10.1 Encourage Healthy and Sustainable Food Networks

10 – 35 Points

Action Updates

This action has been revised for the **current certification cycle**. A version of this action from the prior program year is available for comparison. Edits are highlighted in yellow. (Last update 2020)

Objective

Plan for and implement projects to promote community-wide healthy, sustainable, and equitable food networks.

What to Do

The more you do, the more points you earn.

1. Form a local or regional Food Policy Council (or equivalent, such as a collaborative or commission, collectively referred to hereafter as "Council"). Designate a person(s), agency(ies) or committee to lead the local or regional Food Policy Council. The purpose of the Food Policy Council, among others, is to examine, connect and improve all component parts of the food system, including through policy recommendations. You may leverage your Sustainability Team or other existing committee to assist with this task or partner with an existing community organization. Consider joining the Food Policy Councils of Connecticut Collaborative. **(10 points)**

   Submit: The names of the Food Policy Council committee members and the date of the most recent Food Policy Council meeting.

   Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Committee/Task Force/Position Creation" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

2. Conduct a Community Food Assessment **(10 points)**

   a. Gather data on at least 10 indicators of food access. This baseline data collection will help explain why residents are making certain food choices based on convenience, availability, and affordability. Data points might include income levels, unemployment rates, eligibility for free school lunch, public transportation need or options, and quality/quantity of food retailers.

   b. Using the baseline data to prompt discussion, host a series of dialogues on priorities and strategies for improving food access. This input should come directly from residents as well as community leaders and members of citizen boards and committees of the municipality (e.g. Health Services, Youth Services, School Board, etc).

   c. Assemble information gathered into a Community Food Assessment Report.

   The following data points and sources are readily available from the U.S. Census, other national data sources, and the UCONN: Zwick Center for Food and Resource Policy:

   - Poverty rate
   - Unemployment rate

- Number of households that lack private vehicles
- Educational attainment of town residents
- Participation rate in the National School Lunch Program
- Participation rate in the National School Breakfast Program (if offered in your school district)
- Number of Summer Meal sites and average daily participation rates in Summer Meal Programs
- Number of persons and number of households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the last 12 months (for which data is available)

The following potential indicators will require more customized, local research:

- Examination of food retail options (See Inventory and Promote Local Food Retail Options Action), analyzing for each vendor and also collectively factors including but not limited to availability of public transit and other non-personal-vehicle mobility options; location; hours; navigability of physical space by persons with functional limitations; availability of fresh produce; and acceptance of SNAP and incentives for use of SNAP on fresh produce.
- Map of emergency food providers (such as food pantries, soup kitchens and mobile pantry distribution).
- Number of community garden plots and number of people directly benefiting from renting community garden plots (e.g., household size of each gardener).
- Value of nutrition incentives redeemed at local farmers' markets during the last seasons, including double value coupons, WIC coupons, and senior farmers market coupons).
- Number of active school gardens and number of students with 10 or more hours of hands-on learning in the garden.
- Number of school-age students that participate in community programs that connect youth to growing foods and food enterprises.

Submit: The Community Food Assessment Report and a completed worksheet 1 including the required elements listed above, plus additional elements that your municipality determines are pertinent.

3. Following completion of the Community Food Assessment Report, distribute the assessment to relevant municipal departments. Then, make a presentation on the report to your local elected official(s), governing body, and other town leaders. **(5 points)**

   Submit: Evidence that you distributed the Community Food Assessment Report to relevant municipal departments and a copy of the final presentation of the assessment made to the local elected official, governing body and other town leaders.

   Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Websites, Maps, Inventories, Checklists, Assessments, Plans, Ordinances, Policies, Regulations and Resolutions" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

4. Including resident and stakeholder participation, create a Community Food Action Plan to ensure that all community members can access sustainable, healthy food. Consider subpopulations (including variations in income, race, ethnicity, national origin, and age). **(10 points)**

   All elements must be completed to receive credit.

   a. The lead contact for the Action Plan within municipal government and any key partners/agencies;

   b. Who will take responsibility for various action items;

   c. A timeline of deliverables with no less than 6-month intervals for a period of not less than two years;

   d. An easy method for community members to get involved, such as joining a working group; and

   e. A dedicated webpage where residents can track action plan implementation and review meeting notes.

Submit: Your Community Food Action Plan and a completed worksheet 2.

Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Websites, Maps, Inventories, Checklists, Assessments, Plans, Ordinances, Policies, Regulations and Resolutions" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

Timeframe for Credit

Actions can either be "New" or considered for "Rolling Credit."

New Action Credit. Any action completed within the past three years (from January 1 of the year seeking certification) is eligible for potential certification points. If you are applying for recertification in your year of expiration, you may not claim New Action Credit for items that previously received credit.

Rolling Credit. For any action older than three years (from January 1 of the year seeking certification), you must demonstrate ongoing, currently relevant, and meaningful impact in your community to be considered for certification points. If you are applying for recertification in your year of expiration, you must apply for Rolling Credit for any item that previously received credit, even if it was completed within the past three years.

View the "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for detailed submission requirements.

Engaging Partners

Sustainable CT encourages regional collaboration and other forms of partnership. For every action, please complete the "Partners" box in your submission, indicating the name(s) of any municipalities and/or organizations you partnered with (if any) and a brief description of your municipality's role. If you collaborate with other municipalities, each community will receive points. For additional information, please see the "Partners Guidance Document".

Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators

The local government public health department or district staff and municipal economic development representatives should be involved in the implementation of this action, in partnership with community agencies. Partners might include community food nonprofits, local businesses (including farms), emergency food providers, schools, farmers markets, early childhood collaboratives, chambers of commerce and other business alliances.

Funding

If available, below are potential funding sources specific to this Action. For a complete listing of potential funding opportunities to assist with implementing Sustainable CT Actions, please visit the Sustainable CT Grants Portal, which is searchable by Action. Please also visit the Support for Your Town page for opportunities for technical assistance and other supports.

- Urban Act Grant Program
- Municipal Grant Program (MGP)
- 2021 Sustainable CT Community Match Fund

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents

- How to Establish a Food Policy Council
- USDA Community Food Assessment Toolkit, providing a series of standardized measurement tools for assessing food security within a community
- Whole Measures for Community Food Systems: Values-Based Planning & Evaluation
- Could Your Community Survive on Local Food?

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- John's Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

- The Edible Schoolyard Project
- Food Solutions New England
- CT Food System Alliance
- UCONN: Zwick Center for Food and Resource Policy
- End Hunger CT!

Benefits

Enhancing food security improves the general health and wellness of your community and promotes equity. Addressing malnutrition also enhances a community's capacity for economic growth and community building. When food security is considered in the context of sustainable food choices, increasing access to locally grown products can also reduce adverse environmental impacts and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

CT Success Stories

- East Lyme - Oct 2019 Certification
- New Britain - Jun 2020 Certification
- New Haven - Oct 2018 Certification
- Vernon - Oct 2019 Certification
- New Britain - Oct 2020 Certification