

## **Food for All Policy Writing Team Toolbox**

In this guide you will find the following materials to help guide you through the research and policy writing process. You do not need to read everything in this Toolbox – use the materials that are of use to you. (However, please use the Research Findings Template and Policy Template to submit your work.)

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## Step-By-Step Guide

This is a big job, but important work. Keep in mind that there are many supports and resources to help. If you get stuck, ask your fellow Policy Writing Team members, or the Food for All team. Together, we will make sure that we develop thorough, clear, well-researched, and innovative policies that will make our food system in Ottawa better.

### 1. Get Organized

Each team will have a Facilitator (or co-facilitators), that will call and facilitate meetings, collect all of the work of the team, keep a record of your team's activities and any expenses, and communicate with the Food for All coordinator.

### 2. Prioritize Policy Areas

Identify policy areas that are of high priority, and those that are of lesser priority/interest

The subject matter for each team has been clearly defined and outlined. You can find a description of each team further on in this Toolbox. It is important that each team focus on the policy areas outlined for their team so that your work does not overlap or is duplicated. If your team is unsure as to whether a particular policy area falls under your team, you can speak with other teams directly, or with the Food for All coordinator.

At your first meeting, review the policy areas that your team is responsible for, and prioritize the policies that your team will work on. Prioritize based on:

- Your team's interest in the policy areas – Work on areas that team members are highly motivated to work on first, and other areas later
- Consider the relative difficulty/complexity of the policy areas – You might find it easier to start right away on the policies that seem more straight-forward, and then work on some of the more complex policies as your team feels more comfortable working together. On the other hand, you may wish to begin with some of the more complex policies, as these may take more time.

Once the policy areas have been identified in order of priority, you can start to divide up the tasks of research and writing amongst your team.

If there are policy areas that your team is not interested or able to work on, we will look for additional team members, or find other ways of developing those policies. Try to identify these gap areas as early on in the process as possible and inform the Food for All Coordinator.

### 3. Assign tasks

Who will work on what, and how will work be shared amongst your team? Depending on your team members' interests, availability, and strengths, you can divide up tasks based on policy area, or type of research – it's up to you.

Your team will need to decide how you are going to work and report back to one another. Some options for organizing the Policy Writing Team include:

- Dividing tasks among team members to work on individually and communicating by email or telephone to discuss and review your work
- Assembling smaller teams of 2 or 3 that can meet together as needed and work together to develop specific policies, and report back to the larger group
- Meeting together as a large group on a regular basis to discuss and plan your work

Food for All is an inclusive process – in organizing the Policy Writing Teams, we need to work together to make sure that every team member can contribute and have their voice heard. This might mean that different team members contribute in different ways. Group work can sometimes be a challenge – if any issues or concerns arise, please let the Food for All team know.

#### **4. Do it!**

Use the rest of tools in this Toolbox as needed to help you as you research and write policies with your team. Please use the Policy Template and Research Findings sheets to keep track of your work. Ask your colleagues, friends, and family to give you ideas and feedback. If your team requires printing, photocopying, meeting space, or access to computers or internet, or anything else, the Food for All coordinator can help to arrange these.

#### **5. Review your work as a team**

Bring policy proposals and research findings to your team to discuss and agree upon. If your team is unsure of how to proceed with a particular policy, the Food for All team can ask our Advisory Committee and Steering Committee for advice. Use the Food for All Statement of Values (in this Toolbox) to help guide your policies. No policy can contravene any of the values in this Statement, and all of the policies should respond to as many of these values as possible – we're looking for systemic solutions that address a multitude of needs.

#### **6. Submit your draft policies and research findings**

Once your team has completed, reviewed, and agreed upon the policy proposals and research findings, the Policy Writing Team Facilitator(s) will gather them and submit them to the Food for All Coordinator.

In late August or early September, we will compile all of the policies into a larger draft document, and ask all Food for All participants – and later, community members – to provide feedback. One or two members of your team should be available during this period to speak on behalf of your team and answer questions about the policies that your team has developed, as well as to incorporate changes and prepare a second draft, if needed.

