

LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS



The role of municipal governments

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What is the food system?

The food system encompasses all the activities involved in the production, processing, distribution, marketing, consumption, and disposal of food. Farms, fisheries, factories, grocery stores, and restaurants may be the most visible and recognized elements of the food system, but schools, hospitals, social service agencies, developers, and other businesses and institutions play critical roles as well. And all these players are supported and regulated by the public sector, in many cases at the municipal level.

The food system touches everyone. Not only do we all eat, but the food system has a significant impact on our local economy, our health, and our natural resources. The food system makes up at least 4.5% of Massachusetts' economy, and 10% of the state's workers are employed in the food system. A significant portion of public health costs are spent on preventable, dietary-related diseases related to poor nutrition. Food production and distribution is heavily dependent upon natural resources such as clean air and water. They can also be significant contributors to protecting those resources.



Figure 1: Graphic Source: *Municipal Strategies to Support Local Food Systems*. Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. 2012. goo.gl/JxUyJC

Municipal decisions affect the food system

Residents in your town or city depend upon a sustainable and equitable food system. A sustainable food system is one that balances the environmental, health, social and economic needs of a community or region and its workers and eaters. An equitable food system ensures access to food, jobs, and resources for production for all, and is inclusive of all individuals and communities in the decision-making processes that determine how the food system is regulated and supported. As awareness of and interest in the food system has grown, residents are looking to municipal government and other members of the public sector to make choices that support these principles.

Most policy, planning, and programmatic decisions made by a city or town can have an impact on the food system, whether directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally.

- Widening a road may make it more difficult for residents to walk to grocery stores.
- A municipal food waste education and diversion program can help reduce landfill use, provide edible food for families in need, and create nutrient-rich compost to help increase cropland yield.

Accepted by the State in 2015, the *Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan* lays out a set of goals and recommendations toward a sustainable and equitable food system for the Commonwealth, centered around four overarching goals:

- Increase production, sales and consumption of Massachusetts-grown foods.
- Create jobs and economic opportunity in food, farming and fishing, and improve the wages and skills of food system workers.
- Protect the land and water needed to produce food, maximize environmental benefits from agriculture and fishing, and ensure food safety.
- Reduce hunger and food insecurity, increase the availability of healthy food to all residents, and reduce food waste.

- An ordinance or bylaw zoning amendment could mean that a community garden no longer has adequate parking to meet the new zoning law.
- A town purchase of land for conservation may mean that productive agricultural fields are now unable to grow food.
- Zoning that allows rooftop gardens and urban farming can help communities develop job training programs as well as increase access to healthy foods.
- A workforce training program may not consider the special skills needed by food chain workers.
- A permitting process for manufacturing businesses may unnecessarily complicated for small food business entrepreneurs.

About this tool

This tool, developed by the Massachusetts Food System Collaborative in partnership with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council with support from the Massachusetts Healthy Eating Community of Practice, is meant to help you consider the role your city or town plays in the food system. It is not intended to answer every question, but to stimulate thinking by municipal leaders and staffers as you consider how your work and your policies affect the food system, and to direct you to resources that can help with that work.

The tool is organized by key municipal agencies and personnel, and introduces questions to consider in these roles as they relate to promoting food systems. Following these sections are additional guides to help cities and towns develop food system strategies. Included at the end of the document, several organizations are listed that lead food systems work and can provide additional support and as towns and cities. Throughout the document, footnotes include additional topic-specific resources.

Helping build a strong food system in your city or town food

As you consider municipal policies, regulations, or programs, consider them in the context of the food system by asking these overarching questions at the beginning of any project or decision-making process:

- Who has been engaged in this decision-making process (i.e.: farmers, food retailers, health clinics, etc.)?
- How will this decision support or hinder food production, such as farming or fishing?
- How will this decision help small food businesses be economically sustainable?
- How will this decision protect natural resources and resilience?
- How will this decision affect fair access to healthy food, particularly for low-income families?

MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP

mayors | city councilors | city and town managers | boards of selectmen | town meeting members

Municipal leaders help define the food system vision for the city or town. Rural towns may prioritize agriculture, while Gateway Cities may choose to foster food manufacturing, and other municipalities may focus on food access for all.

Since most agencies play a role in supporting the food system, administrative leaders play a significant role in ensuring that the municipality's priorities and values are reflected in all the work that they do related to the food system, that their respective systems are integrated in ways that are mutually supportive, and that all voices are heard from when setting policy and designing programs.

