

Food Policy Council Presentation

FOOD POLICY COUNCIL PRESENTATION

Food Policy Council – La Semilla Food Center staff requested the opportunity to present the idea of creating a food policy council for Las Cruces and Doña Ana County. They would like to have an advisory group established whose mission would be to facilitate education and collaboration centered around the needs of our community for safe and reliable food supplies.

MISSION

To create a collaborative effort to improve the availability of safe, healthy, and sustainable food at reasonable prices for all residents that fosters a link between food, health, and local economic development.

PURPOSE & INTENT

The Mesilla Valley Food Policy Council (FPC) will be comprised of representatives from all stakeholder groups of Las Cruces' food system.

The purpose of the FPC is to:

- Convene meetings and lead discussions aligned with its mission and goals.
- Develop relevant policy and program recommendations based on the City's Sustainability Plan, the Paso del Norte Regional Food Plan, and related community food assessments.
- Actively advocate and support implementation of new and existing food policies and programs in the City of Las Cruces.

Through all of its initiatives the FPC will build upon the baseline recommendations from the City's Sustainability Plan and Paso del Norte Regional Food Plan as well as findings from other food policy councils.

DEFINITIONS

- A. Food Policy Council – The Food Policy Council will be referred to as FPC for the remainder of this document.
- B. Food Miles - Food miles is an expression for the concept that the mileage of food before it reaches the consumer is a good indicator for the environmental impact of the food and its components.
- C. Smart Growth - Smart growth recognizes connections between development and quality of life. It leverages new growth to improve the community. The features that distinguish smart growth in a community vary from place to place. In general, smart growth invests time, attention, and resources in restoring community vitality to city centers and surrounding areas. New smart growth is more town-centered, is transit and pedestrian oriented, and has a greater mix of housing, commercial and retail uses. It also preserves open space and many other environmental amenities.¹

GOALS

Goal 1: Food Security

Ensure that no Las Cruces resident experiences hunger. Promote strategies that create the systemic change necessary to reduce the need for emergency and charity-based food sources. Ensure that access to local, safe and nutritious food is not limited by economic status, location, or other factors beyond residents' control, prioritizing underserved residents.

Goal 2: Public Health

Support the development of balanced food environments that allow residents the opportunities to make healthy food choices and reduce environmental causes of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and other diet-related illnesses. Prioritize improving food environments in areas of our community that suffer from disproportionately high rates of diet-related disease and that are underserved by full-service grocery stores, farmers' markets, community gardens, and other healthy, fresh food options.

Goal 3: Local Agriculture

Support local agriculture that is economically viable, environmentally sustainable and socially responsible by serving as a market for processing and consuming local food. Promote policies and programs that aim at increasing the consumption of food produced within the regional foodshed to 20 percent of all food consumed by supporting such activities and endeavors as local sourcing or purchasing agreements, farmers' markets and roadside produce stands, community and school gardens, and Community Supported Agriculture. Advocate for regional Smart Growth policies that direct growth away from prime agricultural land. Maximize Las Cruces' self-reliance and capacity to grow and provide sustainable and nutritious local food for its citizens through urban agriculture initiatives such as backyard gardens, community farms and gardens, rainwater harvesting, and building code recommendations for edible landscaping. Support farmers, both rural and urban, and create infrastructure that aids in moving local foods to local markets.

Goal 4: Energy Efficiency

Promote energy efficiency at all stages of the food system by promoting local, sustainable food production. Support "green business" principles (such as energy efficiency and water conservation) for all food-related businesses in Las Cruces, and encourage the adoption of clean technologies and renewable energy sources into all food system industries.

Goal 5: Environmental Resource Stewardship

Support the preservation of environmental resources by reducing food miles and increasing the consumption of food grown using local inputs as well as less chemical, water, and energy-intensive production, processing, and distribution practices. Support local agricultural activities as a method of preserving open space

Goal 6: "Zero-waste"

Promote food scrap composting by Las Cruces' residents and businesses, and encourage the utilization of food scraps as compost for Las Cruces' urban agriculture and community garden programs, as well as regional foodshed agriculture.

