



City of Bridgeport Food Policy Council 2017 Recommendations Report

Adopted May 2017

Introduction

The Bridgeport Food Policy Council was established by City ordinance in 2012 by City Council in response to community discussions held in the East End neighborhood that identified limited access to nutritious foods as the residents' most pressing issue. According to Chapter 2.123 of the Bridgeport municipal code, the purpose of the Bridgeport Food Policy Council is to “integrate all agencies of the city in a common effort to improve the availability of safe and nutritious food at reasonable prices for all residents, particularly those in need.”

The original ordinance outlined five primary goals for the Bridgeport Food Policy Council:

1. To improve the availability of healthy, fresh food for all city residents;
2. To improve food distribution channels into and within the City of Bridgeport;
3. To generate growth and employment in the food sector;
4. To support regional farmers, strengthen regional linkages and increase urban food production;
and
5. To seize opportunities to reduce and recapture waste into the food stream.

The Bridgeport Food Policy Council works to achieve these overarching goals by addressing specific policy opportunities within identified areas of focus. This report details our policy recommendations for 2017 and provides a framework and context for each area of recommendation.

This report is dedicated to the memory of Warren Blunt, Director of Environmental Health for Bridgeport's Department of Health and Social Services, who dedicated his life to improving the lives of Bridgeport residents and increasing healthy food options for low-income citizens throughout the city.

Bridgeport Food Policy Council Members

As directed by City ordinance, Bridgeport Food Policy Council membership consists of the City's Chief Administrative Officer, Director of Planning and Economic Development, Director of Health and Social Services, and six City residents, who are appointed by the Mayor and subject to City Council approval. Each council member serves a term of three years, or until a successor is appointed. The following members currently serve on the Food Policy Council:

Margot Gotterer (Chair)- Nonprofit Consultant and South End resident

Christine Stafstrom (Vice Chair)- Vice President, People's United Bank and Black Rock resident

Maritza Bond- Director, Department of Health and Social Services, City of Bridgeport

Thomas Gill- Director, Office of Planning and Economic Development, City of Bridgeport

Kimberly Staley- Chief Administrative Officer, City of Bridgeport

There are currently four vacant resident seats on the Food Policy Council with applications pending.

Thank you to the following individuals for providing part-time support to the Council:

Chelsea Gazillo- Food Policy AmeriCorps VISTA, The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport

Jessica Zielinski-Meffert- Food Policy Coordinator, Department of Health and Social Services, City of Bridgeport

The 2016-2017 Bridgeport Food Policy Council Advisory Board

The Bridgeport Food Policy Council has an advisory board consisting of representatives from different sectors of the City's food system. Advisory board members are not voting council members and do not require City Council approval, but they are active in the Council's sub-committees and monthly meetings.

Eleanor Angerame- Farm & Youth Program Manager, Green Village Initiative

Albertina Baptista- Deputy Director of Health and Social Services, City of Bridgeport**

Harold Blackwell- Former Owner, Chestnut Hollow Farms (now closed)

Tanner Burgdorf- Program Coordinator, Groundwork Bridgeport

Angel DePara- Boards and Commission, Chief Administrative Office, City of Bridgeport**

Clinton Gee- King's Pantry*

Alanna Gilbert- AmeriCorps VISTA, CT Food Bank

Mary Green- Executive Director, Park City Initiative Corp*

Anna Greer- Associate Professor, Sacred Heart University*

Nadya Hafizova- Research Assistant, Green Village Initiative

Erin Harkrader- Operations Manager, FreshConnections, LifeBridge

Jeanette Herron- City Council Liaison to the Food Policy Council

Landon Horan- Program Manager, Center for Food Equity & Economic Development, The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport

Marcella Lawson- CEO/Founder, New Level Academy LLC

Jessica Mahon- Campaign Coordinator, American Heart Association

Michelle McCabe (Chair, Food-Based Economic Development sub-group)- Director, Center for Food Equity & Economic Development, The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport

Isa Mujahid- Organizing Director, CT-CORE Organize Now!

Lisa Neff- Director of Community Health, American Heart Association

Melissa Quan- Director, Center for Faith & Public Life, Fairfield University

Raquel Rivera-Pablo (Co-Chair, School Wellness Policy sub-group)- Chef/Owner, A Pinch of Salt*

Jacob Robison- City Planner, Office of Planning and Economic Development, City of Bridgeport**

Cristina Sandolo (Chair, Urban Agriculture sub-group)- Executive Director, Green Village Initiative

Christina Smith- Executive Director, Groundwork Bridgeport

Gina Smith (Co-Chair, School Wellness Policy sub-group)- Community Health Improvement Coordinator, Yale New Haven Health

*Applications to join the Food Policy Council pending approval by City Council as of May 2017.

