Drafting a Resolution
to Create a Food Council

A community food council examines how the local food system operates, and provides policy recommendations to improve that system. A food council is often made up of a diverse group of stakeholders for the purpose of improving the food environment within a particular community.

Creating a food council through resolution is a powerful tool that a local government can utilize to interact with the community in policymaking and seek guidance on complex issues. Food councils are becoming more commonly used and have proven to be an effective process for implementing and executing state and local food policies.

No food council is set up or run exactly the same; each one can be adapted to the specific needs of each community. That being said, a governing body can look to existing committees and councils in order to determine the organizational structure of the entity. Likewise, a food council can have any name and that name can be changed to match goals or objectives of that community. The term “food council” will be...
Having strong and influential support from a government organization can be crucial to the success of implementing new food policies.

used in this document, however, there will be sample language throughout highlighting the other names and purposes identified by existing councils.

What is a resolution?

A city or county can create a food council by enacting a resolution. A resolution is often a short 1–2 page motion that declares an action, policy, or goal set by the governing body. The components of a successful food council resolution include: findings; purpose statement(s); provisions on membership, duties and responsibilities, meetings, and reporting; and a means for a meaningful evaluation.

Why establish a food council?

There are several strategic reasons for a local government to create a food council. For one, being sanctioned by government action gives the council more “credibility and access to policymakers, potential official capacity to craft public policy, utilization of government facilities, resources and staff, and access to federal dollars targeted for local government initiatives.”¹

Further, a political champion can be a vital force behind the prioritization of the food system within existing city

and county agencies as a tool to establish a support base and “get the public agencies marching with some direction.”² Having strong and influential support from a government organization can be crucial to the success of implementing new food policies.³

This document will outline the main components of a successful resolution, providing examples of each component within a sample resolution, and concluding with next steps one can take to create a food council via resolution.
Components of a Successful Resolution

1. Findings
Findings are brief statements that describe the reasoning for the policy action. For example, a finding may highlight the state of the community’s food environment or prevalence of adult and childhood obesity, heart disease, or stroke. The findings should be community-specific. For example, if a city or county is located within a food desert, the resolution can identify this information.

2. Purpose
A resolution must include a clear and specific purpose statement. In this case, the purpose of the resolution is to establish a food council. Therefore, the purpose statement should be supplemented with other objectives, such as long-term goals promoting public health, healthy eating and living, or access to and affordability of healthy food in the community. The purpose should match the duties and responsibilities outlined in the main provisions of the resolution.

3. Membership
Within the resolution, the main provisions should outline the membership eligibility of the council. An effective food council has a diverse selection of individuals (diversity of geography, gender, race, ethnicity, education, background, etc.) that are able to come together to analyze and recommend policy considerations for the governing body. Diversity will enable the council to pull from a variety of perspectives and experiences in order to best navigate the food system and existing local policy.

There is no magic number for how many members should be included in the council; however it is not uncommon to see councils with 10–20 members. Further, a council should consider either staggering or differing lengths of appointments, which will help prevent total loss of expertise and leadership in any given year and safeguard against political whims of the appointing body.

4. Duties and Responsibilities
The main provisions should set some of the council’s duties and responsibilities. These provisions should address how the council will move forward to meet the resolution’s purpose. This is a great way to continue the momentum from the resolution to the council itself.

5. Meetings
The resolution should outline the meeting frequency and open nature of the food council’s work. A publicly-appointed food council is usually subject to the requirements of open meeting laws.

6. Report and Evaluation
An important tool in the continued success of a food council is to highlight its impact on the community. In order to accomplish this goal, the resolution should specify a public report highlighting the work of the food council. In addition, the resolution should outline some form of evaluation process, which will guide food councils to review their practices to determine what worked, what did not, and what type of change has occurred in the community since the creation of the food council.

