

Hosting a Local Food Summit

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What is it?

A local food summit is a public meeting to bring together stakeholders in the local and regional food system. The summit can be shorter or longer depending on your objective for the event. Generally, it is ideal to provide *learning* content as well as space for people to *discuss* local food system issues and *network* with each other.

Why have a local food summit?

If your community or neighborhood has been working to bring more food system stakeholders to the table, a publicized summit event can help get the word out and bring in food citizens who may not already be involved in food system projects as part of their work. It can also raise awareness among groups already working in food systems to create synergies and collaborations.

You can create an objective for the event, and that can shape how you approach the invitation list and agenda. Because it is a public event, give a press release and invite guests with high profiles to participate or have a special role, like welcoming everyone to the Summit. You will also want your attendees to network with one another, so structured and unstructured time to do that is important.

Possible Objectives

- Build network connections for local food system
- Foster producer to buyer connections and/or B2B facilitated networking
- Learn and discuss local food system issues specific to your community
- Invite collaborations or project ideas
- Raise awareness among consumers about local food purchasing options
- Organize core team and supporting team for grant application or implementation
- Create focus areas for discussion to understand community concerns regarding food system

Community Readiness for a food summit and follow up learning events

This section to be completed with Alva's research IRB currently in process.

Extension's Role in a local food summit

The county or regional Extension office can have several roles in a local food summit, and ideally, more than one of your agents would be involved to fulfill those roles. Partners can also have these same roles, depending on who is leading the Summit planning process. For whomever is leading, careful thinking about how you are going to support these stakeholders after the summit is an essential part of the process. You can set a next steps meeting date before the summit and announce it, or plan to convene the group with the strongest support (i.e. developing a local food council) following the Summit. People who attend will expect that they will be able to engage further, and you do not want to miss the opportunity to capture this engaged audience!

Extension offices may be looking to create community leadership for local food to have impact in the community. Projects such as farm to school, farmers market training and technical assistance, urban farming, food council development, food network support, grower-buyer meetings, forming a grower cooperative, campaign launch, food entrepreneurship, leadership program, grant writing program are just a sample of ideas and projects that can have measurable impact in the community.

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A word about food

If you plan to have a meal or snacks at your food summit, work with a caterer who will agree to source food from local farmers for this event, if they do not already do so. Not only will it increase your community connections for local food, it will demonstrate your commitment to the process of sourcing local, which is not always easy.

Moreover, you can invite your farmers to attend and share their story about the food from their farm.

Planning the Summit

A small committee of Extension and Partners can be involved in the planning of the food summit and several meetings will be necessary to execute this event. Six months is a good amount of time to plan, discuss, learn and invite others to the event to make it a success. Less than six months and you may have low attendance, problems finding speakers, or catering/locally sourced food. Each of your planning meetings will address the Summit Agenda and Summit Logistics.

Meeting 1: Objectives and Assets

1. Discuss and determine objective(s) for the local food summit.
2. Discuss local food system assets in the community and brainstorm ideas for learning topics.
3. Assign responsibilities for the logistics of hosting a food summit. Choose a date.

Meeting 2: Learning Agenda for Summit

1. Review objectives outlined for hosting local food summit in meeting #1 and finalize.
2. Prioritize and narrow focus for learning topic(s) for the event
3. Brainstorm speakers to present about those topics as a general topics and as specific to your community.
4. Draft your local food summit agenda – including day, length, food and location.

Meeting 3: Speakers and Partners for Summit

1. Planning Lead will need reports from all the planning committee groups on the progress of the summit planning.
2. Discuss speakers, sponsors and invitation lists as a group to brainstorm an inclusive, long list of potential participants and technical assistance providers. Understand who is doing what to address these tasks.
3. Discuss budget and determine registration costs, who will host registration and distribute payments to caterer, facility, speakers, etc.

Meeting 4: Facilitative Leadership and Host Responsibilities

1. Planning Lead will need reports from all the planning committee groups on the progress of the summit planning.
2. Issues, problems or concerns
3. Discuss and assign roles for event

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Meeting 1: Objectives and Assets Agenda

Purpose: To discuss, as a planning committee, the objectives for the food summit, the knowledge we want our community to gain about local food systems, and to assign tasks and responsibilities for the summit event.

