

# FOOD POLICY AND ADVOCACY GUIDE

## WHAT IS FOOD POLICY?

**Food Policy is any policy that impacts the growing, processing, distributing, selling, and consumption of food.**

- Nutrition Entitlement Programs
  - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/"Food Stamps")
  - Women, Infant, and Children Nutrition Program (WIC)
- National Hunger Programs
  - Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act (CNR)
    - School food
    - After school feeding programs
- Food Retail
  - Grocery Stores
  - Fast Food
  - Restaurants/Bakeries/Coffee Shops/Breweries/Distillers
- Agriculture and farming
  - Land Use
  - Agricultural and Food Safety Regulations
    - GAP/GHP/FSMA
  - Livestock (such as bees and chickens)
  - Community Gardens

**Food Policy is also the systemic policies that impact our food system, big and small. They each have their own sets of policies that impact our food system in large ways.**

- **School Systems**
- **Institutions** (hospitals, universities, etc.)
- **Distributors** (deliveries, insurance)
- **Retailers** (large grocers, farmers markets)

**This guide will provide you with information on how to engage, how to tell your story and be heard, and how to make public comment as well as information on governing bodies and food access to assist you in becoming a powerful and effective advocate.**

## WHO GOVERNS WHAT?

**Understanding who is in charge of your issue at hand is essential to determining your next steps and plan of action.**

### National

- Entitlement Programming
  - SNAP rules and regulations
  - WIC rules and regulations
- Child Nutrition Programming
  - Summer feeding programs
  - After school meals
- USDA School Food Nutrition and Funding
- Farming and Agriculture
  - Food safety, commodity, funding for programming

### State

- SNAP (administered and programmed)
- WIC (administered and programmed)
- School Food
  - Procurement
  - Individual Buys
- Farming and Agriculture
  - Food Safety
  - Land Use

### Local/Municipal

- Support for national programming
- Funding for food access programming
- Retail incentives for healthy food
- Zoning for food access (retailers, growers, restaurants, fast food, etc.)
- School Food
  - Procurement
  - Individual Buys
- Farming and Agriculture
  - Zoning
  - Retail
  - Land Use (unless public lands)

## NATIONAL LEVEL

### Senator Bill Cassidy

520 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
(202) 224-5824  
<https://www.cassidy.senate.gov/contact>

### Representative Cedric Richmond\*

506 Cannon HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202)225-6636  
<https://richmond.house.gov>

### Senator John Kennedy

383 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
(202)224-4623  
<https://www.kennedy.senate.gov/public/>

### Representative Steve Scalise\*

2049 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202)225-3015  
<https://scalise.house.gov/about>

## FIND YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202) 224-3121  
<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/LA#representatives>

*\*See websites for regional office information*

## STATE LEVEL

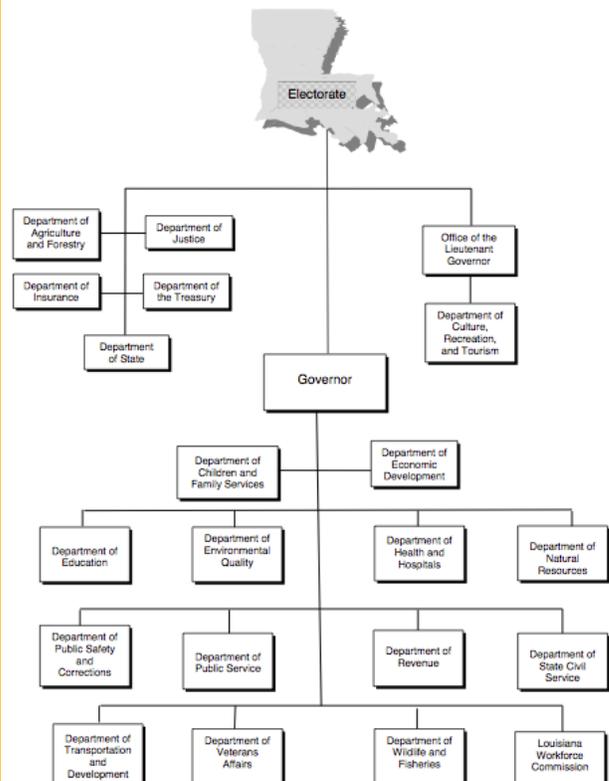
### Commissioner of Agriculture

5825 Florida Blvd.  
Baton Rouge, La 70806  
<http://www.ldaf.state.la.us>  
[commissioner@ldaf.state.la.us](mailto:commissioner@ldaf.state.la.us)  
(225) 922-1234

### Department of Education

P.O. Box 94064  
Baton Rouge, La 70804  
<http://www.louisianabelieves.com>  
(877) 453-2721

## STATE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



# HOW TO ENGAGE

## Organizing

It is always better to have people working alongside you. The more voices, the bigger the impact. Have you found others in your community who are interested in the issue you are? If not, how can you find them? Maybe a question to friends, colleagues, or people in the same community (parents at your child's school) on Facebook, or another social platform. Is there a meeting in town you can attend such as school board, local food policy, farming group or even a party or festival?