Municipal systems + governance

- **Does your municipality have a local food plan, or a community food assessment?¹ Is food integrated into your comprehensive plan?** These documents help municipal agencies and institutions work collaboratively toward common goals and measure progress toward those goals.
- **Have you set food system goals?** Setting benchmarks and working toward targets – like reducing hunger by a specified amount in a given amount of time, or increasing local food procurement by public agencies by a certain amount each year, or permanently protecting a certain percentage of your municipality's farmland each year – are effective ways to improve the food system.
- **Have you conducted a land inventory? A food asset map?²** These tools help significantly with food system planning, as they provide a baseline of existing resources to work from and give you a sense of the scope and importance of the food system to your municipality.
- **Has your municipality established an agricultural commission?³** Agricultural commissions ensure that the voices of farmers and others in the agricultural community are represented in municipal governance.
- **Have you passed a right-to-farm bylaw?⁴** These ordinances and bylaws protect and encourage the growth and development of farm-related businesses by protecting farmers and farm operators against nuisance lawsuits.
- **Does your municipality have a food policy council,⁵ or do you participate in a regional FPC?** Food policy councils provide opportunities for food system and local government representatives to work together to improve a community's food system. FPCs can be an important resource to other agencies.

¹ *Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit*. United States Department of Agriculture, 2002. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=43179>

² *Food Systems Assessments*. Practical Visionaries Field Project, Tufts University. 2013 <https://sites.tufts.edu/foodeconomyfinalreport/practical-visionaries-history/theoretical-framework/food-systems-assessment/>

³ Massachusetts Association of Agricultural Commissions. <http://www.massagcom.org/>

⁴ *Model Right to Farm Bylaw*. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/08/nv/farmbylaw.pdf>

⁵ *Research on Food Policy Groups*. Center for a Livable Future, Johns Hopkins University. <http://www.foodpolicynetworks.org/research/>

- **Do you promote local food production and purchasing within municipal agencies?** When your agencies purchase food (schools, jails, events etc.) do you prioritize purchasing from local producers and processors?
- **Do you promote your local food system?** Farms, restaurants, specialty retail stores, and other food system businesses can be tourist destinations and attract visitors to your municipality.

PLANNING + DEVELOPMENT

planning boards | zoning boards of appeals | economic development agencies
| redevelopment authorities

Planning agencies are directly responsible for some of the most critical policies and programs that affect the food system, such as land use, economic development, and transportation. Their work has an impact on how food is produced, processed, transported, and sold. Their analysis can help determine the economic impact of food businesses, which in turn can help a municipality consider investments in supporting these ventures.

Land

- **Do you have policies that protect farmland, and minimize its conversion to development or other uses?** Such policies could include limiting construction on prime farmland soils, assisting local landowners with accessing state programs such as Agricultural Preservation Restrictions⁶ and the Chapter 61 tax program⁷, or establishing a Transfer of Development Rights program. Your open space and recreation plan should include these considerations.
- **Do you make municipality-owned land available for agricultural production or sales?** Leasing or permitting public land for farmers markets, community gardens, or commercial agricultural production helps to increase the availability of fresh foods and contributes to the local economy.
- **Do you support the local shellfish industry?** Coastal municipalities can provide leases to small, local harvesters and aquaculturists, and can support shellfish restoration projects and sustainable harvesting practices.

Zoning

- **Are your planning board and agricultural commission educated about the use of Conservation Subdivision/Natural Resources Protection Zoning⁸ and accessory apartment bylaws?** These are tools that promote compact development and provide technical support to communities seeking to adopt and use these zoning tools.

⁶ Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program Details. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/agricultural-preservation-restriction-apr-program-details>

⁷ Massachusetts General Law Chapter 61A: Assessment and taxation of agricultural and horticultural land. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleIX/Chapter61A>

⁸ Smart Growth / Smart Energy Toolkit Modules - Open Space Design (OSD)/Natural Resource Protection Zoning (NRPZ). Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/smart-growth-smart-energy-toolkit-modules-open-space-design-osdnatural-resource>