1. Discuss and determine objective(s) for the local food summit.

Take a moment to think about WHY you are interested in hosting this event in your community. Here are a few questions you might use to reflect. You can answer these questions and/or write down three reasons why a local food summit will benefit your community.

Why are we hosting this public event? Do we have local food systems assets in our community that need attention? What are those assets?

Do we have a strong network of people working in various aspects of the local food system and the community food system, or can we improve the network?

What is our role in hosting the summit and do we have a role after the summit?

What is my role in the local food system, and what can I offer the local food system network?

What do we want people to DO after the summit?

2. Discuss local food system assets in the community and brainstorm ideas for learning topics. Use this time to think about your local food system and what your community and region have that is unique, or innovative, or excellent or working. These are the people in the local food system network that can be highlighted for their efforts, and bring more people into the network to help strengthen their work, learn about others work and create synergies among networkers. Here are some asset prompts to help with your brainstorming activity:

Farmers (growing, raising, processing food for local and regional markets)

Coordination (how local food gets to market – trucking, storage, marketing, backhauling)

Markets (where you currently buy local food in your area – farmers market, restaurants, food service, schools, universities, grocers, pop-up markets, etc.)

Buyers (consumers, local retailers, local restaurants, etc.)

Community (food system issues – food insecurity, food literacy for youth, public health, local economy, food system workers, healthy food access, culturally appropriate food, etc.)

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Meeting 1: Objectives and Assets (continued)

3. Assign responsibilities for the logistics of hosting a food summit. Below is a list of tasks to prepare for the food summit event. They have been grouped by similar skillsets but your committee can assign/volunteer as you see fit.

Planning Lead- this person will lead the planning meetings and follow up with questions about logistics, speakers, etc. This is the 'point person' or 'designated worrier' to ensure the summit planning is on track and on time. This person may finalize the agenda, communicate formally with invited speakers, format final documents for attendees, in addition to supporting other committee tasks.

Name(s):

Master of Lists – this person or team will work with others in the group to brainstorm names for formal invitations, manage attendance and work with sponsors for donations, funds, donated food for recognition.

Name(s):

Marketing Guru – This person or team will work with others in the group to create invitations, flyers, emails, social media posts, draft press release and get these materials sent, posted, and published.

Name(s):

Food Monger – This person or team will work with others in the group, and line up the food for the event through a caterer, food truck or other food service. They will work to source local food from farmers, and determine cost, beverage service, food allergy accommodations, service ware, permissions, etc.

Name(s):

Facility Manager – This person or team will work with others in the group to secure a location for a low or no cost rate, work with the food monger to follow rules and regulations for food service and determine room layout for summit, networking, vendors or other activities on the agenda. This team will also secure the needed AV equipment (projector, laptop, speakers, mic, screen, etc) needed for the summit.

Name(s):

Evaluator & Budgeter– This person will create evaluation tool from existing resources, create a future engagement survey and print materials in preparation for the summit.

Name(s):

Sweeper – Write down other tasks specific to your group that were missed above and assign.

Name(s):

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Hosting a Local Food Summit

Meeting 1: Objectives and Assets Committee Responsibilities	Who	Deadline	Notes
Planning Lead Finalize Agenda Speakers Printed format			
Master of Lists Create Invitation List and send invitations Create Sponsor List and make asks Manage RSVPs and attendance			
Marketing Guru Create/send invitations, flyers, emails, FB posts, etc. Draft/review/send press release Draft/review/send event handouts			
Food Monger Organize food Beverages Food allergies Local food procurement			
Facility Manager Organize use of space Catering arrangements Room layout Projector, speakers, mics, other tech needs			
Evaluator and Budgeter Create/print evaluation tool Create/print future engagement survey Create budget for the event including sponsors, donations, catering, facility			

Meeting 2: Learning Agenda for Summit

Purpose: To review and finalize Local Food Summit objectives, finalize learning topics, create a draft agenda assigned to committee teams and discuss speakers.