**Alternates for City officials who serve on the Food Policy Council.

2017 BRIDGEPORT FOOD POLICY COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Bridgeport Food Policy Council collaborates with Bridgeport city officials, non-profit organizations, residents, and businesses to achieve the Council’s mission and goals. Through extensive input from the community stakeholders listed above, three priority areas have been identified for 2017: Urban Agriculture, Food-Based Economic Development, and School Wellness Policy. The priority areas and recommended actions associated with each area are described in the sections that follow.

Urban Agriculture

Definition: The Bridgeport Food Policy Council defines “urban agriculture” as farms and gardens that exist within city limits for the purposes of household consumption, commercial venture, and/or education, such as urban farms, community gardens, backyard gardens, and school gardens. Urban agriculture can include activities such as hydroponics, aquaponics, aquaculture, indoor farming, rooftop farming, beekeeping, flowers, livestock (i.e. chickens, grazing goats), composting, and use of accessory structures, such as hoop houses, greenhouses, cold frames, and sheds.

Background: Bridgeport is emerging as a hub of urban agriculture through urban farms, community gardens, educational school gardens and aquaculture, and indoor, hydroponic operations. Further developing these initiatives can expand employment opportunities, entrepreneurial activities, and access to fresh food. Bridgeport is home to:

- an outdoor urban farm operated by Green Village Initiative, a local nonprofit dedicated to urban farming, community gardens, school gardens and leadership development
- the Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture Science and Technology Education Center, a high school serving grades 9 through 12
- a for-profit, high density indoor farm business operated by Metro Crops
- over 15 community garden lots that allow gardeners to grow food for their families
- over 25 school gardens that provide healthy food and educational opportunities to Bridgeport students

Why it matters: Scholars and advocates argue that urban agriculture has many potential benefits for post-industrial cities, including increasing access to healthy food, improving social capital, opportunities for job creation and crime reduction, building community resilience to climate change (Cohen and Reynolds, 2016; Kim, Palmer, & Santo, 2016), technical skill-building, and youth development. The benefits of urban agriculture are outlined in greater detail below. Specific examples of how urban agriculture is benefiting Bridgeport are included where data is available.

Access to Healthy Food: A common barrier to a nutritious diet is the ability to afford a variety of fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods. A Bridgeport Community Health Needs Assessment showed that overweight Bridgeport adults reported cost as the biggest barrier to healthy eating (Bridgeport Community Allied to Reach Health Equity, 2013). A survey conducted by the Bridgeport Department of Health and Social Services found that in some neighborhoods, up to two-thirds of residents experience

food insecurity (Bridgeport Food Policy Council, 2015). Gardens have the potential to save at least \$475 in food costs per season for individual gardeners (Golden, 2013).

Youth Attitudes about Food: Urban agriculture presents an opportunity to change perceptions of healthy food among young people. This was demonstrated in a recent survey of Bridgeport high school students (Greer, Davis, Sandolo, Gaudet, & Castrogivanni, 2017). The study showed that students who reported experience farming and gardening had more favorable attitudes towards consuming local fruits and vegetables, and were more willing to try new fruits and vegetables than students that reported no prior experience with gardening and farming.

Improving Social Capital: The potential social impacts of farming and gardening in Bridgeport are significant. For example, Planting Justice, a nonprofit organization in Oakland, CA, uses urban agriculture as a tool for the formerly incarcerated to find meaningful work that pays a living wage. Since its inception in 2011, 100% of program graduates have successfully stayed out of prison (Deane, 2017). While non-profit organizations in Bridgeport already utilize urban farming as a mechanism for youth development and community building, the city could benefit from programming for residents who were formerly incarcerated, such as the Mayor's Initiative for Re-Entry Affairs (MIRA).

Opportunities for Job Creation: Currently, Green Village Initiative currently employs 3 full-time staff to work with school gardens, community gardens, youth leaders, and manage Reservoir Community Farm; in addition, 15 part-time, seasonal farm jobs have been created. 12 of these 15 positions are occupied by high school students who might otherwise seek out-of-town employment; skills developed include farming, leadership and training others, customer service and sales, and strategic thinking.