7. Funding
Funding is an important component to ensure the viability of a food council. Often, the city or county funds the staff time for a permanent member on the council. This can either be identified in the membership section or in a separate section on funding. In addition to this important financial backing, the resolution should clearly state that the food council has the authority to apply for other types of funding, such as grants.

8. Effective Date
Finally, the resolution should end with an effective date, which will be the date of the resolution passage or some later date determined by the city or county.

For more information about membership criteria and the role of a permanent council member position, see Appendix A & Appendix B.
Supplementing the Resolution with Bylaws

Notably, any information not included in the resolution can easily be determined and included within the food council’s bylaws. The goal of the resolution is to clearly declare the governing body’s goal of establishing a food council and giving that new council enough instructions that it can begin effectively. The bylaws can be drafted later by the council itself and set additional parameters and objectives.

Next Steps

Do you believe a food council will benefit your community? Here are a few steps that will help get momentum rolling and encourage action and engagement in order to create a food council in your community (see diagram at left).

Conclusion

Ultimately, the resolution should be simple and easy to implement. There are several communities that have already enacted resolutions (see examples in Appendix C) and those should be looked to for guidance.

The next page of this resource is an outline of a resolution that was developed based on review of several resolutions enacted throughout the U.S. New food councils are being created every month. In addition to the resolutions in the appendix, look to nearby communities or communities of similar size for additional help in drafting the resolution.
RESOLUTION NO. XXX
Establishing a [Food Council] for the [City/Council]

WHEREAS, [Finding]
Food system issues significantly affect the public health, land use, economy and quality of life of [City/County] citizens; and food related concerns are prevalent in the country.4

WHEREAS, [Finding]
Food security is a necessity of life, recognized as a condition in which all community residents must be able to obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and self-justice.5

WHEREAS, [Finding]
The [City/County] constitutes a food desert with limited access to fresh, healthy foods within a reasonable distance.6

WHEREAS, [Finding]
The availability of nutritious food for all citizens is essential to the health and well-being of the community, and local government has a proper role to play in ensuring that all citizens have access to an adequate and nutritious food supply.7

WHEREAS, [Finding]
The [City/County] Council has made the recruitment of grocery or local food provider a top priority for economic development.12

WHEREAS, [Finding]
All residents of [City/County] should have access to nutritious, affordable, locally and sustainably grown food.9

WHEREAS, [Finding]
The [City/County] believes that a well-conceived community food policy can dramatically reduce instances of chronic disease and obesity which place undue stress on other community resources.10

WHEREAS, [Purpose]
The [City/County] recognizes the establishment of a [Food Council] to encourage the establishment of small businesses; to encourage the offering of better and fresher food available locally; to encourage larger institutional entities to commit to the use of 10% of local food to support growth and the local economy; to encourage the efficient use of land, and preservation and conservation of agriculture; to encourage reduction in food transportation; and to promote educational resources for the local population.11

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the [City/County] hereby establishes the [Food Council]. The [Food Council] shall become effective after passage by the majority of the [City/County] Council and shall continue annually unless terminated by the [City/County].13
Section 1. Membership [An example of a more detailed membership provision.]

A) For the [first year], members shall be appointed in a “staggered” manner- [one third] for a [one]-year term, [one third] for a [two]-year term, and [one third] for a [three]-year term. Thereafter, members shall be appointed by the [City/County] for a term of [three] years.

B) Terms of service will begin at the start of the first meeting of the calendar year.

C) In the event of a member’s inability to serve or resignation, the [City/County] shall appoint another person to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.

D) No person shall serve more than [two] consecutive terms as a member, except that: a) members appointed for an initial [one] or [two]-year term may be reappointed and complete [two] full [three]-year terms; b) vacant, unexpired terms may be filled by appointment of standing council members otherwise ineligible for reappointment; and c) if an appointment to the [food policy council] expired before the [City/County] has appointed a replacement member, then the member whose term has expired shall serve until a successor has been appointed; and d) if an appointment is an at-large appointee by a [City/County].

