ESTABLISHING A REGIONAL FOOD NETWORK
Indiana Uplands Winter Food Conference
January 30, 2020
Government: The structural elements of the food system that influence the big picture of how our system functions, including policy, education, and regulation.

Non-profit: The social aspects of a food system including food values, food assistance networks, community organizing, and public health.

Business: The functional aspects of the food system including food production, processing, distribution, markets, and waste.
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Walmart’s Monopolization of Local Grocery Markets

In 43 metropolitan areas and 160 smaller markets, Walmart captures 50% or more of grocery sales. In 38 of these regions, Walmart’s share is 70% or more.


Notes: The federal government defines 392 Metropolitan Statistical Areas and 146 Micropolitan Statistical Areas. A metro area is a region with a relatively high population density at its core and close economic ties throughout the area. A micropolitan area is, likewise, an economically integrated region, but has a smaller urban core of between 10,000 and 50,000 people. Because some metropolitan areas extend over a large territory, despite having a relatively small population, this map uses two differently sized circles to represent each type of region, rather than showing their geographic boundaries. Figures for Walmart’s grocery sales include Walmart-owned Sam’s Club outlets.
FIGURE 1. NUMBER OF FARMS AND FARM SIZE OVER TIME

Note: After 1997, the USDA adjusted the figures for coverage.
Source: USDA Census of Agriculture.
The Knoxville Food Policy Council was the first council of its kind in the US. It formed in 1982 in response to two studies that found there was limited access to nutritious food in the inner-city. The first of these was a Community Food System Assessment conducted by the students and faculty at University of Tennessee. It broke new ground with the idea that a community’s food system should be given the same attention and treatment as the city transport system or the planning for housing. The second was a study done by Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee on food access and equity issues. These two groups got together and made a joint submission to the mayor. The submission outlined the city’s food system and highlighted two major concerns – food access and hunger in the inner-city, and lack of coordination of food system planning.

At the time Knoxville hosted the 1982 World’s Fair, which drew millions of visitors and brought attention to the importance of the food system, as the city coordinated mass food transport, displaced inner-city residents and ramped up food provision and waste disposal for the event. Randy Tyree, at that time mayor of Knoxville, responded to the proposal and presented a resolution recommending the formation of a Food Policy Council. The council was approved, and has been in existence up to the present as one of the most highly recognized Food Policy Councils – garnering national and even international praise. Activities over the last three decades include: advocacy for the School Nutrition Education Supervisor position with Knox County Schools, development of a food monitoring system, working to improve access to full-service grocery via public transit and influencing the city government to incorporate food impact assessments into planning and zoning decisions.
Examples of network weaving

- Bloomington Food Policy Council
- Real Food Challenge
- Center for Rural Engagement
Change happens at the speed of trust
- Stephen Covey

What is an example from your life when a social connection helped you?

What are ways to build trust?
Find someone next to you that you do not already know

- What is your role in the food system?
- What skills do you have?
- What connections do you have?
Team up by county

- Place yourselves on the map
- What are the major strengths in your food community?
- What are the major gaps in your food community?