Building Community Resilience to Climate Change: Promoting urban agriculture in Bridgeport supports Mayor Ganim's climate change goals. Urban agriculture has been linked to increasing rainwater drainage, and reducing the risk of flooding, groundwater contamination, and depletion of groundwater levels (Kim, Palmer, & Santo, 2016). As such, it can assist the administration in fulfilling the obligations of a nearly \$40 million U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development grant that the City received in 2014 "for flood protection to guard against rising tides, coastal storms and the impact of climate change." (Mayor's Office, City of Bridgeport Website, 2017). Another environmental benefit of urban agriculture is carbon sequestration, or the ability of the soil to harness carbon and carbon dioxide from polluted and car-dense environments, such as Bridgeport (Okvat, Zautrat, 2011).

Barriers: Currently, urban agriculture activities in Bridgeport are limited in scope and long-term sustainability. There is not an existing planning and zoning framework to ensure that urban agriculture activities on City-owned land are approved by the City. In many cases, formal relationships between the landowner (the City) and the people gardening are not existent. Although there is steady demand for garden and farm sites, there is no clear process to follow to register new sites for agricultural use. Since many Bridgeport residents lack backyard space, self-reliant and convenient access to fresh food is limited.

For example, non-profit organizations and other community groups take on the responsibility of maintaining community gardens throughout the city; however, there is no consistent, formal agreement

between the City and these groups to delineate roles and responsibilities. A clearly stated long-term plan, such as integration of urban agriculture into the City's Master Plan and the creation of a specific agricultural zoning use, would provide commitment from the City that the community can depend upon and encourage investment of time and resources toward long-term upkeep of sites. This would have a significant impact on the ability of hundreds of individuals to conveniently grow food for their families, reducing their cost of food overall.

Additionally, Bridgeport's only outdoor urban farm, which grows more than 6,000 pounds of healthy produce for the community each year, is dependent on renewal of 5-year leases. The non-profit organization managing this site could engage in more strategic decision-making and resource procurement if longer-term use was guaranteed.

Recommendations: The Council seeks to work with City officials to protect current urban agriculture initiatives within Bridgeport and create policies that will allow for new community and commercial agricultural sites. The City of Bridgeport should seek longer-term land tenure opportunities for community gardens and urban farms, and ensure access to basic commodities such as soil, water and technical support in site maintenance (such as fencing and debris removal), and low cost, readily available commodities such as compost. This support will encourage urban agriculture initiatives that add to Bridgeport's economy, vitality, culture, and uniqueness.

The Council recommends that the City of Bridgeport formally recognizes Urban Agriculture efforts as defined by the Council in order to foster, support and protect such initiatives within the city.

- A. The City will place information regarding Urban Agriculture efforts on the City website.
- B. The City will incorporate long-term goals, needs, and benefits of Urban Agriculture into the Bridgeport 2030 Master Plan.
- C. The City will continue to supply water to community garden and farm sites free-of-charge, with usage guidelines.
- D. The City's Public Facilities Department will partner with organizations that manage Urban Agriculture sites in ongoing maintenance. Public Facilities will identify a point of contact to oversee debris removal, wood chip and soil and compost delivery, fence lines maintenance and other technical, site-specific support when available.
- E. The City will adopt a new zoning use to designate Urban Agriculture sites.
- F. The City will work with the Food Policy Council to codify maintenance and upkeep requirements for Urban Agriculture sites on public land and identify who has responsibility for maintaining these standards.

Food-Based Economic Development

Definition: Food-Based Economic Development is defined as activities supporting the inception, growth, and expansion of food businesses in Bridgeport. Food businesses include, but are not restricted to, the following: commercial urban farming, value-added product manufacturing, shared use commercial kitchens, pop-up marketplaces, food box programs, farmers markets, farm stands, and food trucks.