1. Review the objectives of the summit and secure committee approval. Write down Objectives(s) for the Summit below and create 1-2 PR or marketing statements to use on all materials for the event (flyers, formal invitations, social media, press release, etc)
2. Finalize learning topics and spend some time discussing potential speakers. Who would speak generally about a topic (i.e. what is farm to school), and who can speak specifically about what they are doing (i.e. Here is what we are doing in farm to school in our community)? Do you need a panel? Who will moderate the panel and what information do you want from your panelists?
3. Draft your agenda and determine the length of your event, what activities will be part of this event? Do you want to formalize networking with a 'speed dating' sort of activity? What about a farmer/food business/community organization vendor faire? Are you going to have a keynote speaker for lunch? If so, did you leave enough time for informal lunchtime networking? See sample agendas to get some ideas for your planning process.

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Meeting 2: Learning Agenda for Summit

Sample Agendas for Local Food Summits

Sample #1 Objective: to create community leadership on a topic that will receive further support from hosting organization

Time	Activity
:30	Registration and Welcome
:45	Learning speaker – invite an experienced speaker to deliver research or experiential information to attendees on a specific topic that is part of objective, topic should connect to afternoon table discussions
:15	Break
1:30	Short Panel – facilitate a panel of speakers, representative of the local food chain that can speak to their experience in local food
1:30	Lunch and Networking – invite attendees to introduce themselves and/or sit with someone at lunch they do not know, remind them that this networking is part of the event
1:30	Facilitated table discussions – host group will facilitate small roundtable discussions on focused topic (see facilitator handout page)
:15	Report out – each table facilitator should report to the larger group about their round table discussion, highlighting 2-3 key themes that were most important for the group at the table
:15	Next Steps - to-do list for attendees, line of communication – the host will need to reconvene the larger group to invite next steps, facilitate some final discussions around next steps, invite attendees to complete the evaluation and future involvement forms and communication and sharing of attendee's contact information among the group to facilitate future communication

Sample Agenda #2: This was a very small, local food summit held in Gibson County in 2017. Hans Schmitz led the planning for the event with the objective of seeing if there was broad interest in the community for local food system work.

10:00 AM	Welcome and Introductions	Hans Schmitz
10:15 AM	Building a Local Food Economy	Jodee Ellett
11:00 AM	FoodLink sm	Amy Thompson
11:30 AM	Welborn Foundation: HEROES and food procurement	Laura Mesker
12:00 PM	Lunch and Networking	Catering by R'z Cafe
1:00 PM	Facilitated Discussion	Jodee Ellett
2:00 PM	Community Garden Successes	Troy Baize, Community Corrections Kelly Kelley, Gibson County Health Department
2:15 PM	Next Steps & Closing Remarks	Jodee Ellett

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Sample Agenda #3 Objective: to build awareness and network connections in the local food system to see where community may want further support. This agenda is helpful for communities with various activities in the local food system, but not strong connectivity or public awareness

Time	Activity
:30	Registration and Welcome
1:30	Morning Panel – invite the food system project leaders from the community to present about their work and facilitate questions from moderator and attendees, invite panelists to stay for the afternoon discussions
1:30	Lunch and Networking – invite attendees to introduce themselves and/or sit with someone at lunch they do not know, remind them that this networking is part of the event
	Invited keynote speaker – this speaker may talk about the value of creating a relocalized food system, someone who is inspirational rather than technical
:45	Facilitated Table Discussions – invite guests to join a table with a topic of interest and participate in community discussions about the food system.
:15	Report out – each table facilitator should report to the larger group about their round table discussion, highlighting 2-3 key themes that were most important for the group at the table
:15	Next Steps - to-do list for attendees, line of communication – the host will need to reconvene the larger group to invite next steps, facilitate some final discussions around next steps, invite attendees to complete the evaluation and future involvement forms and communication and sharing of attendee's contact information among the group to facilitate future communication
	Closing Remarks and Thank you

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Sample Agenda #4

This agenda was for the first Local Food Summit in Allen County where food hubs and food councils were two learning topics that were of primary interest to the Allen County Extension office. Following the meeting, the Allen County office supported monthly meetings for the food hub and food council committees that formed during the summit. The Allen County office hosts food summits each year, and as a result now have a partner who hosted the last food summit with more than 150 attendees!

