



**Growing the Local / Regional Food System:  
Strategies for Sustainable and Equitable Economic Development**

February 18-19, 2015 | Louisville, KY



Sustainable Communities  
Learning Network



**Galt House Hotel**

Rivue Tower  
140 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Louisville, Kentucky 40202  
Main event room: Segell, Third Floor

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18**

**8:30 a.m. Registration and Networking Breakfast**  
Room: Segell  
Coffee and breakfast

**9:00 a.m. Welcome and Introductions**

**9:15 a.m. Opening Keynote: Equity: The Key to Growing a Strong Economy and Sustainable Food System**  
*Amanda Navarro, Deputy Director, PolicyLink*  
PolicyLink is a national leader in advancing economic and social equity at the local, regional, state, and federal levels. Aiming to build a deeper understanding of food inequities and adoption of effective solutions, PolicyLink has worked successfully to use policy in creating conditions that help to improve food access, grow the economy, and enhance community health, especially for low-income people and people of color. Having recently launched the [Healthy Food Access Portal](#), Amanda will share PolicyLink’s perspective on why equity matters for everyone and is a national economic imperative, what constitutes an equitable food system, and how to apply this frame to food policy and systems strategies that will ensure triple bottom line outcomes for millions of low-income individuals and people of color.

**10:15 a.m. Break**

**10:30 a.m. Small Group Networking**  
Learn about your fellow grantees’ food systems work through guided, small-group discussions about what’s working, what challenges you’ve encountered, and how you can support one another’s efforts.

**12:00 p.m.**

**Lunch Presentation: Louisville’s Food Literacy and New Roots Projects**

*Carol Gunderson, Food Literacy Project*  
*Karyn Moskowitz, New Roots*

This session will highlight two innovative food projects in greater Louisville that are improving healthy food access for low-income and food insecure residents. The Food Literacy Projects helps children build healthy relationships with food, farming, and the land through hands-on, inquiry-based programs, including planting, harvesting, and cooking fresh vegetables. New Roots, a food justice and education nonprofit, launches and supports “Fresh Stops” in low-income neighborhoods. A cross between a cooperative buying club and a CSA, Fresh Stops allow families to pool SNAP benefits and other funds to purchase local food.

**1:30 p.m.**

**Breakout Sessions**

Room: Taylor

**Spurring Food Business Entrepreneurship and Innovation**

*Brian Williams, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)*  
*Rebecca Schaffner, Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG)*

Learn about Columbus’ Food District, anchored by a proposed food co-packing facility in a low-income neighborhood, and how the District is just one component of a planned food system that will be an economic driver for the region. Leading these efforts is MORPC’s Central Ohio Regional Food Council, which tries to foster collaborative new business models that benefit entrepreneurs as well as existing food processors and distributors. Goals include a shared-use freezer facility for meat processors in the region, and an online “virtual hub” that can help new and existing businesses with distribution logistics. You will also hear from GPCOG, which is leading a consortium of organizations in Greater Portland working to boost the local food manufacturing cluster in light of the region’s recent designation by EDA as an Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership. Come prepared to discuss ways to incentivize innovative businesses models in order to fill gaps in the regional food system.

Room: Wilson

**Promoting Economic Development and Equity with Food Policy Councils**

*Nathan Rosenberg, Fink Food Fellow, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)*  
*Sasha Forbes, Policy Advocate, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)*

The number of Food Policy Councils (FPC) has exploded in the last 10 years. During this interactive session, we’ll explore why these councils, which bring together a wide range of stakeholders to influence food policy, have proven so popular. We’ll examine the practices of successful FPCs such as Cleveland’s and take an in-depth look at how FPCs can increase economic development and improve equity in regional food systems. Participants from jurisdictions without FPCs will have an opportunity to learn about strategies for starting one in their own community.