Background: Bridgeport is home to a burgeoning food culture featuring international cuisine, vibrant farmers markets, craft breweries and distilleries, food trucks, and shared-use commercial kitchens. By creating an atmosphere that actively supports and fosters food-based businesses, Bridgeport can successfully attract new businesses and visitors and become a culinary hub for Connecticut. Currently Bridgeport hosts:

- Seven farmers markets and farm stands in seven neighborhoods, featuring 12 Bridgeport businesses as vendors
- Commercial kitchen space in the Bridgeport Trade and Technology Center and neighborhood churches
- Three Healthy Corner Stores, dedicated to stocking their shelves with healthy food items
- FreshConnections, a social enterprise bringing fresh produce and jobs throughout Bridgeport
- Brewport and Aspetuck Brew Lab, serving Bridgeport-brewed beer
- Local restaurants representing the ethnic diversity of the city
- Nonprofit organizations that offer culinary and small business development training and support

In addition, there are two initiatives under development:

- The East End NRZ Pop Up Market & Cafe, a nonprofit, community-run small grocer
- The Bridgeport Organic Food Co-op

Why it matters: The food industry is one of largest growth industries in the United States, employing 17 million people and contributing roughly 11% to the U.S. economy on an annual basis. A robust local food economy provides opportunities especially for those who traditionally face barriers when finding meaningful employment, such as having a high school diploma or less and having a criminal record. The USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) found that “local food networks drive economic activity in other parts of the economy as well. Revenues tend to stay in the local economy and be reinvested in supplies, labor, and other spending” (Golden, 2013). Specific examples of the potential benefits of investment in Food-Based Economic Development are included below.

Support Local Economy: A study conducted by the City of Madison, WI revealed that for each dollar spent on local food, \$2.60 was re-circulated back into Wisconsin’s economy, and for every \$100,000 spent on local food, 2.2 jobs were created (Jenkins, Schepker & Rhodes-Conway, 2014).

Creation of Meaningful Employment Opportunities: The food industry can be a source of jobs that pay a living wage, which is instrumental in alleviating poverty and decreasing rates of food insecurity. According to a 2016 report released by Data Haven, a research think tank based in New Haven, “underemployment rates in the four Fairfield County core cities of Bridgeport, Stamford, Danbury, and Norwalk were much higher than the rest of the county. Those four cities had rates ranging

from 14 to 24 percent, whereas the 19 other Fairfield county towns had a combined rate of 10 percent” (Data Haven, 2016, pg. 57). Policy Link, a policy research center in Oakland, CA, offers a solution to high unemployment and underemployment rates in a 2010 report that demonstrated a linkage between investment in food retail and job creation and retention.

Improve Food Insecurity Rates within Bridgeport: A survey conducted by the Connecticut Food Bank found that nearly 23.2% of Bridgeport residents are considered food insecure (CT Food Bank, 2016). Food insecurity is defined as as not enough food to meet people’s basic needs at all times due to lack of financial resources (End Hunger CT, 2017).

Barriers: The City’s current application process for the permitting and licensing of new food businesses is difficult to navigate. The Food-Based Economic Development sub-group has found that the existing process hinders many nonprofits, small food retailers, and food entrepreneurs from obtaining the necessary licensing to operate, based on results from a focus group conducted by the Council of Churches in October 2015, as well as information gathered from food entrepreneurs at local farmers markets and community events.

In addition, new food retail ventures have been subject to temporary permits or licensing requirements that are not indoctrinated in policy or procedure, which creates uncertainty in planning for the following year. For example, there is no set policy that addresses the required permits for farmers markets and their vendors across City agencies. Farmers markets in urban areas need to be responsive to the needs of both consumers and vendors to ensure that the markets bring affordable, fresh produce to underserved neighborhoods. In this way, the Food Policy Council and the City can ensure the viability of our markets as outlets for customers to purchase affordable, healthy food, and for local farmers and new food businesses to reach a diverse customer base.

Recommendations: The Food Policy Council seeks to work with City officials to develop a clear and efficient system for permitting and licensing new food businesses. These recommendations serve as a first phase towards making Bridgeport welcoming and economically viable for food entrepreneurs.

The Bridgeport Food Policy Council recommends that the City of Bridgeport facilitates and supports the development and growth of food businesses.

- A. The City will allow farmers markets to apply for one permit from the Department of Health and Social Services and one permit from the Police Department on behalf of all vendors at the market for the duration of the season.
- B. The City will exempt 501c3 farmers markets and single vendor farm stands from paying associated permitting fees.
- C. The City will work with the Food Policy Council to create an interdepartmental workflow process for food entrepreneurs and food retailers to obtain all necessary permits, licenses, and other necessary permissions from all departments responsible for oversight and regulation.

Bridgeport School Wellness Policy

Definition: According to the Connecticut State Department of Education, a school wellness policy is a “written document of official policies that guide a local educational agency or school district’s efforts to establish a school environment that promotes students’ health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.”