#### **7. Next steps**

##### *Public Review, Editing, Revising, and Launch*

In the fall, we will continue to fine-tune our policy drafts and incorporate community feedback. We will be hosting public forums in October and November, and compiling a final draft after that. If you wish, you may continue to be involved as an editor, writer, or in organizing the community meetings, explaining the policy proposals, and keeping track of community feedback. However, if your time doesn't permit, there will be other ways of participating that will require less of your time.

## Food for All's Policy Development Timeline

### **First Meeting of the Policy Writing Team (June)**

The Policy Writing Teams will have their first meeting with the Food for All Coordinator in June.

### **Researching and Writing (July – August)**

The Policy Writing Teams are working. Each Policy Writing Team will set their own internal goals and deadlines to help complete their work.

### **“Almost Finished” Meeting (end of August)**

By this time, the Policy Writing Teams should have a good sense of the policy proposals that they will be submitting and their work should be well under way. Most policy proposals are already well-developed and have been discussed by the team, or there is a plan in place to do so.

### **Review with Food for All workshop participants (1 month; September)**

The Food for All Coordinator and the Policy Writing Team Coordinator will distribute your Policy Writing Team's proposals to other participants of the Spring workshops for feedback and comments. At this time, we will also be asking others with subject area expertise to review the proposals and provide feedback.

### **Food for All Review (1 month, October)**

Each Policy Writing Team will incorporate the feedback from other Food for All workshop participants as appropriate (note – it is not necessary for all members of the Policy Writing Team to do this).

The edited policy proposals will be shared amongst all Food for All participants to date for their feedback and comments. Editors will work to incorporate this feedback, and a draft for public review will be completed by October 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Public Meetings and Feedback (2 months, November-December)**

The Food for All team will host a series of public meetings in different locations in Ottawa for members of the public to learn about the policy proposals that have been drafted, and to provide their feedback and comments. The Food for All team will bring the policy proposals to various decision-makers and stakeholders in Ottawa for their feedback and comments. This will include our City Councillors and staff at the City of Ottawa, the National Capital Commission, school boards, and other key organizations involved in food issues in the City of Ottawa. The deadline to receive comments from the public and from decision-makers will be December 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Finalizing the Document (January)**

The Food for All team will incorporate comments and feedback from the public and decision makers and compile a final draft.

### **Community Launch of Food for All policy (February)**

Food for All will host a “launch” of the Food for All policy proposals, officially marking the send-off of these policies and celebrating the work completed to date.

### **Implementation**

Implementing our policies will be an ongoing process, and will continue as opportunities arise beyond the launch of the Food for All policy proposals. Through Just Food, partner organizations, and new projects, we will continue to work on implementation of these policies, particularly working with our new city Council.

## Description of Food for All Policy Writing Teams

- ***Community Gardens, Land and Soil***

This Policy Writing Team will focus on issues relating to gardening in shared spaces, access to land for gardens, soil contamination and soil health.

- ***Edible Landscape, Working with Private Institutions, City and NCC***

This Policy Writing Team will examine issues pertaining to landscaping practices in Ottawa, including the types of plants chosen, and how public and private green spaces are cared for. This team will also look at how we can move towards an edible landscape in Ottawa.

- ***Urban Livestock***

This Policy Writing Team will focus on developing a comprehensive policy to permit small animals such as chickens, rabbits, and bees in urban areas.

- ***Access to Food***

This Policy Writing Team will focus on two areas:

- ***Businesses***

This includes policies targeted towards facilitating access to healthy food in all of Ottawa's neighbourhoods. This will include zoning regulations around concentration and type of food businesses in hospitals, school zones and neighbourhoods; incentives to encourage smaller food stores to stock healthy and where possible, locally sourced foods; encouraging healthy foods in mobile food markets and food carts; supporting the development of farm-gate sales in the City and farmers' markets, particularly in underserved areas.

- ***Getting People to Food and Food to People***

This includes other means of providing access to food, such as delivery services, online and phone ordering, and transportation programs that bring people to food outlets or that bring food into underserved neighbourhoods or directly to peoples' homes. This team will also look at various transportation routes to food, including public transportation and recreational pathways.

- ***Food Education and Awareness***

This Policy Writing Team will focus on public education and awareness about food issues in Ottawa. This includes education and awareness around the realities faced by all sectors of our food system; increasing awareness about our local food sources and supplies; awareness about linkages between household food insecurity, poverty, and health; awareness about the various food programs and solutions that we have in Ottawa already; and increasing our collective food knowledge and reconnecting with our food system. This Policy Writing Team will look for innovative ways that the City, School Boards, and the NCC can support public education and awareness on these issues.