9:00 – 9:10	Welcome	Jodee Ellett, Vickie Hadley Purdue Extension
9:15 – 10:00	Food Hubs – What is a food hub? What activities exist in Fort Wayne? In Indiana? Panel of current activities	Jodee Ellett
10:00 – 10:30	Break, Networking	
10:30 – 11:30	Food Councils: Why and How to Begin	Emily Toner Purdue Extension, Marion County
11:30 – 12:30	Lunch	
12:30 – 1:30	Facilitated Discussion – choose your table of interest	All – choose two topics and join in the conversation in rounds one and two to contribute to the community discussion
1:30-2:30	Fort Wayne Food Hub Farm to School for our Children Food Council for Allen County Urban and Neighborhood Farms and Gardens Youth Entrepreneurship and Farming	
2:30 – 3:00	Next Steps	Jodee Ellett
3:00	Closing Remarks	

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Meeting 3: Speakers and Partners for Summit

Agenda

Purpose: This meeting will focus on deadlines and tasks to prepare for the food summit event. All planning teams will report on progress, discuss issues with group and leave with a to-do list for the next meeting.

1. Planning Lead will need reports from all the planning committee groups on the progress of the summit planning.
 - a. Lead report
 - b. Master of Lists
 - c. Marketing Guru
 - d. Food Monger
 - e. Facility Manager
 - f. Evaluator and Budgeter
 - g. Sweeper
2. Discuss speakers, sponsors and invitation lists as a group to brainstorm an inclusive, long list of potential participants and technical assistance providers. Understand who is doing what to address these tasks. Use this list to brainstorm and list names and contact information.

County Commissioners	Chefs/Restaurants	School food service director
Local food farmers	Institutional buyer (school, hospital, etc)	Local foundations
Commodity farmers	Food processing/distribution business	Chambers
Health Department	Farm Market managers	Faith community leaders
Food businesses	Economic Development agencies	Local-foods/citizen advocates
City officials	Hospital foundation	Grocery stores
Food assistance orgs.	Small Business Development Center	Extension agents

3. Discuss budget and determine registration costs, who will host registration, how funds will be collected and payments made to caterer.

Sample budget for 50 attendees	Expense	Income
<i>Facility</i>	Free	
<i>Paper/printing</i>	\$100	
<i>Postage</i>	$\$0.49 * 100 = \50	
<i>Speaker</i>		
<i>Food</i>	$\$15 * 50 = \750	
<i>Beverages</i>	$\$2 * 50 = \100	
<i>Sponsors</i>		\$250
<i>Registration</i>		$\$15 * 50 = \750
<i>Total</i>	\$1000	\$1000

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Meeting 4: Facilitative Leadership and Host Responsibilities Agenda

Purpose: This meeting will assess planning progress as teams finalize their deliverables in the planning process. This meeting will also shift the focus from planning to run the Local Food Summit Event. Committee members will be asked to participate on the event day or recruit others to help run the event.

1. Planning Lead will need reports from all the planning committee groups on the progress of the summit planning. Use Planning Committee chart and Planning Timeline to set deadlines for tasks.
 - a. Lead report
 - b. Master of Lists
 - c. Marketing Guru
 - d. Food Monger
 - e. Facility Manager
 - f. Evaluator and Budgeter
 - g. Sweeper
2. Issues, problems or concerns – leave time for discussion for anyone to communicate needs or issues with the agenda of the food summit. This is a good time to get help with assigned tasks and work on solutions to problems.
3. Shift the focus of the group to the event and frame the discussion by leading the group through the chain of events that will occur during the day. Describe the roles and how they will lead certain aspects of the event before assigning responsibilities.

