

ABOUT THE LOCAL FOOD COUNCIL OF NC

Name:

This coalition is called the Local Food Council of North Carolina (LFCNC).

Vision and Purpose of LFCNC:

The Local Food Council of North Carolina serves as a collaborative network across various organizations, agencies, and groups whose statewide work supports vibrant farms & fisheries, healthy people, strong communities, thriving local economies, and resilient ecosystems through a common aim: NC's local food systems. Specifically, this council will facilitate:

- Interaction between members to foster coordinated programs, policies and support for NC local food systems within member organizations and government and non-governmental agencies.
- Communication, training, policy development, and collaboration within local councils and between the local councils and the statewide council.
- Food-related policy discussions and development in formal and informal forums.

What Is The *Local* Food System?

Food system refers to all aspects of producing, buying, selling, eating, and disposing of food. This includes production, processing and aggregation, distribution, marketing, consumption, and food waste recovery. A *local food system* encompasses a network of all of these components, is place-specific and relationship based. It can encompass a county, region, or the whole state.

Agriculture is North Carolina's number one industry, and the state is the 4th most agriculturally diversified in the nation. The growing focus on local food acknowledges our state's rich agricultural heritage, blended with new ideas, technology and passion. Supporting local economies by buying local foods both retains and puts money and resources into our communities, and creates strong local networks that benefit all through economic, health, social and environmental

vibrancy.

As more facets of culture and society focus on food, new stakeholders are emerging to influence our agricultural economies and food systems. Business and industry leaders, non-profits and philanthropists, universities, health care professionals, government and private citizens are converging on the discussion about local food, resulting in a broader understanding of, for example, the interrelationships and co-dependencies of health, food access, income and geography.

A vibrant local foods economy will help preserve our state's agriculturally rich farmland, waterways, and rural countryside with the added benefit of preserving and protecting our water and resources and water and soil quality. A strong local foods economy can sustain the economic viability of many of our farm and fishery operations, thus enhancing the quality of life for food producers and the society as a whole. Non-conventional partners, for example health insurance companies, regional planners, and entrepreneurs starting business ventures that respond to and fuel demand for local products, are teaming up with existing food and agricultural stakeholders to address food-related societal issues in new ways.

Equally important is that food, as a universal language, is creating ties between our state's rural heritage and our growing urban populations.

Guiding Governance Principles:

1. LFCNC will operate in a transparent way and post all of its meeting and committee minutes on a public website.
2. LFCNC members agree to assist with communication about the Council, and also circulate relevant information that results from the council to their constituents.
3. LFCNC shall provide a formal way for local and regional food councils to request information and/or technical assistance from LFCNC. LFCNC will create a public website and develop a form that local and regional food councils may use to make a formal request of LFCNC.
4. LFCNC will work towards consensus (or at least unity) of the Council membership when making decisions, but will rely upon the majority of voting members during council meetings to resolve issues that have not been resolved by consensus. A simple majority (50% +1) of members shall constitute a quorum for transacting business both at LFCNC meetings and at ad hoc committee meetings.
5. LFCNC members must play an active, participatory role. This includes attending at least half of scheduled LFCNC meetings, and participating on at least one ad hoc committee per year.
6. LFCNC encourages and actively pursues participation from underrepresented groups. LFCNC will consider its membership during each fourth quarter meeting to determine whether new organizations or community members should be invited to join LFCNC. Outreach will be designed to ensure there are diverse viewpoints and constituencies represented on the council. LFCNC will include, when possible, state-wide organizations and agencies focused on farmers; fishers; agriculture and fisheries research, extension and education; land conservation; environmental research and advocacy; hunger and food security; planning; food-related youth engagement and leadership; supply chain development; food access; food justice; financing; farm and food labor; public health; food retail; and food waste. LFCNC will invite membership, when possible, from organizations meeting all other membership criteria who represent, work with, or are staffed by people of color.
7. Ad hoc committees will be formed as necessary and as agreed upon by a quorum of LFCNC.
8. Ad hoc committee members will be nominated and appointed by the LFCNC.
9. Ad hoc committee members will designate a chair and secretary of the committee.
10. Organizations or community members who are not members of LFCNC may be invited to join ad hoc committees, with approval by the ad-hoc committee. These organizations or community members will be voting members of the ad-hoc committee in which they participate, but are not members of LFCNC.
11. Ad hoc committee members who are not LFCNC members may attend, but not vote, at LFCNC meetings, and therefore do not count toward a quorum of LFCNC.

