

Partners for Places Project Lessons Report

Project Name: *Improving Philadelphia's Food System through the Food Policy Advisory Council*

- **Year Complete:** 2016
- **Local Government:** City of Philadelphia, PA
- **Local Foundation:** Merk Family Fund, Leo and Peggy Pierce Family Foundation, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Project Purpose

To improve Philadelphia's food system and increase healthy, affordable food access by sustaining and expanding the project and policy work of the Food Policy Advisory Council.

Key Lessons Learned

Lessons learned about tools and tactics through the project that other sustainability directors could use to advance their work.

Discretionary funding is a potential place to start for projects that do not have dedicated funding. Discretionary grants often do not require a competitive application process and, while small, can open the door to larger grants and a longer-term funding relationship with local foundations. Many small grants add up, so sustainability directors should cast a wide net for funders, rather than focus on a smaller pool with larger funds.

Lessons for developing a collaborative process between a local government sustainability director and local place-based foundation(s).

Taking the following steps improved collaboration: expanding the City's role as a convener to deepen relationships and collaboration with a wide array of stakeholders; inviting more and different voices to provide input on priorities and guidance on implementation; and understanding and addressing barriers to community participation in sustainability work. A Food Policy Advisory Council (FPAC) is a key model and resource for the Office of Sustainability to implement these recommendations. The FPAC has refined a model for a City-convened advisory body that facilitates successful collaboration between community members and City officials that can be replicated in other areas of sustainability. Acknowledging that equity is a critical part of sustainability work across the country, other sustainability directors can use this model of community engagement to ensure sustainability work is relevant to residents' daily lives.

Additional Information and Resources

The Pierce Family Foundation and Merck Family Fund contributed a second year of funding to support FPAC. After awarding funds to FPAC from its discretionary budget, the Claneil Foundation asked FPAC to apply for their competitive grant cycle in 2016. Funding relationships are ongoing as a result of Partners for Places. Read more about FPAC [here](#).