- **Does your zoning allow for greenhouses, farmstands, nursery sales, farmers markets, or other agricultural activities as permitted uses, particularly on agricultural land?** For local farms to remain sustainable, on-farm infrastructure and venues to sell produce are both critically important.
- **Does your zoning allow for poultry⁹ or other small livestock, or beekeeping?** Such regulations can limit the numbers of animals or hives based on the size of the parcel, can require noise and odor abatement, and can have requirements for setbacks for structures and fencing.
- **Do you allow front yard gardens?** Some municipalities and homeowner associations require that street-facing yards must be grass, which limits residents' ability to grow their own food.
- **Do you allow rooftop and indoor farms and gardens?** Urban growing requires making use of any available space and controlled-climate growing in unused buildings can be an effective reuse.
- **Do you differentiate between home gardens, community gardens, and urban farms?** This is important to distinguish between how each is regulated – where they are allowed, requirements for soil testing, noise abatement, parking, chemical use disclosures, accessibility, appearance (landscaping, setbacks, etc.), fencing, structure, signage, retail sales, etc.

Retail

- **Do you incentivize healthy food sales?** Density bonuses, reduced parking requirements, and as-of-right site locations for stores can entice retailers interested in selling healthy foods to locate in underserved areas. Reduced permit fees, real estate tax reductions, infrastructure improvements, and mortgage recording tax waivers are other incentives that municipalities have employed.
- **Do you limit unhealthy food sales?** Some municipalities have placed a density limit on fast-food restaurants, or established buffer zones between those establishments and schools and other institutions.
- **Do you allow food trucks?** Permitting food trucks and allowing them to park on public land such as parks helps foster small food retail businesses.

Transportation

- **Do you support mobile farmers markets?** These retailers bring fresh produce to communities that otherwise might not have access to it. Waiving parking restrictions or permitting requirements helps them provide this service.
- **Do you consider issues of food accessibility when making changes to transportation infrastructure or public transit?** In higher-density municipalities, many families rely on public transit or walking to get groceries. If shopping for healthy foods requires travelling outside of their neighborhoods, a lack of public transit routes or dangerous walking routes can severely limit their access to these foods. Public transportation to community gardens should be a consideration as well.

⁹ Massachusetts law about backyard chickens. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-law-about-backyard-chickens>

- **Are you connected with a regional public transit system?** In rural areas and small towns, many seniors and other residents rely on public transit to access healthy food from retail stores, farmers markets, and farmstands. At the same time farm and other food system workers may need public transportation to get to their jobs. Consider Community Transit Grants¹⁰ as a resource.
- **Are bags limited on public transportation?** Some public transit systems limit passengers to two bags each, which makes shopping difficult for families who live a significant distance from sources of healthy foods.

Housing

- **Is there affordable housing near farms and processing plants?** Farming and food processing are labor-intensive industries, and workers depend upon being able to find housing near their employers.
- **Are food resources located in or near affordable housing developments?** Access to services such as food pantries and meal programs is critical for low-income families. Community gardens should also be conveniently located, as should retail grocery stores, and farmers markets.
- **Are you developing new housing?** Consider the proximity to food outlets (retail, community/urban agriculture, etc.) for residents, particularly when developing affordable housing.

Funding

- **Do you have grant or loan programs, and do you help connect local businesses to state programs that are available to, or targeted to, food system infrastructure or other facilities for processing, aggregation and distribution?** The amount of start-up capital needed for food system businesses is often prohibitive, but facilities such as shared-use commercial kitchens¹¹, food hubs¹², cold storage, or other infrastructure can help foster entrepreneurs starting farms or manufacturing enterprises.

Regulation + licensing

- **Are your processes accessible to and understandable by all members of your community?** Permitting processes should be ideally available in a single document and be clear, inexpensive, and available in multiple languages.

¹⁰ Community Transit Grant Program. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <https://www.mass.gov/community-transit-grant-program>

¹¹ Shared Use Kitchen Space. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/shared-use-kitchen-space>

¹² Local Food Directories: Food Hub Directory. US Department of Agriculture. <https://www.ams.usda.gov/local-food-directories/foodhubs>

HEALTH

boards of health | local health departments | health and human services departments

In setting and enforcing health policy for a municipality, boards of health and health agents can play a critical role in ensuring that food is produced, distributed, and sold safely. Unlike other municipal boards, the Massachusetts Legislature vested local boards of health with legal authority over health issues in the 1800's, including the authority to pass local public health laws in the form of regulations. Boards of health also have the legal authority to enforce the State Sanitary Code, which includes the Food Code. In doing so, boards of health and health agents interact with many food businesses, such as farms, restaurants, retail stores, and processors. Boards can encourage healthy food production and sales through policies they have the authority to enact and enforce. Examples include encouraging locally grown food, generally accepted agricultural procedures, farmers markets and the keeping of animals. Boards are responsible for promoting health in all its forms, including providing information on nutrition and food assistance programs. Health departments work regularly with stores, restaurants, and other food vendors, and can capitalize on these relationships to incentivize access to healthy food.