E) There shall be between [10–20] members on the [Food Council], which will include representatives from such groups as:
   a. [Three] at-large members, [one] appointed by the [City/County] commissioner from each commission district;
   b. Agricultural producers, representing both the Kansas and [City/County] watersheds; at least [one] of which is a producers of animal protein, at least [one] a producer of produce, at least [one] a commodity producer, and at least [one] involved in direct marketing of products;
   c. Retail food outlets, at least [one] of which is a retail grocery, and at least [one] of which is a restaurant;
   d. Food purchasers;
   e. Educational institutions or organizations located within [City/County];
   f. The [City/County] Extension Service;
   g. Representative from [any relevant City/County existing board/committee/council];
   h. The food security community;
   i. A non-governmental organization working in the area of health, nutrition, or medical care
   j. A non-governmental organization working in the area of local food systems or sustainable agriculture;
   k. An established farmer’s market in [City/County];
   l. The [City/County] business community;
   m. The youth community;
   n. An independent chairperson (if needed).

F) [City/County] will provide staff support to the [Food Council] as available.

G) Council member attendance is expected at every meeting of the [Food Council]. In the event of [three] consecutive, unexcused absences, a Council member may be asked to resign from the Council.¹⁴

Section 1. Membership [An example of a less detailed membership provision, which can be supplemented with bylaws.]
The [City/County] Council hereby appoints the [City/County] Administrator to serve as a permanent member of the [Food Council]. The [City/County] Council appoints a representative from the [City/
County Health Department] to serve as a permanent member of the [Food Council]. Additional members of the [Food Council] shall be appointed by the [City/County Council] as necessary. The body of the [Food Council] shall not exceed [20] members, with members serving staggered [two] year terms.

Section 2. Duties & Responsibilities.
The [City/County] approves the establishment of a [Food Council] to achieve the following:

A) Increase access to affordable, nutritious and safe food for all [City/County] residents;
B) Enhance economic development and strengthen local food systems in the [City/County];
C) Bring stakeholders together and provide mechanisms for seeking stakeholder advise and expertise;
D) Effect improvement in the health and well-being of all [City/County] residents;
E) Explore means for small business development;
F) Coordinate and collaborate with existing programs within [City/County] and other county and state food policy organizations regionally;
G) Bring to the attention of the [City/County] new programs and opportunities;
H) Identify and recommend to the [City/County] policy initiatives to support the goals and objectives of the [Food Council];
I) a web site presence.
J) Investigate ways to preserve and sustain local resources including soil, agricultural land, important breeds/cultivars, water, skilled labor, capital, and markets

The [Food Council] shall serve as an advisory board and has no authority to take official action on behalf of the [City/County].

Section 3. Meetings.
The first meeting for the [Food Council] shall be held on or before [date]. Meetings shall be held bimonthly and minutes shall be promptly recorded and made available to the public and [City/County].

The [Food Council] shall prepare an annual report for the [City/Council] on the progress and successes related to the purpose, duties and responsibilities of the [Food Council.] The [City/County] or its designee shall evaluate the [Food Council] every [three] years to evaluate its success in improving the food environment in [City/County].

Section 5. Funding
The [Food Council] may actively seek grant funding for its activities.

Section 5. Effective Date.
This Resolution shall take effect and be in force and effect from and after its adoption.

PASSED, APPROVED, and ADOPTED by the Governing Body of the [City/County] this ____ day of ____, 2014.
APPENDIX A

Food Council membership: Who should be at the table?

Every community is different, and you will know best which leaders in your community are both motivated to improve the local food economy and are well-positioned to be effective leaders in this area. Here are a few general principles, to consider:

- **When composing your Council, think of food as a system.** Who are the key players in the food system that will be impacted by and able to help with the changes you are seeking to make?

- **Diversity on your Council is key.** Think about inviting members who are not the typical “foodies” or advocates who work on food and hunger issues. Food system improvements impact health, the economy, and the environment. Try to balance representation from these key areas.

