

Mendocino County Food Policy Council

Operating Principles and Procedural Agreements

(A.K.A. How We Get Things Done)

Mission

The Mendocino County Food Policy Council's (MCFPC) mission is to promote a fair and sustainable local food system through research, collaboration and collective advocacy.

Statement of Purpose

- Bring together a collaboration of all segments of the local food system, serving as a community forum for discussing food issues.
- Identify and understand current issues and concerns in all segments of our local food system.
- Engage stakeholders and connecting various sectors to propose and create innovative solutions to improve the local food system.
- Promote programs that deliver healthy locally-grown foods to county residents.
- Educate the public and local governments on the benefits of a vibrant local food system.
- Advocate for local policies that facilitate increased local healthy food production, processing, sales and consumption.

Vision

- Increased production, processing, distribution, sales and consumption of locally-grown foods
- Reduced hunger and increased food security
- Protection of the land and water resources required for sustained local food production
- Increased knowledge and skills needed to grow, preserve, and prepare healthy local foods
- A community knowledgeable about the economic and health benefits of eating healthy local foods
- Increased coordination and collaboration among groups and individuals promoting local healthy food systems
- A healthy local economy that keeps money circulating locally instead of leaving the area

Definitions

Local Food System: Encompasses all activities from production, processing, transportation, storage, distribution, consumption and waste management.

Fair and Sustainable: In the promotion of a fair and sustainable food system we address issues of; expanding economic vitality, protecting land and water resources, increasing health, and reduction of hunger, particularly in communities with disproportionate burdens of poverty, obesity and chronic disease.

Collaboration: An engaged group of participants from the community, local government and local food system segments.

Operating Principles

1. We work through the mutual and open sharing of information.
2. We will address and resolve areas of disagreement early and often.
3. We will share and build on lessons learned from what works both within Mendocino County, and from best practices from around the world.
4. We will work to bring in new partners and build new alliances.
5. We will respect the individual stakeholders and organizations involved, and take care not to overlap or usurp lines of decision-making.
6. We will strive for equitable representation from our geographically, ethnically, and culturally diverse communities.

Membership

Mendocino County Food Policy Council (MCFPC) membership shall consist of primary stakeholder groups that have an active interest in and commitment to a county in which everyone has access to affordable, nutritious food from a viable agriculture. The targeted number of Members is 12 to 25. If the Membership falls below 12 for more than three consecutive months, the MCFPC should seriously consider whether its work is relevant due to the lack of interest in the community becoming Members.

Membership Responsibilities

The effective functioning of the MCFPC is absolutely dependent on the commitment and regular participation of its members. Membership responsibilities include:

1. Support the vision, purpose, and goals of the Council.
2. Attend all the regularly scheduled meetings.
3. Inform the group if unable to attend regularly scheduled meetings.
4. Engage in Council meetings using agreed upon principles of engagement and actively work toward Council goals.
5. Engage in at least one committee.
6. Champion the MCFPC and represent the Council in the broader community.

Membership Representation and Selection Guidelines

Membership should consist of as broad a representation from the following primary stakeholder groups as possible:

- Economic sectors including: Agriculture, economic development, food processing, distribution, waste recovery, health, environment, labor, education, consumer, and regulation.
- Diverse backgrounds including: geographical regions, ethnicity, race, culture, gender.

- Social connectors, mavens, systems thinkers, and salespeople who are deeply connected to the communities we want to affect.

The above list is to be used as a guideline when seeking out, nominating, or selecting new members in order to ensure our membership represents as diverse a group of the above niches as possible. Members may represent themselves, as individuals, or their organization, depending on their role, and should endeavor to represent groups identified above that are not part of the membership.

New Member Selection Process

1. New potential members can be recruited and nominated by current MCFPC Members or by the Membership Committee.
2. The Membership Committee will be responsible for gathering recommendations and nominations for new members and vetting these candidates.
 - a. The Membership Committee will be composed of 3-5 Council Members who together are a group of diverse, socially engaged and connected individuals.
3. Any individual Member bringing forward a nomination will notify the Committee prior to the next meeting of the Council so that they can be added to the process.
4. Nominated potential Members will be evaluated by the Committee on their ability to;
 - a. Engage in Council activity.
 - b. Represent one or more of the targeted populations in the guideline above.
 - c. Participate in respectful dialogue.
 - d. Help move the initiatives of the Council forward.
5. The Membership Committee must approve the nomination of the potential Member by consensus. Once they do so the approved nomination will be brought to the full Council for a vote. 75% of the full Membership must vote yes for the nominated person to become a Member.
6. The Membership Committee will provide the newly approved Member with the Charter and an invitation to attend the next meeting or a specific meeting for new Members.

