program
- Go to stakeholders - Meet them where they're at
- Create a policy platform/priorities
- Create standards/indicators and then offer a logo or "stamp of approval. Base it on ideas like the triple bottom line philosophy and the Michigan Good food charter
- Continue to improve the resource map
  - interactive, usable, related resources
  - Use the map to identify complementary approaches to address issues
- Create accessible and consistent feedback methods
  - Forum (online and/or in-person)
  - Dot surveys/question boards

## [WHAT] Reaching & Engaging our Stakeholders

The goal for this portion was to discuss specific ideas do we have to reach or engage our key audiences? While we did not have much time to discuss this topic in our first session, the “how” discussion did generate a few “what” ideas, listed below. We will continue revisit this discussion in each session and grow this list of ideas, leading up to the priority-setting and action planning sessions.

- Logo/stamp of approval program - to indicate alignment with standards to be determined (i.e. local, sustainable, inclusive, fair, etc.).
- Continue to add to the resource map, make it more relevant and useful
- 4 question boards - develop a question campaign (a new health department resource)
- Provide/keep developing an info sheet - keep developing our talking points, info on how to get involved



## BIKE RACK (THINGS TO COME BACK TO)

- 7 principles of food sovereignty
- Equity models illustration - fence & bikes
- Equity vs. equality / equity + equality
- ROC → Restaurant Opportunities Center
- Economics related to the food system
- Outreach vs. engagement
- Other FPC strategies, structures
- Collective impact
- Michigan Good Food Charter

## OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

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### *Takeaways, Implications, & Impressions*

#### **Equity and Inclusivity**

The group feels very strongly that equity be integrated in the work and approach of the council. There also seems to be several individuals within the group OCFPC can draw on to help move that forward. As a next step, the notes from the “why session” could be turned into statements about each concept, rather than strict definitions. They could serve as a set of principles by which the council assesses goals and projects (as in, *does the project advance health equity, a fair and inclusive food system, etc. as we understand it?*).

But I would also recommend a further exercise: The May 2017 report from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, entitled: [What is Health Equity?](#) offers a definition of health equity that closely matches what the group identified. It may be helpful to adopt or adapt this definition.

Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care.

For the purposes of measurement, health equity means reducing and ultimately eliminating disparities in health and its determinants that adversely affect excluded or marginalized groups.<sup>1</sup>

It seems important that the council undertake some training or learning activities around the systemic inequities that exist in the food system. I have compiled some low or no-cost ideas below, and can recommend some speakers who might be good to bring in. Part of action planning should include education and action around this learning goal.

- Request that members sign up for the 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge: <http://www.foodsolutionsne.org/sign-2018-racial-equity-challenge>
  - Extension Activity - host a facilitated discussion on members thoughts and reactions to what they learned in the challenge.
- Select some readings from the [CRFS Annotated Bibliography on Structural Racism Present in the Food System](#)
- Bring in a speaker from outside or from within the group. Host a “brunch and learn” or “brown bag discussion series.”
- Show a film and host a panel discussion after.

#### **Engagement & Outreach**

Overall, the OCFPC has already taken steps to meaningfully engage its members and gather information from the community. Several folks rightly pointed out that we should be careful to distinguish outreach versus engagement. The group had creative ideas for ways to reach new audiences and we can keep building on that as we move toward action planning.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from: [https://www.rwif.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue\\_briefs/2017/rwif437393](https://www.rwif.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2017/rwif437393) (pg. 2)