- **Pick members who have some understanding of policy and local government.** As the changes you will be seeking will be likely to policies, ordinances, planning documents, zoning, etc., having people who are knowledgeable about the system will help you be effective.

**Other considerations**

- **How many members on the council?**

- **How long should a member’s term be?**
  - One-year? Two-year?
  - Differing lengths?
  - Continuous?
  - Staggering appointments?

- **How are members selected?**
  - Appointed by mayor?
  - By legislature?
  - Selected by a particular government agency?
  - An application process?

**Food System Stakeholders**

**SOURCE:** MODIFIED FROM DOUGLAS COUNTY FOOD POLICY COUNCIL
APPENDIX B

Food Council coordinator: Sample job description

Often, Food Councils are composed of volunteer members, but having staff assistance to set meetings, organize agendas, and do research for the Council can help you make progress faster. When setting up your Council, consider requesting staff assistance from the local government or organizations represented on the Council.

With as little as 0.15-0.2 FTE (full time equivalent), you can ensure that the Council has the support it needs. This can be one staff person, or multiple staff people in various departments, as long as each has support of the Food Council in their job description.

Some typical tasks that a Food Council coordinator/staff may be asked to do:

- Organize meeting dates and locations.
- Work with the Chair to develop a meeting agenda.
- Take minutes at the meeting.
- Manage the Council’s email listserv, website, or social media presence.
- Conduct research on behalf of the Council, and report back on any findings.
- Arrange speakers who have expertise needed by the Council to provide presentations at meetings.
- Connect the Council to food-related events happening around the community.
- Act as liaison between the Council and the local government staff and officials to achieve the policy outcomes desired by the Council.
APPENDIX C
Existing Resolutions

Allen County, Kansas
Crawford County, Kansas
Douglas County, Kansas
South Hutchinson, Kansas
RESOLUTION NO. 201409
A Resolution Establishing the Allen County Growing Rural Opportunities Works Food Policy Council

WHEREAS, the availability of nutritious food for all citizens is essential to the health and well-being of the community, and whereas, local government has a proper role to play in ensuring that all citizens have access to an adequate and nutritious food supply;

WHEREAS, food policy councils established in other communities have provided government officials and stakeholders with a forum to encourage the establishment of small businesses; to encourage the offering of affordable, nutritious and safe food available locally; to encourage larger instructional entities to commit to the use of 10% of local food to support growth and local economy; to encourage the efficient use of land, and preservation and conservation of agriculture; to encourage reduction in food transportation; and to promote educational resources for the local population;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ALLEN COUNTY, KANSAS:

Section 1: The Allen County Board of Commissioners supports the Allen County Growing Rural Opportunities Works Food Policy Council, also known as Allen County GROW, for the following stated purposes:

A) Increase access to affordable, nutritious and safe food for all Allen County residents;  
B) Enhance economic development and strengthen local food systems in the County;  
C) Bring stakeholders together and provide mechanisms for seeking stakeholder advise and expertise;  
D) Effect improvement in the health and well-being of all county residents;  
E) Explore means for small business development;  
F) Coordinate and collaborate with existing programs within Allen County and other county and state food policy organizations regionally;  
G) Bring to the attention of the County new programs and opportunities;  
H) Identify and recommend to the County policy initiatives to support the goals and objectives of the local Food Policy Council;  
I) Establish a web site presence;  
J) Review available options where the Council could/should be administered.

Section 2: the Allen County Growing Rural Opportunities Works Food Policy Council shall compromise of up to sixteen members appointed by the Allen County Commission Chair with the advice and consent of the Board of Commissioners; each council member to be appointed to a 2-year term and to include membership as follows:

- One member from each city in the county;
- One member from each public health, food instability, and youth communities;
- One member from Higher Education and one member representing school districts;
- One member from business/enterprise end users of local foods;
- One member from a local farm and ranch organization;

Section 3: the Allen County Growing Rural Opportunities Works Food Policy Council shall be reviewed and assessed by the Board of County Commissioners of Allen County in June 2018 for the continuing need for the local Food Policy Council;

Section 4: Allen County GROW may actively seek funding for its activities.

