

Partners for Places Project Lessons Report

Project Name: *Strengthening Greater Cincinnati's Regional Food System*

- **Year Complete:** 2017
- **Local Government:** City of Cincinnati, OH
- **Local Foundation:** Interact for Health, Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile Jr. / U.S. Bank Foundation

Project Purpose

To enhance Cincinnati's regional food system through civic engagement, policy creation and collaborative programming that positively impacts access, consumption, production, distribution, procurement and land use.

Key Lessons Learned

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

- The Campaign was more successful when it reached the key contact within organizations who were interested in sustainability. This indicated a need to widen the worksite target group beyond wellness coordinators and to better present the wellness case with more recent studies coming out that connect local eating with better health outcomes.
- Having a person who was paid to dedicate time to the work and was accountable for producing results helped work occur that otherwise would not and moved the work to the next level. On the other hand, the project team saw that having a paid person seemed to coincide with volunteer disinvestment in responsibility for accomplishing agreed upon goals. Rather than assert ownership over goals, volunteers with limited time and capacity started deferring to the paid person to take responsibility for initiatives and expected that kind of support long-term. Once this occurred, it became difficult to re-energize volunteer involvement when funding for a paid staff ended.
- Having the right person in the paid position was an incredibly important piece for the project director to consider, and in building collaborations, the right person may change over time.

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

The ability to offer financial rewards provided a number of opportunities for collaboration. By being very clear about the mission, values, vision, and priorities, it was easier to raise awareness about regional food system needs. Involving funders in various processes enabled both positive relationship gains, as well as additional funding.

Additional Information and Resources

Through their partnership with the Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council, Green Umbrella continues to promote a healthy, equitable, and sustainable food system for all within Greater Cincinnati's ten-county region. More about their work and current events can be found [here](#).