Goal 7: Community and Economic Development

Promote the creation of living-wage jobs through green economic opportunities in the food sector that recirculate wealth within the community. Develop food growing, marketing and processing opportunities that create direct links between local producers and consumers.

Goal 8: Education, Outreach and Advocacy

Increase public “food literacy” and engage Las Cruces’ to make food-related choices that positively influence public health, and are social responsibility and environmentally sustainable. Promote programs that engage residents as participants in all aspects of the of the FPC’s work.

Goal 9: Public Transportation

Ensure that public transit adequately addresses the needs of all residents to access healthy food options.

STAFF & MEMBERSHIP

Creation of FPC

La Semilla Food Center, through funding provided in part by a New Mexico Department of Health Community Transformation Grant program contract, will commit their Food Planning & Policy Coordinator part-time to coordinate the FPC as an initial liaison. The City and the FPC will commit to identifying funding for this position for long-term sustainability of the group. This coordinator will identify the key representatives in each of the five stakeholder groups (identified below) and invite them to nominate members to the FPC. The nominations will be considered and decided upon by the City Council and Mayor.

FPC Structure

Coordination

A part-time coordinator, at a minimum, is essential to the success of the FPC. They will be responsible for coordinating the FPC in accordance with the FPC mission and goals as outlined in the FPC proposal. The Coordinator will help with meeting logistics, background research, and policy briefs. This person will also help identify funding opportunities for the FPC. The FPC coordinator will not be a voting member of the FPC.

Stakeholder Groups

Five major stakeholder groups have been identified for the FPC. From each group, nominations will be collected and FPC representatives will be elected by the City Council and the Mayor (see each group for detail as to who and how members are elected or appointed).

A) Business Community

(3 representatives: 2 elected by city council, 1 appointed by the Mayor)

Suggested areas to be represented:

- Local business associations or Chambers’ of Commerce
- Restaurants, grocery stores or grocer associations
- Cold storage or food distribution companies

B) Community Organizations

(3 representatives: 2 elected by City Council, 1 appointed by the Mayor)

Suggested areas to be represented:

- Community garden and farmers' market groups
- Community food or environment focused non-profit organizations
- Food charity organizations

C) Rural and Regional Organizations outside of City of Las Cruces

(1 representative elected by City Council)

Suggested areas to be represented:

- Farmer or rancher
- Producer organizations

D) Health and Education

(3 representatives: 2 elected by City Council, 1 appointed by the Mayor)

Suggested areas to be represented:

- Las Cruces Public School District
- Public health or community health organizations
- Private health providers, medical centers, or hospitals
- Institutions of Higher Education

E) Government*

(3 representative: 2 elected by City Council, 1 appointed by the Mayor)

Suggested areas to be represented:

- Staff of state or federal representatives
- Public Works
- Utilities or Transportation
- Community Development
- Parks and Recreation

*Note: Government Representatives have the responsibility to be informed and coordinate with state and federal programs or policies that might affect anything relating to food systems in Las Cruces.

FPC Members

Once in place, Members have the responsibility to represent all constituents of their stakeholder group. FPC Representatives are the only members of the FPC who have voting rights.

If best efforts have been pursued to elect or appoint a Member from a particular stakeholder group and for whatever reason the position is not able to be filled, then the FPC is allowed, by vote of seated Members, to redistribute the unfilled position to another stakeholder group. The FPC may never have an even number of Members.

A chair and vice chair will be elected by FPC members.

Working Groups

Working groups may be established by the FPC. Working groups may have a broad range of participants from any stakeholder group and the general public, and must have at least one FPC Member involved.

Facilitation

The Coordinator will facilitate FPC meetings. Third party facilitation may be present, at the Coordinator's discretion or FPC direction, at FPC meetings. They may also be present at meetings for working groups established by the FPC.