- ***Emergency Food***

This Policy Writing Team will focus on the supports and policies required for emergency food providers, including soup kitchens, food cupboards and food banks, and other meal programs. This team will look at issues such as: linkages with local farmers and gardeners, linkages with community food programs, and ways that the City can better support emergency food programs.

- ***Community Food Programs***

This Policy Writing Team will focus on the supports and policies that will strengthen existing community food programs, and that will allow new community food programs and models to thrive. Some examples of these programs include collective kitchens; community seed and tool banks; community networks to swap, share, and sell extra garden produce; programs that support individual gardeners; gleaning projects; programs that support households in accessing healthy food and learning about food issues; programs that develop food skills; and

community food processing, storing, and education centres. This Policy Writing Team will also work closely with the Community Food Programs in Our Schools Policy Writing Team. This Policy Writing Team does not include Emergency Food programs.

- ***Community Food Programs in Our Schools***

This Policy Writing Team will look at the various linkages between schools and community food programs, and how these linkages can be strengthened and supported. This includes community-school connections around school meal programs, school gardens, school kitchens and food processing, relationships between schools and local farmers, and school programs or initiatives that reach out to students' families and neighbourhoods. This Policy Writing Team will also look at initiatives to improve food in schools that can take place within the school without explicit involvement of the School Board or Ministry of Education. This Policy Writing Team will work closely with the Community Food Programs Policy Writing Team.

- ***School Boards and Food Issues in Schools***

This Policy Writing Team will focus on encouraging our school boards to develop and implement comprehensive school food policies. This will include strengthening relationships between Food for All and Ottawa school boards and partnering with them to develop school food policies. A comprehensive school food policy would include aspects such as the quality of cafeteria food and vending machines, food preparation facilities in schools, food education in classrooms, purchasing policies; and drinking water in schools.

***The following three teams will work in a different fashion, but are included here in order to provide a full picture of the range of policies being developed:***

- ***Food in Schools and the Ontario Ministry of Education***

This longer-term Policy Team will focus on the types of steps that we can begin to take to develop a more comprehensive change around food in schools by engaging with the Ontario Ministry of Education. Issues include: healthy foods policies, farm-to-school networks, food in the curriculum, and funding for schools to carry out food-related activities and programming.

- ***Market Food Production***

This Policy Writing Team will focus on issues specific to farmers and those producing food for sale in the Ottawa region. Some issues include protection of agricultural lands, supporting sale of local products in urban areas, and improving access to processing facilities for local foods.

- ***Income and the Cost of Eating (Research Group)***

This Research Group will focus on the linkages between income, poverty, household food insecurity, and health and wellbeing. This Team will not be a Policy Writing Team as such, instead, they will gather information about the various policy "asks" that other groups in our community are already organizing around as they pertain to food, income, and related issues.

## Statement of Values

The following values form the foundation of Food for All policies. Please note that these values are based on discussion and feedback to date, but will continue to be fine-tuned as we work through the policy writing process.

We agree that:

1. Everyone has the right to physical and economic access to sufficient, culturally sensitive, and nutritious food to eat. This right goes hand in hand with our collective responsibility to work to ensure that this right is fulfilled.
2. Our food system should enhance and protect all kinds of diversity, including biodiversity.
3. Inclusivity is fundamental to the Food for All process – we recognize that food options must reflect a diversity of needs, of cultures, and of spiritualities, and that a diverse spectrum of food choices can be sustainable choices.
4. We need to recognize the ways in which our food choices may or may not be sustainable, and work towards making our chosen diets more sustainable.
5. We need to work towards a food system that emphasizes social, economic, and environmental sustainability through the entire food cycle.
6. Food should be integrated into all components of community planning, including planning for walkable access to food
7. We need to work towards an edible landscape, in which all of our green areas are safe, healthy, and suitable for foraging.
8. We need to work for poverty reduction
9. Healthy, good-quality, nutritious food is the basis for wellness for all people, from the moment of birth to time of death.
10. Food knowledge and skills are a fundamental part of a person's education
11. Collectively, we need to reconnect with our food system and support one another in developing food skills
12. Supports are needed for communities to address food issues
13. Our policies are shaped on the basis of interdependence and community resilience; our government and community leaders have key roles to play
14. Food for All values long-term solutions that consider our whole community
15. Social justice and equity are fundamental components of the food system that we want
16. Together, we are not afraid to be leaders, to propose bold new directions, and to strive to regain collective control and ownership of our food system