Healthy eating

- **Have you reviewed your municipality's comprehensive plan, zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations?** Are there unintentional barriers to healthy eating that you can propose changes to? Is there a food system/public health element in these documents?
- **Do you help connect residents with food assistance programs?**¹³ Federal and state programs like SNAP, WIC, and food pantries can be difficult to navigate for some families who need these services.¹⁴
- **Do you work with community institutions that have programs to reduce obesity and preventable chronic diet-related diseases?** Programs run by health clinics, YMCAs, senior centers, Mass in Motion¹⁵ groups, and others, can help people improve their health through better nutrition and, in turn, reduce burdens and costs on the public health system.
- **Do you have an obesity, or other chronic disease like diabetes, prevention program?** Such programs might include increased access to healthy foods, establishing and incentivizing employee wellness programs, and community engagement programs designed to improve nutrition.

¹³ *Food & Cash Assistance*. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <https://www.mass.gov/topics/food-cash-assistance>

¹⁴ Link to COP's Good food MA document <http://www.mapc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Good-Food-MA-Municipal-Resource-Guide.pdf>

¹⁵ *Mass in Motion*. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/mass-in-motion>

Use of excess edible food + food waste

- **Do you encourage residential as well as institutional donations of food¹⁶, especially healthy food to local pantries and food banks?** Doing so helps keep food out of the waste stream and provides food for families with limited resources.
- **Have you established guidance for composting?¹⁷** By setting standards for location, materials, and management your agency can help protect public health and eliminate potential nuisances, while keeping food out of the waste stream and creating nutrients to be added back to productive soil.

Food production

- **When considering board of health regulations related to agriculture, does the board local farmers in the deliberations?** Since some towns' boards of health and health agents have limited experience in farming, turning to farmers as resources during these processes is important.
- **Do you provide soil testing assistance¹⁸ for home gardens, community gardens, and urban agriculture operations?** Contamination can significantly reduce productivity of soil, or even make foods grown in it hazardous to eat.
- **Do you work with your region's Buy Local organization?¹⁹** These groups connect farms with customers, helping promote the local economy, increase healthy eating, and sustain natural resources.
- **Do you provide education and technical assistance to homeowners and landscapers for proper use of herbicides and pesticides?²⁰** Even safe pesticides and herbicides can be hazardous if used improperly and can have an impact on neighboring farms and gardens as well as the property where they are being applied.
- **Do you help connect food business entrepreneurs with local facilities with kitchens?** Commercial kitchens in schools, Grange halls, churches, and other institutions where foods could be manufactured or developed in compliance with the state food code can be made available to small food businesses. Helping to inform food entrepreneurs about the Massachusetts cottage food laws²¹ that allow for some commercial production in home kitchens is another way to support small food businesses.

¹⁶ Food Donation Guidance. Recycling Works MA. <https://recyclingworksma.com/donate/>

¹⁷ Composting & Organics. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <https://www.mass.gov/composting-organics>

¹⁸ Determining your Soil's Nutrient Needs. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/determining-your-soils-nutrient-needs>

¹⁹ Buy Local Groups. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/buy-local-groups>

²⁰ Pesticide Regulations in Massachusetts. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/pesticide-regulations-in-massachusetts>

²¹ Residential Kitchens Questions and Answers. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/10/ty/residential-kitchens-faq-sheet_0.pdf

Regulation

- **Is your permitting process for food businesses streamlined, clear, and language accessible?** Small businesses often struggle with paperwork and requirements, particularly if the processes are designed for larger operations.
- **Do you require a Health Impact Assessment²² for development projects?** Development projects in a city or town can often have an impact on public health, including availability of and access to, fresh, healthy foods.
- **Have you been trained in the Food Safety Modernization Act?²³** The new federal regulations are complex and represent a significant change for many parts of the food chain.
- **Are your permitting process and regulations for farmers markets in line with those of neighboring communities?** Many farms sell their products in multiple towns. Different requirements in each municipality may be unnecessarily burdensome. Have you reached out to neighboring cities and towns to inquire what other's requirements for permitting are and whether consistency in requirements among neighboring towns might be feasible?