**3:00 p.m.**

**Break**

**3:15 p.m.**

Hotel lobby  
front door

**Local Tour: Food Business Entrepreneurship in Louisville’s Portland Neighborhood**

*Theresa Zawacki, Senior Policy Advisor, Louisville Forward, Louisville Metro Government*

A formerly distressed part of town, Louisville’s Portland neighborhood is now home to a growing cluster of food business startups including [Kentucky Peerless Distilling Company](#), Hot Coffee, [Gelato Gilberto / Hillbilly Tea Commissary](#), and the [West Louisville Food Port](#). We’ll stop at several businesses to talk with the owners, and along the way we’ll hear from our tour guide about how Louisville Metro Government is encouraging food value-chain business development, investing in higher-needs neighborhoods to spur economic development, and connecting new jobs with people who need them. We’ll also discuss how food businesses are assembling financing for startup and expansion.

**5:30 p.m.**

**Return to Hotel; Adjourn Day 1**

# THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19

**8:30 a.m. Breakfast and Networking**

Room: Segell  
Coffee and breakfast

**9:00 a.m. Plenary: Building an Inclusive Regional Food Economy**

*Cheryl Hills, Region Five Development Commission*

*Arlene Jones, Sprout MN Food Hub*

*Ellie Lucas, Hunger-Free Minnesota*

Central Minnesota's Choose Health program is an innovative pilot program that is growing the region's local food economy and increasing access to healthy options for food-insecure residents through a partnership of the regional commission, health care system, and food hub. Choose Health is one of several regional initiatives that is growing the region's local food economy and increasing access to healthy food options for disadvantaged populations. Choose Health is made possible by an innovative partnership model that leverages knowledge and resources from the private, public, and non-profit sectors to provide fresh food to the area's most food insecure populations. The program relies on the local hospital to "prescribe" CSA memberships that are accompanied by health screenings, education, and ongoing support for participants. This remarkably comprehensive program serves as a model for the development of inclusive regional food economies that balance economic development with social equity to ensure that local food is reaching its fullest potential.

**10:15 a.m. Break**

**10:30 a.m. Breakout Sessions**

Room: Taylor

**Assessing the Regional Food System**

*Bart Roberts, University at Buffalo Regional Institute*

*Jenn Colby, Center for Sustainable Agriculture, University of Vermont*

A regional food system assessment is a critical step to creating data-driven strategies and a baseline against which you can monitor your progress. This session will explore two different approaches to food system assessment. Come learn how the Buffalo Niagara region integrated a food system assessment into broader regional planning work and efforts to educate its citizens on issues of food systems, access to healthy foods, and the links between food and economic prosperity. Then, hear how Vermont's Farm to Plate (F2P) Initiative has utilized their assessment as a foundational base to create a collaborative network that has resulted in coordinated action and measurable progress. Bring your questions as we'll leave plenty of time for discussion.

Room: Wilson

**Distribution & Infrastructure Roundtable: Filling Gaps in the Food System**

*Jill Jefferson, University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center*

In this interactive session, participants will discuss innovative strategies for identifying and remedying gaps in food distribution networks and in food processing / storage infrastructure such as slaughterhouses, co-processing and packing facilities, cold storage facilities, food hubs, and commercial kitchens. We'll discuss how such infrastructure is a critical component of growing the local food system and building regional economic prosperity, and how filling these gaps can create job possibilities for low-income workers.

**11:45 a.m. Networking Lunch**

Room: Segell

**12:30 p.m.**

Hotel lobby  
front doors

**Local Tour: Jefferson County Public Schools Central Kitchen**

*Theresa Zawacki and JCPS staff*

We'll visit Jefferson County Public School's central kitchen and learn about the JCPS's local foods initiatives and the challenges of feeding fresh, healthy, locally-grown food to a population of 90,000 kids every day. We will discuss strategies for building markets for local foods, especially among institutional buyers, as well as the opportunity that farm-to-school programs present to make nutritious options available to low-income, food-insecure students.

**2:45 p.m.**

**Wrap-up**

Gather to report what you've learned and hear closing thoughts.

**3:30 p.m.**

**Return to Hotel; Adjourn**