PRESENTED, ADOPTED, APPROVED and RECORDED this 19th day of August, A.D. 2014.

/s/ Jim Talkington, Chair, Allen County Commission Board

ATTEST
/s/Sherrie L. Riebel, Allen County Clerk
Crawford County, Kansas

Crawford County Proclamation

WHEREAS The Crawford County Commission oversees the Crawford Health Department; and

WHEREAS Food system issues significantly affect the public health, land use, economy and quality of life of Crawford County citizens; and food related concerns are prevalent in the country; and

WHEREAS Food security is a necessity of life, recognized as a condition in which all community residents must be able to obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and self-justice; and

WHEREAS Food and agricultural sectors are central to the economy of Crawford County and contribute significantly to the environmental and economic wellbeing of our region; and

WHEREAS Creative solutions are being implemented throughout the country, including nutrition classes, targeted food drives, donations of farmers’ markets surplus to low-income families and gleaning activities; and

WHEREAS Over 100 school, city, county, and state food policy councils exist throughout the United States and have been effective over the last 20 years in bringing together stakeholders from diverse food-related sectors to examine how food systems operate and to develop solutions to improve it; and

We, the members of the Board of County Commissioners of Crawford County, Kansas, acting as the Local Board of Health for Crawford County, Kansas, on behalf of its residents, do hereby proclaim support for Crawford County Eat Well, and designate them as the Crawford County Food System Advisory Council. Furthermore, the composition of the council will include three publicly appointed members, one on behalf of each Commissioner.

/s/ Tom Moody, Chairman, Board of Commissioners
/s/ Bob Kmiec, Member, Board of Commissioners
/s/ Carl Wood, Member, Board of Commissioners

Dated this third day of January, 2014.
Douglas County, Kansas

DOUGLAS COUNTY RESOLUTION NO._______
A Resolution of the Board of County Commissioners of Douglas County, Kansas Providing for the Establishment of the Douglas County Food Policy Council; Prescribing the Priority Areas for Study, Communication and Action of the Food Policy Council; and Membership of the Food Policy Council.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Douglas County, Kansas:

SECTION 1. Name
The name of the organization shall be the Douglas County Food Policy Council, hereinafter referred to as the FPC.

SECTION 2. Goals (Priority Areas for Study, Communication, and Action)
The Food Policy Council seeks to identify the benefits, challenges and opportunities for a successful, sustainable local food system in Douglas County. The FPC will serve as a forum for discussion and coordination for community-wide efforts to improve the Douglas County community’s access to local food supply and distribution networks. Therefore, the FPC will focus on the following priority areas:

A) Economic development and entrepreneurial opportunities related to local food production and consumption
B) Improved health outcomes
C) Positive environmental quality impacts
D) Increased access to, and distribution of wholesome, local food
E) Support for local producers of sustainable food products
F) Identification, preservation, and/or sustainable development of local resources including soil, agricultural land, important breeds/cultivars, water, skilled labor, capital, and markets
G) Increased education and awareness on the part of Douglas County residents regarding the benefits of locally produced foods

SECTION 3. Members
H) Members shall be appointed by the Douglas County Commission for a term of three years, except for the initial appointments to the FPC as set out in Section 4. Members, Item D.
I) Terms of service will begin at the start of the first meeting of the calendar year.
J) In the event of a member’s inability to serve or resignation, the County Commission shall appoint another person to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term so created.
K) Members shall be appointed the first year in a “staggered” manner- one third for a one-year term, one third for a two-year term, and one third for a three-year term.
L) No person shall serve more than two consecutive terms as a member, except that: a) members appointed for an initial one or two-year term may be reappointed and complete two full three-year terms; b) vacant, unexpired terms may be filled by appointment of standing council members otherwise ineligible for reappointment; and c) if an appointment to the FPC expired before the
County Commission has appointed a replacement member, then the member whose term has expired shall serve until a successor has been appointed; and d) if an appointment is an at-large appointee by a Commissioner.