Background: Established by the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 and further strengthened by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, schools that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture school nutrition programs are required to develop a local school wellness policy that “promotes the health of students and addresses the growing problem of childhood obesity.” It is the responsibility of each school district to create a school wellness policy that allows them to address the unique needs of their students.

The current Bridgeport school wellness policy was reviewed by the Connecticut State Department of Education in November 2015. This review found there was a significant need to revise the policy in order to meet current USDA standards. Several required components were not addressed in the existing policy, including promotion of the policy and community involvement. In 2010, Congress passed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Sec. 204 of Public Law 111-296), and added new provisions for local school wellness policies related to implementation, evaluation, and public reporting on progress. On February 26, 2014, the proposed rule for wellness policies was published in the Federal Register, requiring all school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program to revisit and revise their wellness policies. As a result of these new requirements, all elementary schools in Connecticut are mandated to submit a revised wellness policy by June 2017.

In order to comply with the mandate, the Thomas E. Carroll School Nutrition Center is currently leading the effort to develop a new school wellness policy that meets the unique needs of Bridgeport children. The Food Policy Council is working closely with the Nutrition Center to include language that ensures access to healthy food and nutrition education for all Bridgeport children, demonstrates a commitment to promote the policy, and allows for community involvement in the policy development and implementation process.

Why it matters: Providing Bridgeport students with access to healthy food as well as information on how to make healthy choices is crucial to supporting healthy bodies and minds. While a healthy food environment is important in every school, it is especially critical in Bridgeport where 100% of school children qualify for free school breakfast and lunch (End Hunger CT, 2016).

High Food Insecurity Rates: In a Bridgeport community health assessment, 27% of parents reported running out of food or money to buy food in the previous month (Primary Care Action Group, 2013). Furthermore, nearly 23.2% of Bridgeport residents are considered food insecure (CT Food Bank, 2016).

High Childhood Obesity Rates: Inconsistent access to healthy food is associated with above average incidences of overweight individuals and obesity among the affected populations. This connection is displayed in Bridgeport where 50% of K-8 school children are overweight and/or obese (Bridgeport Community Allied to Reach Health Equity, 2013). This data supports the need for creating access to healthy food and nutrition education in the Bridgeport schools.

State of CT Mandatory Health Education: In Section 10-16B of the Connecticut General Statute (2009), which prescribes courses of study in public schools, states “A program of study in health and safety education must be offered Grades K-12 in a planned, ongoing and systematic fashion and include, at a minimum: human growth and development; nutrition; first aid; disease prevention; community and consumer health; physical, mental and emotional health, including youth suicide prevention; substance abuse prevention; safety, which may include the dangers of gang membership; and accident prevention. Health and safety education is included as a planned program of study and must be treated like any other content area with regard to quality of curriculum and instruction.” It is mandatory that Bridgeport provide students with health education that meets these standards. Bridgeport School District has one person, Chris Johnson, overseeing the implementation and evaluation of both physical education and health education for 36 schools serving over 20,000 students.

Barriers: Significant challenges exist for the Bridgeport Public Schools to develop a School Wellness Policy that meets state and national standards and meets Bridgeport’s unique needs. For example, the Bridgeport School Wellness Policy outlines a need for nutrition education and physical activity education across all grade levels. However, the current budget for Bridgeport Public Schools only includes \$17,000 funding for health education and physical education at all K-12 schools.

Recommendations: The Bridgeport Food Policy Council supports the Nutrition Center in revising and drafting a new school wellness policy to meet federal and state requirements and the unique needs of Bridgeport children.

The Bridgeport Food Policy Council will actively participate in the Bridgeport Nutrition Center School Wellness Policy Council to help create the city’s new School Wellness Policy. The Council will focus on addressing the unique needs of the children in Bridgeport’s School District by incorporating community input into the process of drafting the School Wellness Policy.

- A. The School Wellness Policy will reintroduce health education for K-6 students through the integration of a school garden program into the current curriculum.
- B. The Bridgeport Public Schools will hire or identify a staff member to serve as a health education coordinator. This person would support the development and implementation of the health education garden program, along with other health education through evidence-based strategies.