Name	Local Food Summit Event Role
	Host: This person welcomes everyone to the event, introduces speakers, sets the stage for the day's event, introduces planning committee and objective for event, thanks attendees at the end and reminds everyone for follow up communication, evaluation and next meeting or steps.
	Lead Facilitator: This person will need to lead the facilitated discussion portion of the event, they will explain how small roundtable discussions will work and the timetable for discussions. They will also lead the final facilitated discussion with the larger group before the close of the event.
	Small Table Facilitator: This group of people will need to choose the table topic where they are not an expert. They will use an agreed upon format (like suggested below) to prepare and lead the small table discussions. They will manage the time for the table, take notes, and work with the group to highlight the top 2-3 ideas or themes from the discussion.
	Registration: Responsible for organizing and running the registration table, payments and enquiries
	Catering and beverage: Responsible for lead up and day-of catering and beverage issues
	Facility: Responsible for communicating with facility people to resolve technical, food, other issues
	Technical: Responsible for managing the speakers' presentations, audio or video for the event
	Other: Assign as needed.

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Facilitator Planning and Role

Generally, the planning committee can serve as table facilitators for the event, but it must be very clear that table facilitators are not to be content experts. In other words, if your county health agent has agreed to facilitate a table discussion, do not place him/her at the Food Safety discussion table. This approach limits the 'coaching' time that can happen in these smaller discussions and ensure that you are reaching the objectives of the event. The ideal table facilitator will spend time preparing for the event and have little content knowledge of the topic.

Facilitator Tips

- ✓ After you ask a question, wait quietly for at least 10 seconds. Some people need time to think. Silence is valuable.
- ✓ Participants will likely have lots to talk about. Please try to keep the conversation focused—getting to action ideas is important. Perhaps 10 minutes for each of A.-E. is a good guideline.
- ✓ Address participants by their first names.
- ✓ If certain participants seem to be speaking more than others, you can ask something like, "Can we hear from someone who has not shared yet?" You can gently interrupt if someone goes on a tangent.
- ✓ Please refrain from contributing your own ideas and opinions. If you prefer to share your own thoughts as a participant, we can have someone else facilitate.
- ✓ Make sure that you write down what participants say. If you paraphrase, check with the participant to make sure you are capturing their idea accurately.
- ✓ Write big enough so that the group can read it comfortably

Flow of facilitated table discussions

Your Summit will need a lead facilitator, who can introduce this activity, clearly instruct attendees on what they are doing, and keep time for the table discussions. This person will also wrap-up this activity by facilitating the 'report-out' from each group, ensuring everyone is brief and can be heard in the larger group. This person can also have a larger group discussion to write some key themes that were heard across the groups. Ask the larger group to contribute others if you missed. This person can also prompt the larger group to think about next steps and how they would like to be involved further. This will help with the Summit wrap up by the Host.

If you are a small table facilitator, follow these steps:

1. Prepare to take notes on flip chart paper. Have your materials (markers, paper) ready. You may want to prepare an action-step flip chart for question 4e ahead of time.
2. Welcome everyone to the conversation. Let participants know that they may move to another table at any time, if they wish.
3. Ask all Participants to say their names, affiliation, and where they are from. (Go around the circle. Gently stop people if they begin to go on about other things at this point.)
4. Ask questions to spark conversation:
 - a. Why might (this TABLE TOPIC) be important?
 - b. What might (this TABLE TOPIC) look like here? How do you envision it?
 - c. Who would be involved?
 - d. What more do we need to know?
 - e. What are some next steps? You may want to use a simple chart:

Action Step	Who	By When

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5. Table Facilitators will hang their flipcharts and summarize/highlight in 2-3 minutes what their table discussed.
 - a. Read highlights from the notes to the larger group, summarize conversation
 - b. Highlight any action steps that may involve the larger group

At the end of the food summit, distribute the evaluations, demographic surveys and future involvement cards. To the right is an example of a future involvement card. This ensures that names are not also on the evaluation and demographic cards. The purpose of this card is to help the leaders of the event organize future meetings with targeted topics. Create your own card with the topics that are relevant to your event, and distribute at the end of the Summit

Closing the event

Once the lead facilitator has wrapped up the final large group discussion, the Host will close the event. This person should thank everyone for their time, remind everyone to complete an evaluation and future interest survey card and demographic survey. The host should remind everyone what the next steps are, if there is a meeting, where it will be and when. If email communications are going out, then remind everyone to ensure their email is on file. If attendees are interested in a list of other attendees, an announcement can be made for this too.