²² *Introduction to Health Impact Assessments*. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. https://matracking.ehs.state.ma.us/planning_and_tools/hia/index.html

²³ *FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)*. US Food and Drug Administration. <https://www.fda.gov/food/guidanceregulation/fsma/>

SCHOOLS

local school committee | superintendents | principals

Primary and secondary schools play a formative role in children's understanding of nutrition and how food is produced. They teach skills that are vital to food system employment and entrepreneurship, and they provide millions of meals to children each year. How schools do this has an impact, not only on the local food system and the immediate and long-term health of students, but also on the roles that their students will play in the food system throughout their lives.

Procurement

- **Do your schools purchase food from local farms for student meals?**²⁴ Policies that facilitate this include enabling larger purchases direct from farms.
- **Do your schools have facilities and equipment to cook meals from scratch?** Schools that prepare their own meals have a greater ability to cook healthy foods and to purchase ingredients from local farms.
- **Do your schools take full advantage of federal and state programs that make meals accessible to students at all income levels?** Programs like the Community Eligibility Provision²⁵ and the Summer Food Service Program²⁶ help meet these needs in high-poverty districts.
- **Does your school have a nutrition policy used to guide foods purchased and distributed to students?** Developing and following a nutrition policy can help shape children's eating habits for their entire lives, and help prevent a range of negative health outcomes.

Education

- **Does your municipality provide transportation reimbursement for students who wish to attend agricultural high schools?** Supporting students who aspire to work in the food system helps keep farms sustainable and help enable farms to keep current with technology and management practices that make them better stewards of land and natural resources.
- **Do you support gardens at your schools?**²⁷ Connecting children with growing produce is a key element in getting them to eat healthy food.

²⁴ Massachusetts Farm to School. <https://www.massfarmtoschool.org/>

²⁵ Community Eligibility Provision. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/nprograms/cep/>

²⁶ Summer Food Service Program. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/nprograms/sfsp/>

²⁷ Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom. <https://www.aginclassroom.org/>

- **Are nutrition, cooking, agricultural topics, and/or other issues included as part of your schools' curricula?** Kids who understand the food system make better dietary choices and help their families to do the same, and they also support local farms, which in turn supports the local economy and environment.
- **Are your career and higher-education counselors aware of available career paths in the food system?** With career opportunities ranging from field work to high-tech scientific research, all industries that are part of the food system provide opportunities for employment.

PUBLIC WORKS

sanitation | water treatment

Every step in the food chain creates waste. Departments of Public Works (DPWs) can establish programs to help reduce or divert that waste from landfills.

Local DPWs can also set water and planting policies and procedures that support local agriculture, and can follow best practices themselves when carrying out groundskeeping duties on public land.

Food waste

- **Do you educate the public about reducing food waste?** There are ways for farmers, processors, retailers, consumers, and other participants in the food system to change how they grow, process, distribute, and eat food so that waste is limited. Connecting larger businesses and institutions with food recovery organizations is one way to help. These programs should connect with local public health programs.
- **Do you offer a municipal composting program?**²⁸ Curbside pickup or transfer station drop-off allows for residents, businesses, and institutions to separate food waste and have it composted, turning it into a nutrient-rich soil additive.
- **Do you educate food businesses about the Massachusetts Commercial Organics Waste Ban?**²⁹ The Ban requires that any business or institution disposing one ton or more of food waste per week divert that material from the waste stream. Municipalities can also help aggregate food waste from smaller generators for diversion.
- **Have you considered a municipal anaerobic digester?**³⁰ These facilities, often located at municipal wastewater treatment plants, turn organic waste into electricity.

Other waste

- **Do you have programs for disposing of inorganic agricultural waste?**³¹ Providing a way for farmers and residents to properly dispose of agricultural chemicals and agricultural plastics like bale wrap helps protect natural resources.