Meetings:

- Meetings of the LFCNC will be held quarterly, or as needed to address immediate concerns between the quarterly scheduled meetings.
- Dates for quarterly meetings in the coming calendar year will be set at the fourth quarterly meeting each year.
- Dependent upon availability of funds, and with consensus of the Council, LFCNC will host, participate in, or schedule an annual convening or other type of meeting of local and regional

food councils within the state to provide training, networking opportunities, and planning for strategic food systems.

Membership:

1. Members of LFCNC are state-wide organizations and agencies that were appointed to the previously legislated Sustainable Local Foods Advisory Council or others approved for membership by existing LFCNC members.
2. All members in good standing, based on attendance (see Guiding Principle 5), may vote during Council and Ad hoc committee meetings.
3. Statewide organizations and agencies who are not currently LFCNC members may either be nominated by an existing member or by submission of a written request to join LFCNC. Nominees or petitioners are voted on by the existing membership at the fourth quarterly meeting each year. If there is not a quorum present, an electronic voting process will be established to vote on new members.
4. If a member does not participate in four consecutive quarterly meetings, the member will be asked if another representative is available to participate. If the member has no employee who can participate regularly, the member will be removed from LFCNC. The former member may be nominated or may petition to join at a later date if they express a commitment and willingness to actively participate.
5. Local Food Council membership:
 - a. LFCNC is committed to finding ways to involve local or regional level food councils in its governance and decision-making process. LFCNC will seek input from local and regional food councils to ascertain how they would like to be involved; through membership in the council, through participation (but not membership) in the council, or in some other way. LFCNC will revisit this provision annually and revise it allow involvement in ways local and regional councils prefer.
 - b. Until the above provision regarding membership by local and regional councils is revisited and revised:
 - i. Local or regional food council members may participate in ad hoc committees as appropriate.
 - ii. Local or regional food council members are permitted and encouraged to attend and participate in LFCNC meetings.

Officers/Subcommittees/Staff:

- Nominations for officers will occur annually, during the fourth quarterly meeting. Officers will include Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary and will be known as the Executive Team.
- A member may hold a position on the Executive Team for no more than three consecutive years. If a member serves on the Executive Team for three consecutive years, that member will become eligible to be nominated to the Executive Team again after a two year hiatus.
- All members in good standing may vote for the Executive Team.
- The Executive Team, under leadership of the Chair, will be responsible for setting the meeting schedule and developing meeting agendas.
- The Chair will preside at Council meetings.
- The Vice-Chair will chair the meetings in the absence of the Chair.

- The Secretary will be responsible for recording the meeting minutes, circulating minutes to all LFCNC members at least two weeks prior to the next LFCNC meeting, and uploading the approved meeting minutes onto the council website.
- Minutes consist of a record of members present, members absent, staff and observers; member updates; new action items; decisions made; successes; and deferred decisions.
- Minutes are approved when a majority of members present vote to approve them at a meeting of the LFCNC. Members are entitled to review the minutes for at least two weeks prior to any vote on whether to approve minutes.
- The Secretary is responsible for reviewing and forwarding questions, comments and concerns expressed by local and regional food council members to all LFCNC members and ensuring that a timely response is provided.
- LFCNC will consider and vote upon assessment of membership dues and pursuit of grant funding for activities that may include: funding of support staff, staff salaries, and/or Council activities and deliverables, etc. on an annual basis.

Miscellaneous:

- The fiscal/operating year for LFCNC will be the calendar year.
- The LFCNC will annually review this governance document and vote on any recommended changes during the fourth quarterly meeting.