

The Fresh Food Fund & Civic Engagement 101

Background:

Illinois spends \$48 billion annually for food, encompasses 28 million of the world's richest and most productive agricultural soils, and imports 95% of what we eat. Because we import our food, we export our food dollars. Retaining these daily expenditures within local neighborhood and community economies would enrich Illinois families, businesses, local governments, and the state Treasury. These dollars would spur local businesses development, entrepreneurial opportunity, jobs, youth mentorship programs, public health, community security, interconnectedness, and hope for a better future. Building rural and urban farm to fork networks in communities statewide would revitalize Illinois communities by retaining our food dollars for circulation locally.

The Fresh Food Fund (SB1221)

The Illinois Fresh Food Financing Initiative (IFFFI) is a capitalization program designed to increase access to fresh food in underserved communities across Illinois. Responsible use of IFFFI taxpayer dollars would simultaneously mitigate the underlying social and economic turbulence that caused a community to now have diminished access to fresh food.

Currently these \$10 million dollars of public monies are appropriated to provide access to fresh food in underserved communities by building conventional supermarkets. Our statewide target is to allow this money for use to also build non-traditional purveyors of fresh food in underserved communities. These non-traditional purveyors should include small format grocery stores, farmers markets, farm stands, mobile processing and delivery units, co-ops, buying clubs, Community Supported Agriculture shares, corner stores, and food kiosks. Eligible projects should also include land and infrastructure required for neighborhood farm production, processing, and food distribution networks.

The Illinois Food, Farms, and Jobs Act of 2009 (Public Act 96-578)

The Illinois Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act of 2009 is an economic development, job creation, rural/urban revitalization, public health, and homeland security initiative. This Bill was enacted by the Illinois General Assembly in May of 2009 and signed into law by Governor Pat Quinn during a public ceremony at the Illinois State Fair August 18, 2009.

Nearly two years of research created a Task Force Report commissioned by the Illinois General Assembly, which can be found at www.food.farms.jobs.org. This Report provided the General Assembly with recommendations for how it could facilitate the building of a farm to fork economy. PA 96-578 commissioned the creation of The Illinois Food, Farms, and Jobs Council, whose mandate is to help local entrepreneurs build their farm to fork economy in rural and urban communities statewide.

The GROW Awareness Campaign & Civic Engagement 101

GROW has been documenting the movement in Illinois and across the nation to make local food a reality we can all taste. We work to create awareness around the issues of local food, health, and civic engagement, believing that shared resources and information are some of the most powerful tools we have for strengthening the community. Sharing our insights with others creates a stronger,

healthier, more interconnected public in which citizens have greater ability to advocate for needs and wishes. In response to issues of health, economic revitalization, and community resilience, *are we ripe for change?* Find out more at: <http://growmovie.wordpress.com/trailer>

SB1221, PA 96-578, and Civic Engagement 101

Elected officials, public servants, citizens, and the statewide Illinois Local Food and Farm Coalition that supported the enactment of PA96-578 seek your support in allowing local communities the choice for how they access fresh food.

Civic Engagement 101

Civic Engagement 101 is a presentation designed to help citizens and grassroots organizers become effective in the passage of public policy objectives. To succeed in achieving policy enactment, two campaigns must be coordinated interdependently:

1. Well organized grassroots campaigns (GRCs)
2. Equally organized internal government campaigns (IGCs)

I. Principles for Organizing an Effective Grassroots Campaign (GRC):

- Talk with people to find whether others in the community have similar objectives as you
- Collectivize a vision that unites people in positive language that will generate support both with the community of concern and within the halls of government
- Create networks of support as broad and diverse in demographics and geography as needed
- Phrase your message in the language of the people you are speaking to
- Establish mature leadership and train future leaders
- Assign tasks responsibly:
 - Align responsibilities with individuals possessing both the desire and the capacity to accomplish them
- Distribute power, responsibility, and oversight throughout the community
 - grow a community-based movement founded on principles of fairness, inclusion, and mutual respect
- Distribute honor and recognition broadly amongst movement participants
 - maintain unity within the movement
- Establish an effective means for communicating and coordinating efforts
- Stage events and institute media strategies that promote the initiative
- Make note of participants who are proficient at communicating responsibly with government officials
- Talk with public servants to “feel-out” support and receive both GRC and IGC advice

II. Principles for Organizing an Effective Internal Governmental Campaign (IGC):

True public servants need grassroots people to support them in causes. Therefore, effective IGCs should:

- Build leadership within the GRC that can organize an effective IGC
 - Utilize individuals who communicate responsibly and effectively with government officials
- Search-out allies in the required governing body from as broad and diverse a demographic and geography as necessary, including respected elected officials, public servants, and offices of government:
 1. Strategically select a respected government leader as the point person for the IGC:
 - preferably one holding a majority party position with passion to lead the IGC
 2. Select a respected government leader holding a minority party position and the passion to lead the minority IGC
- With the IGC's point leadership established, build broad-based support from both sides of the isle, opposing parties, and demographics by:
 1. showing each official how your issue benefits one or more of his or her agendas
 2. demonstrating their constituent benefit and/or support for your agenda
- Direct new government allies to coordinate their work with the IGC's point leadership
- If public officials ask questions whose answers are not known, say, "I don't know, but I will get back to you with an answer."
 1. Return a response as soon as possible
 2. Always respond, even if the answer cannot be found or you do not like the answer you have found.
 3. When applicable, modify initiative accordingly (This makes friends from opponents and strengthens support for the initiative and the initiative itself
- Prove yourself *always* mature, respectful, reasonable, responsible, honest, and trustworthy. Do not make a mistake in this arena!
- Strategically share activities of the GRC with officials (never stretch the truth, share too much, or withhold pertinent information)
- Meet with each of your lead officials before crucial events to:
 1. Support them
 2. Refresh their memories
 3. Answer questions
- Do not expect IGC leaders to know your issue as well as you or to possess your passion for the issue:
 1. Be patient: these are very busy people with many issues before them
 2. Listen to government leaders, taking cues from every conversation
 3. Coordinate strategies with them, be honest but respectful, never waste their time
 4. Support them and ask for direction
 5. Do not expect them to do the majority of the IGC work--even within government
 6. Never grow frustrated with the culture of any government, irrespective of its perceived ineptness
 7. Never do or say anything that will embarrass them

8. Apologize when you make a mistake
- Be friendly and courteous to friends and foes alike
 - Talk with opponents:
 1. Do not get angry and do nothing that makes them angry
 2. Ask legitimately why they are in opposition, listen with an open ear, acknowledge where they are correct, and be willing to make any modifications to fit their reality that do not compromise the objective of the initiative
 3. Apologize when you make a mistake
 4. Seek gently to make them an ally, or at minimum to neutralize their opposition
 5. Never make an enemy
 - Strategically integrate the GRC with the IGC. They must be separate but interdependent campaigns.

If you cannot build the IGC support required to succeed, go back and reapply Principles in categories I. and II. Having failed to organize an effective GRC and/or IGC, you will likely fail governmentally.

The Fresh Food Fund

Lending your support and participation to this issue by joining the network of elected officials, public servants, and concerned citizens at The Illinois Local Food and Farm Coalition (<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/IllinoisLocalFoods/>) will expand the existing database of people who can be reached by action alerts sent when citizen participation with the IGC is required. Together we can do good things for the people of Illinois.

Sarah Carlson: Grow Awareness
Chicago, Illinois 60640
sarahacarlson@gmail.com
Cell: 817-522-8313

Jim Braun: Interim Coordinator Illinois Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Council
Springfield, Illinois 62704
jbraun2525@yahoo.com
Cell: 515-229-2679