

Activity: Food Policy Brief



TIME ESTIMATE

1h outside of class time
30 min in-class discussion



MATERIALS

Sheets of paper or a notebook and writing materials for all participants

PURPOSE

To determine an issue related to local food and create a policy brief for a particular audience.

DESCRIPTION

Food policy is an important tool for advancing the food movement. In this activity, participants will individually or in pairs create a policy brief related to local food - it will be up to the participants to determine what the issue is and how to frame it. Participants are encouraged to keep in mind who their selected audience is for this brief - the general public, a nonprofit/NGO, the local government or another group.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Facilitator Note

Allow class time for small group discussion based on the following guiding questions ahead of writing the policy brief. Divide the group into smaller groups of 3-5 and have them go through the following questions:

- What is the issue related to the local food system that you would like to address? Some examples include:
 - Lack of availability of culturally relevant foods in the local food options
 - Prevalence of urban agriculture as a band-aid solution
 - What potential resources are available related to this issue?
- How have other places/ people/ organizations tackled this issue?
 - What strategies were employed?
 - What were the effects?
 - Who was involved in that process?
- How may these documents be perpetuating the "Local Trap"?¹ How do these documents define local food? Whose goals do they serve?
- What are some food policies/ plans/ strategies in your locality?
 - Example: [Vancouver Food Strategy](#)

¹ Born, B., & Purcell, M. (2006). Avoiding the local trap: Scale and food systems in planning research. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 26(2), 195-207. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X06291389>

NOTES:

ASSESSMENT: POLICY BRIEF

Write a policy brief to a leader in your community (government, philanthropy, business, NGO, etc.) on a topic related to local food and food justice. Define the issue and explore options for addressing this at the policy level. What solutions will you promote? What resources does this solution require? What are the desired impacts of this solution? What are the potential benefits and negative effects of this solution? How will different communities groups experience these effects? Write in a clear, accessible tone; avoid the use of jargon.

Template for Policy Brief¹

The policy brief is a written document that conveys the following:

- Policy issue
- Background related to the issue
- Information pertinent to the Issue (this may include current law, debate about the issue, data about the issue)
- Policy Options
- Recommendations
- References

Sample Outline

1. Title
2. Executive Summary (Can omit if policy brief is just one page long)
3. Statement of the Issue/Problem: Brief (2-3 sentence) statement describing the issue. What is the problem that this policy brief addresses?
4. Background: An explanation of the problem and its significance. Include support as needed, including references to research literature if relevant
5. Information pertinent to the issue: This may pertain to current laws needing to be changed, current debate about the issue, and/or data about the issue
6. Responses and Policy options: What has been done (or proposed) about the issue so far? Have other organizations addressed it? Are there pending legislative or regulatory proposals?
7. Recommendations: List recommendations about what different actors should do —e.g., politicians, state legislatures, relevant government agencies, health systems leaders, other nursing organizations, etc. This is highly context specific.
8. References: Use endnotes throughout the brief rather than in-text citations.

Sample policy documents for analysis:

- [Municipal Food Policy Entrepreneurs: A preliminary analysis of how Canadian cities and regional districts are involved in food system change](#) by Toronto Food Policy Council (June 2013)
- [Vancouver Food Strategy Plan](#) (January 2013)
- [Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy](#)
- [Ontario Local Food Act](#) (2013)
- [Vancouver Food Strategy Action Plan](#) (2017-2020)

¹ Adapted from Woods, N.F. & Shannon, S.E. (2016). Assignment 2: Health Policy Brief. NSG 551 A: Health Politics And Policy. Retrieved from <https://cas.vas.uw.edu/courses/1024901/assignments/3089581>