- C. The Bridgeport Nutrition Center will create a process for amending the wellness policy that involves all stakeholders, including but not limited to, parents, teachers, school nurses, community members, students and Bridgeport Food Policy Council members.
- D. The Bridgeport Public Schools will form a district-wide Wellness Committee that meets quarterly and oversees the implementation and evaluation of the new Wellness Policy. Participation in this committee will be open to all stakeholders, including three assigned staff representatives from the K-8 schools and two from high schools, as well as parents, teachers, school nurses, curriculum leaders, community members, students and Bridgeport Food Policy Council members.

CONCLUSION

This report presents the Bridgeport Food Policy Council's first annual status report and recommendations for how residents, advocates, business owners, and City officials can work together to ensure that Bridgeport is a healthy, sustainable, and thriving community. As noted in the report, the Council and Advisory Board members have identified Urban Agriculture, Food-Based Economic Development, and the Bridgeport School Wellness Policy as three priority areas for 2017. These three areas support and further our mission of increasing access to healthy foods for all Bridgeport residents. Throughout the year, we will evaluate our progress in meeting the goals outlined in this report and make public the current status of the recommendations and initiatives. Additional areas of focus may be identified by the Council and Advisory Board for future years. We invite and encourage community input to ensure that the Council develops recommendations that are meaningful to Bridgeport.

The Food Policy Council holds monthly meetings on the third Wednesday of the month from 6-7:30pm. Meetings are open to the public, and city residents and other interested parties are encouraged to attend. Meeting locations vary in order to include different neighborhoods throughout the city and meeting information for each month is posted online.

Visit our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/BPTFoodPolicy/>) and homepage on the City website (<http://www.bridgeportct.gov/Food-Policy-Council>) to learn more and to keep up to date with current information. Please contact the Chair of the Food Policy Council, Maggie Gotterer, at margot.gotterer@gmail.com with any questions or comments.

Acknowledgements

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Shelly Danko+Day- Open Space Specialist for the Planning Department, City of Pittsburgh, PA

Lynn Haig- Director of the Office of Economic Planning and Development, City of Bridgeport, CT

Robert Halstead- President of Bridgeport Community Land Trust/Founder Bridgeport Community Gardens

Megan Hourigan- Policy Analyst, Hartford Food Systems

Marilyn Moore- Connecticut State Senator representing District 22

Martha Page- Executive Director of Hartford Food Systems and Chair of the City of Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy

Jennifer Schwartz Berky- Principal, HONE STRATEGIC, LLC, City of Kingston, NY

Sharlene Wong- Director of Bridgeport Nutrition Services, City of Bridgeport, CT

The Connecticut Race & Agriculture Working Group

Glossary of Terms

Food-Based Economic Development is defined as activities supporting the inception, growth, and expansion of food businesses in Bridgeport. Food businesses include, but are not restricted to, the following: commercial urban farming, value-added product manufacturing, shared use commercial kitchens, pop-up marketplaces, food box programs, farmers markets, farm stands, and food trucks.

Food Insecurity is defined as not having enough food to meet one's basic needs at all times due to lack of financial resources (End Hunger CT, 2017).

Food Policy is defined as any policy that addresses, shapes or regulates the food system (Food First, 2011). This includes how food is produced, processed, distributed, purchased and protected (Chen, Clayton & Palmer, 2015).

Food System is defined as “an interconnected web of activities, resources and people that extends across all domains involved in providing human nourishment and sustaining health, including production, processing, packaging, distribution, marketing, consumption and disposal of food. The organization of food systems reflects and responds to social, cultural, political, economic, health and environmental conditions and can be identified at multiple scales, from a household kitchen to a city, county, state or nation.” (Chase & Grubinger, 2014)

Policy is defined as “A principle or rule which refers to the process of making important organizational/governmental/corporate decisions, including the identification of different alternatives such as programs or spending priorities, and choosing among them on the basis of the impact they will have. Policies can be understood as political, management, financial, and administrative mechanisms arranged to reach explicit goals.” (Oakland Food Policy Council, 2017)

School Wellness Policy is defined by the USDA as “a written document of official policies that guide a local educational agency (LEA) or school district's efforts to establish a school environment that promotes students' health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.” (End Hunger CT!, 2017)

Urban Agriculture is defined as farms and gardens that exist within city limits for the purposes of household consumption, commercial venture, and/or education, such as urban farms, community gardens, backyard gardens, and school gardens. Urban agriculture can include activities such as hydroponics, aquaponics, aquaculture, indoor farming, rooftop farming, beekeeping, flowers, livestock (i.e. chickens, grazing goats), composting, and use of accessory structures, such as hoop houses, greenhouses, cold frames, and sheds.

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