## A Guide on Conducting Research

Our policies need to be backed up by thorough and reputable research. If we can show that our policy proposals are supported by clear evidence or have been tried in other communities, it is more likely that they will be implemented. That said, we do not need to be “experts” to gather the research needed to support our policies.

In fact, you may not even need to conduct additional research to develop your policy proposal. Much research has already been conducted by Food for All team members and volunteers which you can draw from. This includes:

- Academic literature reviews –These are reviews of the findings of academic studies.
- “Grey” literature reviews – These are reviews of information compiled by community organizations.
- Environmental Scan – A research report on food programs and initiatives in Ottawa. This report also includes information about comprehensive food policies in three other communities, and an analysis of how the Food for All project can be successful by learning from these other examples.
- Comments from Food for All participants – A summary of all of the comments in all of the Food for All workshops, organized by subject, is available for your reference.
- A series of reports on community food policy changes that have taken places in other communities in Canada and the USA.

This research is a good starting point. However, you may find that there are gaps in the information that you have, in which case you will need to conduct additional research. There should be no need to do basic, general research – after all, we already have a good sense of the policies that we want to develop, and what they might contain. Therefore, it is more likely that you will be searching for the answer to a particular question, for example, “How did Waterloo establish farmers’ markets in under-served areas?” Or, “What amount of contamination is safe in garden soil, and what levels require remediation?” Or, “What is the name of the City committee that deals with by-laws, and who is it made up of?” For these types of questions, there are a number of ways to go about finding the answers, including

- Asking people with expertise in our community or in other communities (for example, the Community Gardening Coordinator, or the lead organizer in Waterloo that was responsible for farmers’ market development)
- Asking organizations or groups in Ottawa or elsewhere for particular information (for example, organizations like the Food Bank, community health and resource centres, schools)
- Consulting the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study, which looks at neighbourhood statistical and demographic information in Ottawa
- Internet or library searches for statistical or scientific information

In most cases, we already have the information that we need – or we know where to go to get it. If you find that you are having a hard time finding a contact person or organization that can answer your question, ask in your Policy Writing Team, or the Food for All team. If you need a contact within the City of Ottawa, be sure to ask the Food for All team – we can connect you to the people that can provide answers. If you have a lead within the National Capital Commission, a school board, or other organization, go ahead and pursue it.

It’s important to keep track of the research that we do find, so that we can use it to demonstrate that our policy proposals are relevant, well-researched, and thorough. Make sure to keep a copy of any documents that you consult (either electronic or print), and keep notes of conversations or meetings where information is shared.

## Research Findings Template

Use this document to keep track of the research that you conduct and the results that you have found. The first table is to keep track of documents, including printed reports, information found on reputable websites, videos or audio recordings, policy documents from other communities, and other such information. The second table is to keep track of other kinds of research – such as information collected at lectures, public meetings, and through conversations with businesses, community organizations, community leaders, and others. Please be accurate, and save or keep a copy of the document, minutes, or notes as appropriate.

Documents				
Title	Author or Organization	Date Published	Brief Description of Contents	Exact Link or description of location

Other Research				
Nature of Research (eg. attended public meeting, met with Councillor)	With or by whom?	When and where?	Brief Description of Results	Location of notes, official minutes, or transcript of event (if applicable)

## A Guide on Writing Policy Proposals

### What is policy?

Policies can be guidelines, rules, regulations, laws, principles, or directions. They say what is to be done, who is to do it, how it is to be done, and for (or to) whom it is to be done.

- *Personal policy* is your own guideline for actions based on your personal standards, beliefs, and values.
- *Organizational policy* guides how organizations and businesses operate.
- *Public policy* guides how federal, provincial and municipal governments operate and address specific issues or problems.