²⁸ *Composting & Organics*. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <https://www.mass.gov/composting-organics>

²⁹ *Commercial Food Material Disposal Ban*. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <https://www.mass.gov/guides/commercial-food-material-disposal-ban>

³⁰ *Anaerobic Digestion & Organics Diversion*. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <https://www.mass.gov/lists/anaerobic-digestion-organics-diversion>

³¹ *Inorganic Waste Management*. University of Massachusetts. <https://ag.umass.edu/greenhouse-floriculture/greenhouse-best-management-practices-bmp-manual/inorganic-waste-management>

Water

- **Do your fees and services support farms?** Exempting farms from sewerage fees, streamlining the water connection process for farms, or reducing water fees for agricultural use all help keep farms sustainable.
- **Do you allow or encourage urban farms³² and community gardens to build water catchment systems?** Such systems can help mitigate stormwater management issues and can reduce water costs for the growers.

Parks + open space

- **Do your planting guidelines support pollinator habitats?** Bees are essential for crop production. Having trees and other plantings that support pollinators helps farms remain sustainable.
- **Do you allow community gardens or urban farming on public land?** Open space is at a premium in many municipalities, but making public land available for agriculture supports the local economy, the environment, and healthy eating.

³² *Urban Agriculture Resources*. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/urban-agriculture-resources>

PUBLIC SAFETY

police | fire | EMT | jails

Emergency Preparedness

- **In instances of emergency, does your response protocol address food shortages, distribution disruptions, and food safety?** Public safety takes an active role in ensuring residents, and particularly vulnerable residents can get food in times of emergency, and they take an active role in restoring systems operations.

RESOURCES

Documents and Guides

Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan

<https://mafoodsystem.org/plan/>

Accepted by the Commonwealth in 2015, the Plan provides a set of goals and recommendations for the state toward a sustainable and equitable food system. Much of the Plan is appropriate as guidance for municipalities as well.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 2015

Municipal Food Systems Planning Toolkit for MAPC Communities

http://www.mapc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Food_system_guide_3-18-14.pdf

What is a food system? At what scale does it operate? How can I improve my local food system? The Municipal Food System Toolkit for MAPC Communities was created by CLF Ventures (CLFV), Conservation Law Foundation's consulting affiliate, in partnership with MAPC, to answer these types of questions and provide resources for municipalities to support their important role in sustaining the Massachusetts food system.

Metropolitan Area Planning Council, 2014

Planning to Eat? Innovative Local Government Plans and Policies to Build Healthy Food Systems in the United States

http://cccfoodpolicy.org/sites/default/files/resources/planning_to_eat_sunybuffalo.pdf

This policy brief provides a synthesis of how local governments across the United States are using a variety of tools, such as plans, regulatory tools, fiscal incentives, and institutional mechanisms, to strengthen food systems. The brief highlights national best policy practices in the areas of food production, processing, retail, consumption and waste disposal.

University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, 2011

Municipal Strategies to Support Local Food Systems: Including Local Food in Comprehensive Plans and Urban Agriculture Ordinance Toolkit

http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/10927/FY13-0029+LOCAL+FOOD+TOOLKIT_lowres.pdf/ac034661-e7a9-43b7-b375-6e98578f9e89

A guide for planners for including elements within comprehensive and related plans to serve as a policy framework for community-based agriculture codes and ordinances.

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2012

Municipal Strategies to Increase Food Access

http://www.pvpc.org/sites/default/files/Food%20Access_160928.pdf

Presents a range of approaches municipal staff, board members, and others can utilize to improve food systems and food access in their towns and cities.

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 2016

Minnesota Food Access Planning Guide

http://mnfoodcharter.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/FAPG_PlanGuide_D9_LINKS_LR.pdf

Provides tools, resources, proven policy strategies, and recommended planning and zoning language for comprehensive plans, so planners and healthy food advocates can collaborate to design communities that promote access to healthy, safe, affordable food.

Minnesota Food Charter, 2014

Good Food, Good Laws: Putting Local Food Policy to Work for Our Communities

https://www.chlpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/good-food-good-laws_toolkit-10.23.2017.pdf

This toolkit is geared towards local food policy councils and local food advocates—those who have identified a challenge or opportunity within their community’s food system and want to make an impact through policy change. This toolkit provides a starting place to understand the basic legal concepts surrounding local food systems, develop a base of knowledge about the main policy areas, and discover examples and innovations from other localities.

Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic, 2017

Massachusetts Organizations

Mass in Motion

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/mass-in-motion>

Massachusetts Association of Health Boards

<http://www.mahb.org/>

Massachusetts Food System Collaborative

<http://www.mafoodsystem.org>

Massachusetts Municipal Association

<https://www.mma.org/>

Metropolitan Area Planning Council

<https://www.mapc.org/>