M) There shall be between 15–25 members on the FPC, which will include representatives from such groups as:
   a. Three at-large members, one appointed by the county commissioner from each county commission district;
   b. Agricultural producers, representing both the Kansas and Wakarusa watersheds; at least one of which is a producer of animal protein, at least one a producer of produce, at least one a commodity producer, and at least one involved in direct marketing of products;
   c. Retail food outlets, at least one of which is a retail grocery, and at least one of which is a restaurant;
   d. Food purchasers;
   e. Educational institutions or organizations located within Douglas County;
   f. The Douglas County Extension Service;
   g. The City of Lawrence Sustainability Advisory Board;
   h. The food security community;
   i. A non-governmental organization working in the area of health, nutrition, or medical care
   j. A non-governmental organization working in the area of local food systems or sustainable agriculture;
   k. An established farmer’s market in Douglas County;
   l. The Douglas County business community;
   m. The youth community;
   n. An independent chairperson (if needed).

N) Douglas County will provide staff support to the FPC as available.

O) Council member attendance is expected at every meeting of the FPC. In the event of three consecutive, unexcused absences, a Council member may be asked to resign from the Council.

Adopted June 9, 2010
By the Douglas County Commission
South Hutchinson, Kansas

RESOLUTION NO. 14-517
A Resolution Creating a Food Policy Council for the Purpose of Promoting Local Food Policy to Promote Access to and Consumption of Healthy Food Options in the City of South Hutchinson and Surrounding Reno County.

WHEREAS, the City of South Hutchinson actively seeks to improve access to locally grown healthy food options in collaboration with the Healthy Eating Active Living Reno County group, and

WHEREAS, the City of South Hutchinson believes that a well-conceived community food policy can dramatically reduce instances of chronic disease and obesity which place undue stress on other community resources, and

WHEREAS, the City of South Hutchinson and outlying areas of Reno County constitute a food desert with limited access to fresh, healthy foods within a reasonable distance, and

WHEREAS, the City of South Hutchinson City Council has made the recruitment of grocery or local food provider a top priority for economic development,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the City Council of South Hutchinson, Kansas hereby establishes a Food Policy Council. The Food Policy Council shall become effective after passage by the majority of the City Council and shall continue annually unless terminated by the City Council.

The City Council hereby appoints the City Administrator to serve as a permanent member of the Food Policy Council. The City Council appoints a representative from the Reno County Health Department to serve as a permanent member of the Food Policy Council. Additional members of the Council shall be appointed by the City Council as necessary. The body of the Food Policy Council shall not exceed 15 members, with member serving staggered two year terms.

The Food Policy Council shall serve as an advisory board and has no authority to take official action on behalf of the City Council. Any expenditure will require City approval as per the City Purchasing Policy and as set forth in the annual budget. The Food Policy Council may actively seek grant funding for its activities.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 6TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2014.

_____________________________
Dave Pitman, Mayor

ATTEST

_____________________________
Denise McCue, City Clerk
Endnotes

4 See generally Crawford County, Kan., Proclamation (2014).
5 See generally Crawford County, Kan., Proclamation (2014).
7 See generally Allen County, Kan., Resolution No. 201409 (2014)
8 See generally Allen County, Kan., Resolution No. 201409 (2014)
9 See generally Resolution No. 36974, Portland/Multnomah County, Oregon (May 29, 2002).
11 See generally Champaign County, Ill. Resolution No. 8069.
15 See generally Allen County, Kan., Resolution No. 201409 (2014); Douglas County, Kan., Resolution (2010).