### Who do our policy proposals address?

Food for All is developing a series of policy proposals that we would like to see the City of Ottawa, the National Capital Commission, and School Boards take action on. These three bodies have the authority and the capacity to make policies, fund them, enforce them, and monitor them. We are not targeting the Province of Ontario, or the Canadian government – although in key areas, we might choose to ask the City of Ottawa to take action at these levels on behalf of Ottawa residents.

More specifically, a policy proposal may address a particular Committee, or the members of a Committee within the City of Ottawa. A policy proposal may also address a policy that already exists which we would like to see improved, cancelled, or otherwise amended. Wherever possible, include these details in your policy proposals.

### Policies, Programs, and Projects: What's the difference?

Policies are different from programs and projects. Policies are the overarching rules and guidelines, while a program will take certain actions, has staff and funding allocated to it, and concrete objectives or deliverables. A project is similar, but has a start and an end date. For example,

- *Policy*: The City of Ottawa will provide funding to community-delivered initiatives that addresses food insecurity amongst pregnant women.
- Buns in the Oven is a *program* that offers prenatal nutrition information and support to pregnant teens and women requiring extra supports.
- Food for All is a 2-year *project* to develop municipal food policies in Ottawa

Food for All is developing *policy* proposals – not project or program proposals. The policy proposals that your team develops might refer to particular programs or projects, but the scope of a policy proposal is broader than a project or program idea. If you are getting stuck distinguishing between these, think of the framework, conditions, supports, or rules that your idea would require. What is the intention, what kinds of actions would need to be carried out, and how would we evaluate the impact of the policy?

### How detailed should the proposals be?

Our policies need to contain a certain level of detail in order to be effective. If we include too few details, it will be impossible to implement the policies, and they might be misinterpreted or weakened, when decision makers set out in putting them into action. Targets, timelines, and dollar figures are important to include where appropriate. On the other hand, we do not necessarily have the expertise to outline every detail of each policy –

some aspects, like which Department would implement the policy, exactly how staff would be trained, and other specific details, are best left open-ended.

Here are two examples that show the level of detail that would be required as we write our policy proposals.

*A good start:* “The City of Ottawa should be setting aside greenspace for community gardens, and planning to set aside greenspace for community gardens in the future.”

*A more detailed proposal:* “The City of Ottawa should designate 25% of all existing City-owned greenspace for community gardening by 2012; and designate 75% of all new or converted greenspaces to community gardening.”

### **Policy Tools**

Policy proposals can also include details regarding how the policy will be implemented. Policy tools are the specific actions that the City, National Capital Commission, or School Boards can take in order to achieve the goals of the policy. The following policy tools may help to shape your policy proposals.

- Programs
- Grants
- Subsidies
- Expenditures
- Taxes
- Public Ownership
- Procedures
- Standards
- Guidelines
- Regulation
- Legislation
- Information
- Education

### **Completing the Proposal**

Your policy proposal should also outline the vision, barrier, or gap that the policy is addressing, include a description of the rationale for the policy, and provide the specific evidence that your proposal is based on. You will find a Policy Template which outlines the type of information required further below.

## Policy Template

This document is to be used by Policy Writing Teams to generate Policy Proposals. You can delete the information in brackets as you fill out each section. Fill out as much information as you can, focusing first on the areas marked with a star \*.

**\*Policy Name:**

(A short name to refer to this policy)

**\*Values:**

(Which of the Food for All values does this Policy address?)

**Pertains to:**

(Does this policy proposal refer directly to an existing by-law, regulation, or practice? If yes, which one, and who is responsible for it? If not, which organization or department does this proposal target? Why is it relevant to the organization/department that it is targeted towards?)

**\*Vision/Barrier/Gap:**

(What is the goal of this policy? What barrier or problem is it addressing?)

**\*Rationale:**

(Why do we need this policy? Why is it important? Why now?)

**Evidence/Precedent:**

(What research, statistics, or other documented evidence is there that supports this policy? Have any other communities implemented a similar policy? If so, what have been the results? List the source of the evidence/precedent and keep track of all sources, links, and contact information in the Research Findings document.)

**\*Policy Details:**

(Outline in detail what we are asking for: Include any specific targets, timelines, dollar amounts, or other specifics of the policy here.)

**See Also:**

(What other proposals are we making that relate to this policy proposal)