Terms of Office

FPC Representatives have terms of 3 years. However, the first FPC Membership will be split into two groups with Groups A through C serving 3 year terms and Groups D and E serving for a 2 year period. After the first term, existing Members and Stakeholder Groups will recruit potential Members. The City Council and Mayor will review candidates and elect or appoint new Members.

Attendance

Attendance at FPC meetings is necessary for the sustainability of the group. Members who miss two meetings in any given year will be removed from the group and a new member will be appointed to fill the seat.

Meetings

The FPC should hold at least four regular meetings each year, and by resolution, may provide for the holding of regular meetings at more frequent intervals. The date, hour, and place of each such regular meeting shall be fixed by resolution of the FPC. All meetings of the FPC shall be called, held, noticed, and conducted subject to the provisions of the New Mexico Open Meetings Act (NMSA 1978, Sections 10-15-1 to 10-15-4) which means they are open to stakeholder groups, working groups and the general public.

Committees, Rules and Other Matters

The FPC may establish such committees, rules and procedures as may be necessary to govern the affairs of the FPC.

DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE

Once formed the FPC will decide on how it will reach decisions.

Sources of information on decision making processes include:

- Participatory Democracy (see Appendix A for further detail). This involves consensus decision making and offers greater political representation (e.g., wider control of proxies others trust them with, to those who get directly involved and actually participate).
- Robert's Rules of Order (<http://www.robertsrules.com/faq.html>).

POWERS & DUTIES

Policy

The FPC shall:

- Identify gaps in information regarding the local food system and support research in food assessment data on a regular basis to keep information current and up to date.
- Work collaboratively with City agencies and departments to improve stability and alignment of city policies that have an impact on the City of Las Cruces' food system.
- Review city policies, programs and procedures, and regulatory systems, recommend changes to improve the role of government in ensuring the efficiency and productivity of Las Cruces' food system and consumer access to healthful food. In so doing, work collaboratively with agencies to resolve conflicting or burdensome policies and requirements.
- Work closely with other advisory committees to ensure that the food environment is integrated in planning, land use, and zoning.
- Identify and propose changes in policies to the City Council and Mayor of Las Cruces
- Report to the City of Las Cruces on at least an annual basis.

Programs

The FPC shall:

- Support existing programs relating to food policy and food systems in Las Cruces
- Identify new programs relating to food policy and food systems in Las Cruces
- Support individuals or organizations in their efforts to start new programs

EVALUATION & PUBLICITY

The FPC will develop indicators and systems for collecting and analyzing data representing each of the seven FPC goals.

Annual Reports

Activities, goals, results and outcomes will be reported in an Annual Food Report which includes any relevant updates to the Sustainability and Paso del Norte Regional Food Plans.

Events

The FPC will sponsor annual or periodic public events to publicize outcomes and community food programs to Las Cruces residents.

Communications

The FPC will promote the achievements of the City of Las Cruces through appropriate press releases and publications. Web pages with relevant content of the FPC and its working groups will be added to the City of Las Cruces' web site.

Appendices

Appendix A

Participatory Democratic Decision-Making Process: Modified Consensus (Minus One)

1. Agenda items shall be solicited by the FACILITATOR from MEMBERS (VOTING MEMBERS in the case of SPOKES-COUNCIL meetings) and the agenda with times allotted to each item shall be created prior to the meeting.
 - a) Agenda items shall either be PROPOSALS for a decision or DISCUSSION not requiring a decision.
 - b) PROPOSALS shall be well developed and concrete.
2. All voting members who are present at the meeting shall be identified by the FACILITATOR. A QUORUM shall be half of the voting body.
3. The FACILITATOR shall state each agenda item.
 - a) If it is a DISCUSSION item the FACILITATOR shall recognize speakers (MEMBERS) until the time allotted on the agenda has expired (or if there are no more speakers, before the allotted time has expired). To allot additional DISCUSSION time or take a decision on a PROPOSAL that has emerged during DISCUSSION, the FACILITATOR shall follow the steps from step 4 below.
 - b) If it is a PROPOSAL the FACILITATOR shall ask for DISCUSSION. DISCUSSION shall expire after 10 minutes (or if there are no more speakers, before ten minutes has expired), unless extended by decision. The FACILITATOR shall recognize each speaker (MEMBER).
4. PROPOSALS: After 10 minutes the FACILITATOR shall assess the DISCUSSION, state the favored PROPOSAL and ask if anyone would BLOCK CONSENSUS on it. MEMBERS who chose to BLOCK consensus shall call out that they BLOCK (they do not need to wait for the FACILITATOR to recognize them). If anyone calls out that they BLOCK CONSENSUS, they may not make any additional comments while blocking.
5. If zero or one person BLOCKS CONSENSUS, then CONSENSUS has been reached.
6. If two or more people BLOCK CONSENSUS, the FACILITATOR shall ask if anyone would BLOCK an additional 10 minutes of DISCUSSION.
 - a) If additional DISCUSSION is not BLOCKED (zero or 1 person), after ten minutes the facilitator shall again ask if anyone BLOCKS CONSENSUS on the PROPOSAL.

