

Shore Good Foods

A USDA SARE funded Community
Innovation Grant Project

Goal

- Grow our economy by including more locally grown food in our food system
 - Recapture some of the estimated \$26 million that leaves our community for food every year (leakage)
 - Make local food a tool for downtown revitalization

Local Food Benefits

- Keeps food dollars circulating within the community (reduce leakage)
- Grow and market more local food locally because minimizing transportation cost makes food prices less dependent on oil prices
- Job creation/better farm income
- Farmland preservation

Other Local Food Benefits

- Exceptional taste and freshness
- Health benefits from more nutritious food
- Improved access to affordable fresh food
- Food security/sustainability

Objectives

1. Raise public awareness of the food system as it exists
2. Form a working committee to research and prepare a “Local Food System Plan”
3. Complete the food system plan and have it formally adopted by local governments
4. Form a non-profit organization to begin implementing the plan

Preliminary Research

- Survey – distributed approx 650
- Response rate – 22% (145 to date)
- Plans to target additional survey to African-American and Hispanic populations (low response rate to original survey from these populations)

Survey Results

- 87% are interested in buying local food
- 41% travel off the Shore to buy food – most often for better SELECTION, not price
- 85% think it is very important or important that children learn how to raise food
- 94% would like to see local fruits and vegetables served in school cafeterias

Accomplishments

- Both counties adopted a local food policy resolution
- Food policy organization birthed – “*Shore Good Foods*”

Next Step #1

- Make *Shore Good Foods* a not-for-profit in order to be eligible for grants and community funding because
 - We need STAFF – developing a food system plan is a lot more work than volunteers alone can handle
 - Locate funding to continue the work

Next Step #2

- Develop a Local Food System Plan – but FIRST understand the existing food system– do a comprehensive assessment including, but not limited to:
 - Gathering hunger statistics for the Shore
 - Quantifying food insecurity in our community
 - Catalog all public use kitchens (like churches, restaurants, etc)
 - Identify all the sectors of the food system and delve into how they work and who works them
 - Understand the linkages or lack of them between agencies serving food-insecure populations
 - Whatever other research is identified as we go along in the process

Challenges & Lessons Learned

- Creating a regional food system plan requires a huge amount of research, coordination, and dedication
- Volunteers, while valuable and useful, can not supply as much time as is needed to develop a comprehensive food system plan
- Funding for staff is essential, unless you can find someone who will do this without extra compensation
- Cultivate relationships with organizations that share an interest in food security

Q&A

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