Termination of membership

Membership shall be on a three year term. At the end of the term the Member may voluntarily leave or announce they wish to stay. If they wish to stay they need a 75% yes vote from the full Membership, less themselves.

A Member who misses 3 meetings in a calendar year, without having informed the group prior to their absence, and without having taken the time to inform themselves of the groups actions and activities, shall be considered to have resigned at the fourth meeting. If they come to that fourth meeting and announce they wish to stay and present a convincing argument, a 75% yes vote of the full Membership will keep them as an active Member.

A Member who is deemed by the core group to have failed to live up to the Operating Principles and Procedures of the MCFPC may be terminated by a 75% vote of the full Membership, less the affected Member.

Membership may be voluntarily terminated by submission of a letter of resignation to the MCFPC in care of the MCFPC facilitator.

Meetings

1. Each committee may hold regular meetings as often as they deem appropriate.
2. Regular meetings do not need to be noticed in any way.
3. Agendas for each meeting shall be distributed to all seated members of the committee no later than three days before the meeting.
4. Special meetings of any committees may be called by the officers of the committee. Special meetings may be noticed by email with 48 hours warning.
5. Each meeting of an MCFPC committee shall be run by Modified Parliamentary Procedure. (Robert's Rules of Order will not be followed.) Motions for a vote do not need to be seconded, but rather go to discussion and a vote.

Officers

Sub-committees

1. The MCFPC may, from time to time, appoint a sub-committee to help facilitate the work of the MCFPC. Each such appointment shall include:
 - A. The time frame under which the sub-committee will exist;
 - B. The work the sub-committee is responsible for;
 - C. The decision making capacity of the sub-committee; and
 - D. If the sub-committee has to report back to the committee.

Decision making process

As stated above, all meetings shall be run by Modified Parliamentary Procedure. In specific:

1. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of all seated members of the MCFPC, (minimum of 4), must be present at any committee meeting for decisions to be made. However, voting by proxy shall be allowed. Proxy must be documented by written confirmation by the member.
2. Items to be voted on must be on the agenda before the meeting.
3. Items to be voted on must be put in the form of a motion, but a second is not required.
4. Decisions made at meetings will require at least two-thirds (2/3) of the present members of the committee to pass (provided there is a quorum).
5. Email voting will be allowed for urgent issues that come up between meetings. The request for an email vote must include a deadline for the vote count, to be suggested by the person requesting the email vote. One of the officers of the committee will send out the request for the email vote with the deadline, will request written

responses, and will tally the votes. An email vote will require at least two-thirds (2/3) of all committee members to vote in the affirmative to pass.

Communication Guidelines

(A.K.A. common decency)

In order to facilitate an open and collaborative discussion, committee members shall abide by the following ground rules:

1. Encourage full participation by all members;
2. Maintain focus on the agenda and discussion rather than on email, cell phones, or other personal communication;
3. Keep discussion civil and constructive; differences and critiques are expected, but the group will not make personal attacks;
4. Clarify when expressing personal or organizational views;
5. Offer solutions and alternatives rather than simply stating disagreement or criticism; and
6. Maintain confidential and respectful communications about inter-group conflict.

General Policy on Support of Issues, Legislation, and Policies

1. The MCFPC can support issues, legislation, and policies most favorable to the advancement of the Food Action Plan goals and overall mission and purpose of the organization. Issues, legislation, and policies that do not support agriculture, the production of food, and/or the food system will not be considered.
2. The MCFPC does not endorse candidates.
3. In order to establish any sort of support for issues, legislation, or policies, a special endorsement committee shall meet to research and discuss and then take a vote. This endorsement committee can meet via phone, email or in-person. A majority vote is required.
4. A representative from the endorsement committee shall present recommendations and rationale to the full membership of the organization. The full membership will make the final decision regarding endorsements or position statements. Final decisions can be decided by email by majority vote.
5. Recommendations of support from the membership on issues, legislation, and policies shall be noticed before the full membership via email, or on the following month's agenda.
6. Upon support, an official letter of support shall be signed by the organization representative and sent to the sponsoring committee. Support shall be specific to the issue, legislation, and policies and election/voting dates as appropriate.