b) If additional DISCUSSION is BLOCKED (2 or more people), then the FACILITATOR shall ask for one or two people from each side of an issue to summarize their positions. These speakers shall have 1 minute to speak.

7. When CONSENSUS is BLOCKED and DISCUSSION is completed, VOTING MEMBERS shall vote on the issue. To pass, a PROPOSAL must receive two-thirds of the votes of a QUORUM.

8. If the PROPOSAL does not receive two-thirds of the votes then the FACILITATOR shall ask if anyone would BLOCK TABLING the issue.

a) If two or more people BLOCK TABLING the issue, then a vote shall immediately be taken on TABLING the issue. If two-thirds of the vote supports TABLING, then the issue shall be TABLED and the next agenda item shall be considered.

b) If less than two-thirds support TABLING, then the FACILITATOR shall reopen DISCUSSION for 10 minutes and the process shall follow from step 4 above.

ⁱ <http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/default.asp?res=1024>

Mesilla Valley Food Policy Council



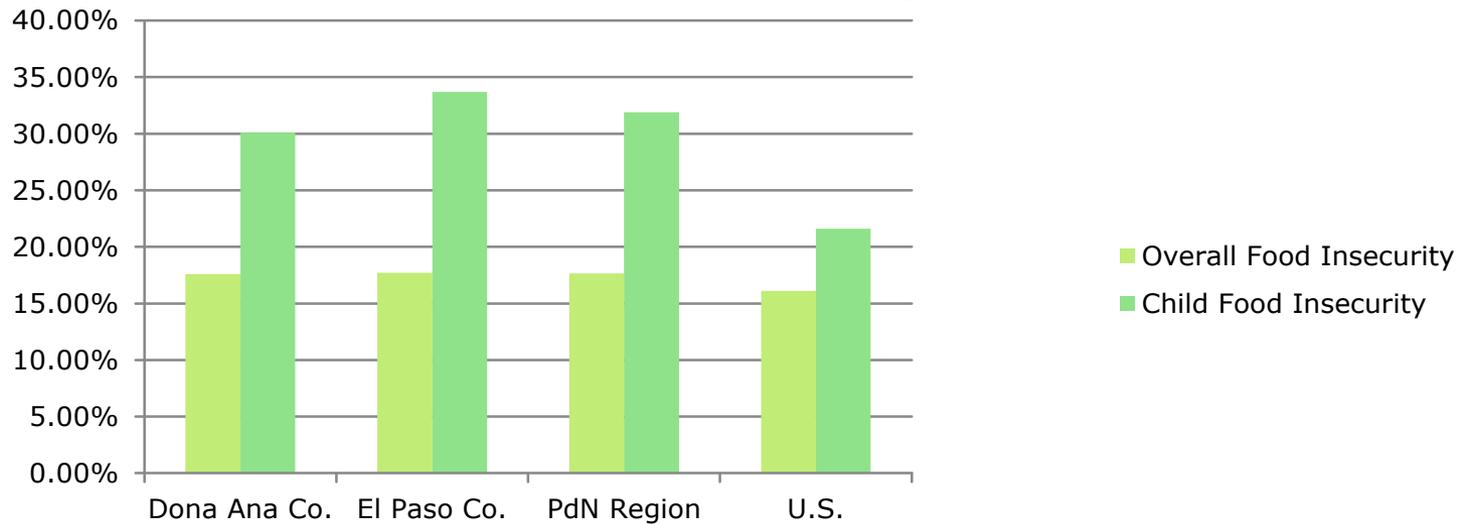
Presented by
Krysten Aguilar
La Semilla Food Center