Once you identify people who have an interest in your issue area, get everyone together. Assign people to find data. Perhaps do a power mapping exercise to see who might know a policy maker or someone who can enact change or connect you to someone who can. Get everyone on the same page with the same knowledge for a unified voice. Be careful not to lose your individual voices as you organize; everyone has a voice, but you all are speaking to the same issue or problem.

## Getting the Facts

- **What is the problem?**
- **Who is "in charge"?**
  - National, State, or Local/Municipal policymakers?
  - Which office?
- **What are you asking for?**
  - Find out which policies affect it and give concrete ideas for how they can help. Have your "ask" ready.
- **What are others doing?**
  - Are there other people advocating for the same issue?
    - Connect with them if so. They may have charted this course in a way that you can replicate or take cues. Look especially at places that are similar to yours for ways to engage that are effective.

## YOUR VOICE, YOUR STORY

*Telling your story and getting your voice heard*

### Tell Your Story

- Why is this important to you?
- How will it help the constituency?
- What will get their attention in relation to what you need?

*Remember, government officials are there to help you. They are not the experts on your farm/business/community, you are! They are people just like you!*

### Get Your Voice Heard

- Find out which ways of advocacy and engagement will have the greatest impact.
  - Are public comments accepted? (Many national rules and policy changes will have a public comment period on their website. See below for our tips to making the most impactful public comment.
  - Are emails and letters accepted?
  - Is there a public hearing or input session?
- Call your policy maker.
  - Find your elected officials at [usa.gov/elected-officials](http://usa.gov/elected-officials)
- Make an appointment to visit local offices.
  - State and National government officials usually have regional offices.
  - Finding an aide or staffer that is interested in the same issue can help get it to the right person quicker.
  - Pay attention to breaks, they are meant to be a time when officials meet with constituents.

*Is there a public meeting you can attend and make comments? Can you get a spot on the agenda? You can use these meetings as a way to be face-to-face with those making the decisions for the issue(s) you care about.*

# MAKING PUBLIC COMMENT

Many times you will have the opportunity to make a public comment on a website or via email. In these instances, each unique comment must be read by policymakers and recorded. Your comment will be on public record, so make sure it is something you feel comfortable with being made public. Be sure to comment in the correct place and in the time given. You will typically be given 2 minutes.

*Helpful tips:*

- **Make your comment count!** Be sure to include your personal impact story including specific facts and details.
- **Each comment must be unique.** Using pre-written comments by experts are a great way to get started, but be sure that at least 30% of your comment is original and from your own voice.
- **Sign on letters as an organization are still only counted as 1 comment.** These are great ways to get the attention of lawmakers but they are still considered a single comment no matter how many organizations or individuals sign.

## RESOURCES

Get talking points from the experts and stay up to date on food system related issues.

### **National Young Farmers Coalition**

<https://www.youngfarmers.org/>

The National Young Farmers Coalition is a national advocacy network of young farmers fighting for the future of agriculture.

### **Food Research and Action Center**

<https://www.frac.org/>

The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) is the leading national nonprofit organization working to eradicate poverty-related hunger and undernutrition in the United States.

### **Union of Concerned Scientists**

<https://www.ucsusa.org/>

The Union of Concerned Scientists is a national nonprofit organization founded 50 years ago by scientists and students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

### **Feeding America**

<https://www.feedingamerica.org/>

The Feeding America network is the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization. Together with individuals, charities, businesses and government we can end hunger.

### **National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition**

<https://sustainableagriculture.net/>

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) is an alliance of grassroots organizations that advocates for federal policy reform to advance the sustainability of agriculture, food systems, natural resources, and rural communities.

This is a production of the New Orleans Food Policy Advisory Committee, a broad based coalition of individuals, organizations, and businesses working together to shape public policy.

Please visit [nolafoodpolicy.org](http://nolafoodpolicy.org) for more information such as policy alerts, news, programs and initiatives and more.