Food policy is a set of collective decisions made by governments at all levels, businesses, and organizations that affect how food gets from the farm to your table. – Mark Winne

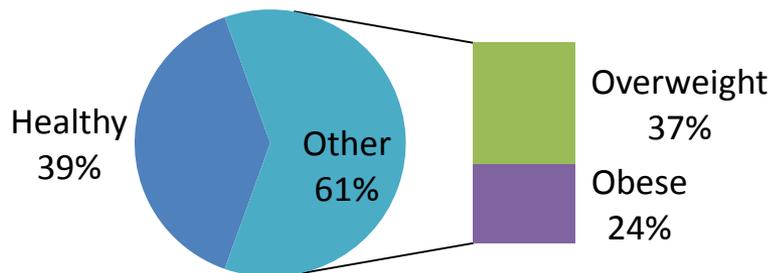
Action and Inaction

The cost of fragmented, piecemeal solutions

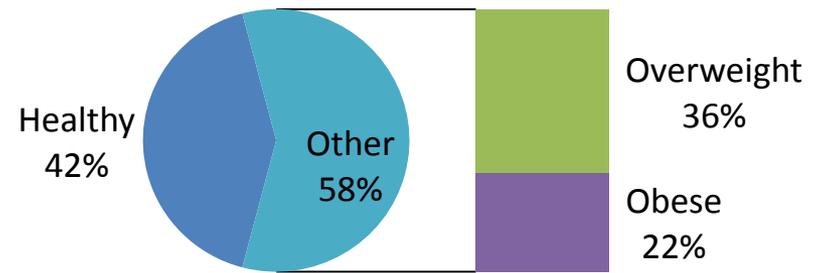
Food Insecurity

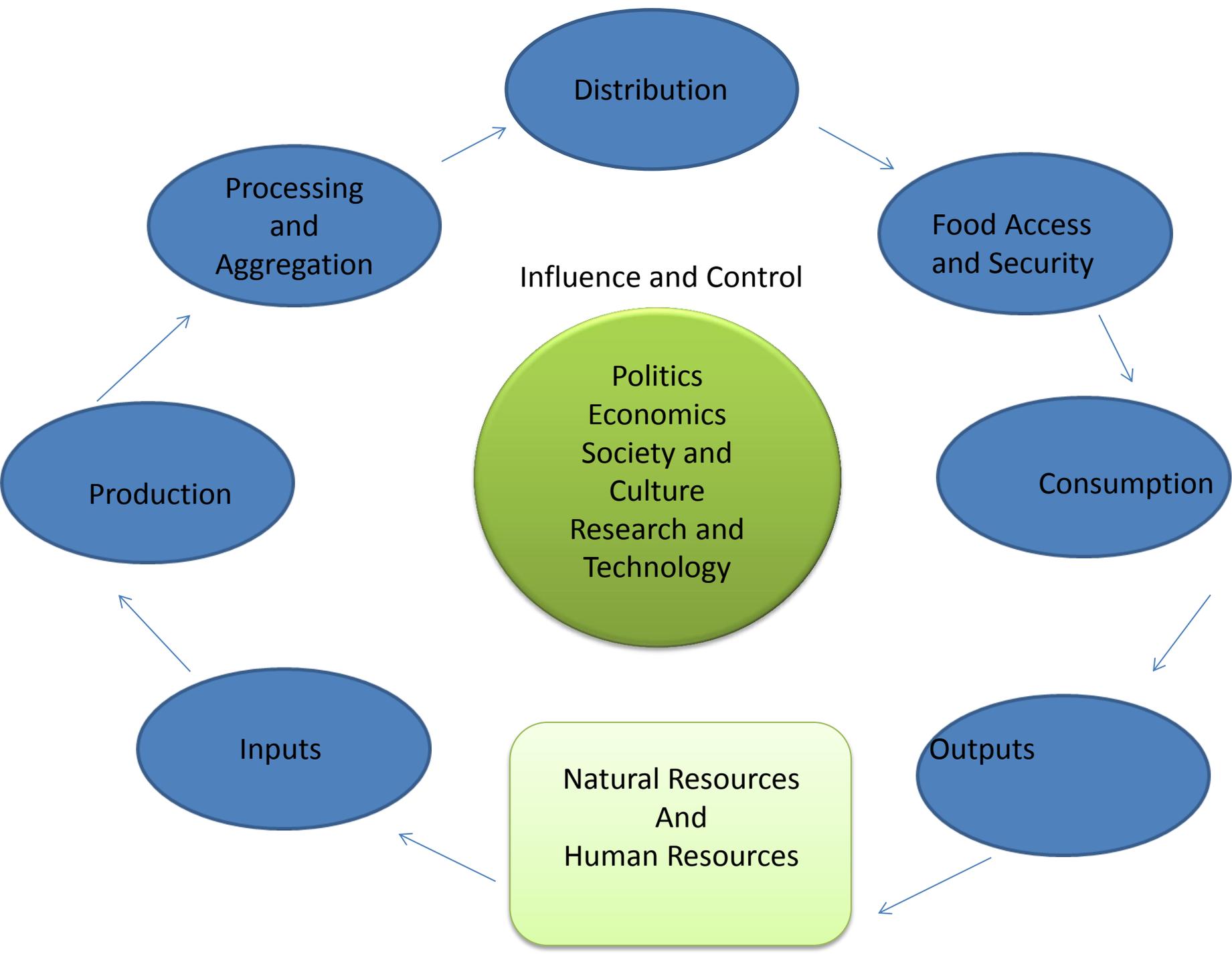


Obesity Rates: Dona Ana Co.



Obesity Rates: El Paso Co.





Dona Ana Food Policy Taskforce

Mesilla Valley Food Policy Council

NMSU

- Extension

City of Las Cruces

- Sustainability Department, Parks and Rec, Community Development

Casa de Peregrinos Food Bank

Dona Ana County

Farm to Table

Mountain View Market Coop

Healthy Kids Las Cruces

NM Dept. of Health

Las Cruces Public Schools

Farmers and Producers

Congressional staff

Early College High School

SeedShare Las Cruces



Mission

To create a collaborative effort to improve the availability of safe, healthy, and sustainable food at reasonable prices for all residents that fosters a link between food, health, and local economic development.



Most common forms of policy work

- **Access to food:** providing affordable, nutritious food to school children and low-income populations; ending food deserts
- **Agriculture:** promoting land preservation, urban farming, etc.
- **Procurement:** seeking policies that direct local institutions (schools, hospitals, government agencies, etc.) to buy locally grown food.

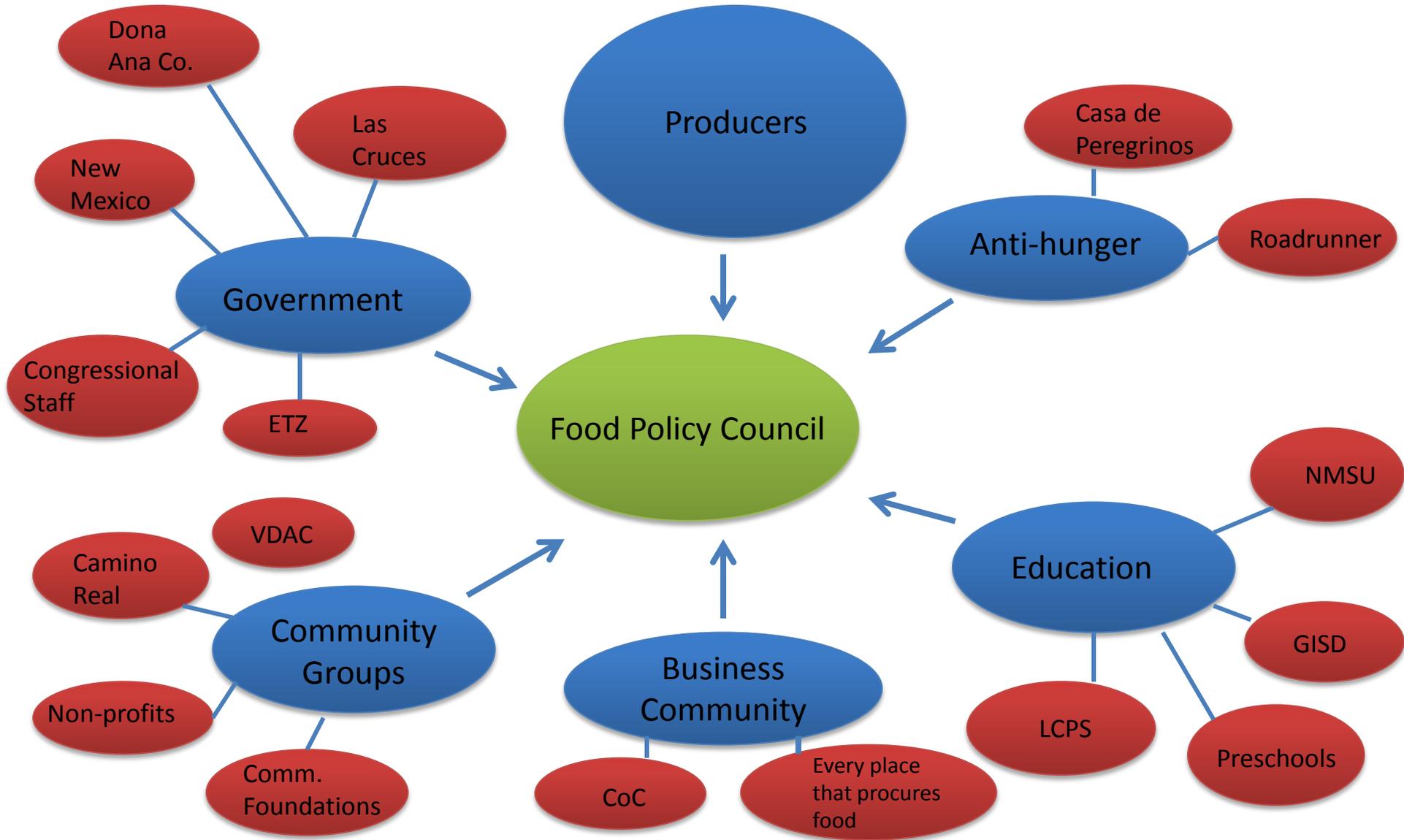
What is the role of a Food Policy Council?

Four general functions:

- To serve as forums for discussing food issues
- To foster coordination between sectors in the food system
- To evaluate and influence policy
- To launch or support programs and services that address local needs

Community-based Coordination

Fostering Communication, Encouraging Civic Action



Comprehensive and Strategic Planning

City of Las Cruces

Dona Ana County

Vision 2040

Viva Dona Ana



Goals

- **Food Security**
- **Public Health**
- **Local Agriculture**
- **Energy Efficiency**
- **Environmental Resource Stewardship**
- **“Zero Waste”**
- **Public Transportation**
- **Community and Economic Development**
- **Education, Outreach, and Advocacy**

Mesilla Valley FPC

- Long term sustainability
- Public accountability/legitimacy
- Public involvement
- Access to government staff
- Coordination of food system across different departments

Mesilla Valley FPC

- Task force drafted template and collected recommendations
- Advisory capacity
- Centralized collaboration point of various stakeholders and their assets



Photo: Sarah Nolan

