
The New Orleans Food Policy Advisory Committee

Governance and Principles

I. Administrative and Fiscal Structure

A. Authority. FPAC is an unincorporated association of individual and organizational members organized under the governing principles of this document who have come together around common interests and beliefs about food and agricultural systems. FPAC does not have formal incorporation or recognition of 501 (c) 3 non-profit status but does, by the creation of this document, recognize the need for rules and guidelines of its internal governance.

B. Steering Committee.

- i. Role: FPAC shall be supported through a Steering Committee with a role to provide leadership for operations, administration, and policy development and will support the work of ad hoc subcommittees and taskforces.
- ii. Composition: The Steering Committee shall consist of no less than 3 and no more than 11 organizational or individual members and shall maintain an odd number of members. Members must explicitly state whether they will be representing an organization or if they are representing themselves as individuals. Each member is given one vote. Organizations with multiple attendees at a meeting count as one vote. Members of the Steering Committee must represent diverse interests and must include representatives from agriculture, public health, retail, and food distribution/food access. Additional members may consist of representatives from the following interests: local economy, food wholesale or retail, sustainable agriculture, aquaculture, land conservation, farmers, consumers, food waste, or individual citizens.
- iii. Diverse Representation: The Steering Committee will make every effort to achieve and maintain a representation of diverse interests on the committee. Steering Committee members must include representatives from diverse interests with no more than two members representing any one sector.
- iv. Selection: Membership to the Steering Committee will be open on an as needed basis as determined by the Steering Committee. An enrollment process will be developed by the Steering Committee and announcements for vacancies will be made widely available and open to any organization or individual citizen in the Greater New Orleans region. Organizations and individuals interested in joining the Steering Committee will be asked to submit a letter of interest or be nominated by a current Steering Committee member. The Steering Committee will evaluate potential members based on their support of mission and vision, diversity of representation, and alignment with the goals and objectives of FPAC.
- v. Term: Steering Committee members shall serve a term of no more than three (3) years with no limits on the number of terms served. Terms shall be staggered between 2 to 3 years to maintain continuity as well as newness.
- vi. Meetings: Steering Committee members will hold in-person meetings at least six (6) times per year. The presence of two-thirds (2/3) fifty one percent (51%) of members constitutes a quorum except in the matter of governance decisions, which require a two-thirds (2/3) majority.

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The coordinator will share meeting minutes with the Steering Committee within ten (10) days of meeting.

- vii. Responsibilities: Steering Committee members, or their proxy, will be expected to attend all FPAC Steering Committee meetings. Steering Committee members, or their proxy, will be expected to attend at least fifty percent (50%) two-thirds (2/3) of full FPAC meetings. Steering Committee members will be expected to support FPAC through in-kind or cash contributions as outlined in the Steering Committee Agreement.
 - viii. Termination: Steering Committee members may resign their position on the Steering Committee in writing to the Coordinator and Co-Chairs at any time. Steering Committee members will be removed for failure to meet the responsibilities outlined in the Steering Committee Agreement by a simple majority vote of the Steering Committee.
- C. Co-Chairs** – The FPAC will have a chair, past-chair and chair-elect elected to serve for 1 year in each role for a total 3 year commitment.
- i. Role: Co-Chairs will work with the Coordinator to develop agendas, presentations, and written materials for FPAC meetings; facilitate FPAC meetings; help to craft the FPAC report for their topic; speak at FPAC press conferences, and present on behalf of FPAC to the New Orleans City Council and other entities. Co-chairs or Coordinator will also serve as members and/or chairs of FitNOLA's Community Design Sector.
 - ii. Selection and Term of Service: At the initial meeting of FPAC final meeting each year (May), voting members will nominate and vote on co-chairs to serve leadership functions. The co-chairs will be members of the Steering Committee for the duration of the FPAC process for a particular topic area; usually ending when the report of recommendations is launched.
- D. Fiscal Sponsorship & Partnership Arrangements.** The Steering Committee may seek a relationship with organizations for the purpose of partnerships or fiscal sponsorships. These agreements will be signed by a simple majority of Steering Committee members.
- E. Fiscal Sponsor and Coordinator.**
- i. Fiscal Sponsor The Steering Committee shall select an organization to serve as the Fiscal Sponsor from members of the Steering Committee. This organization will be selected based on the capacity to provide stable and long-term support to FPAC.
 - 1. Responsibilities: The Fiscal Sponsor will serve as financial organization for FPAC expenses and donations, including but not limited to payroll for Coordinator. The Fiscal Sponsor shall be the lead organization on grants for FPAC. The Steering Committee and Fiscal Sponsor will enter into a written agreement with terms specified by the Steering Committee with the Steering Committee.

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ii. Coordinator:

1. *Role:* The coordinator will serve as lead staff for the FPAC and will provide administrative support. The coordinator will be accountable to the Steering Committee but will be employed by Fiscal Sponsor. The conditions for the coordinator's employment will be specified in a written agreement. If the Fiscal Sponsor cannot provide office space and equipment, another Steering Committee member organization may be selected to provide in-kind donations for this.
2. *Selection:* The Steering Committee will identify one organization that will provide support for the coordinator position. The Steering Committee shall select the coordinator in collaboration with the Fiscal Sponsor and the organization providing in kind support for the position if applicable.
3. *Responsibilities and Duties:* The Coordinator's duties will include, but are not limited to, helping the FPAC and Steering Committee organize and manage effective meetings and events (including the preparation and distribution of agendas and minutes), building working relationships and trust, assisting with dispute resolution, maintaining the membership roster, maintaining regular contact with participants to promote information sharing and internal communications (including website and list-serves), leveraging and generating resources (including fundraising and grant-writing), ensuring follow-through on proposed action items, research, and coordinating any evaluation work. The Steering Committee may specify these or additional duties in a written job description. Assisting Co-Chairs to develop reports, hold press conferences, and develop presentations. If no coordinator is in place, these responsibilities will be divided between the Steering Committee members.

II. Membership

A. Types of Members. Membership to the FPAC is open to individuals and organizations. The FPAC will actively strive for diverse membership representing interests such as agriculture, health and human services, food related businesses and organizations, environment, education, economics, nutrition, transportation, and legal such as but not limited to regional associations, land and water organizations, agriculture and commodity organizations, small scale food industries and distributors, local farmers and markets, grocers, cooperatives, restaurants, schools, recipients of food and agriculture program aid, consumers, foundations, financial institutions, corporate giving programs, local or state government representatives, researchers, and neighborhood associations. Members may be either voting members or participating members.

B. Voting Members.

- i. Role: Voting Members are organizations or individuals that actively participate in the policy development process, may join ad hoc subcommittees or taskforces, and assist with advocacy and implementation of policy recommendations.

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ii. Responsibilities: Voting members must:

- Support the mission, vision and objectives of FPAC
- Agree to FPAC's Governance Principles and Process
- Attend FPAC meetings as scheduled or send a proxy
- Make every effort to support and endorse FPAC recommendations

iii. Selection and Term of Service: The Steering Committee, upon selection of a topic area, will open applications for membership to FPAC. Applications will be made publically available as widely as possible. Applicants will be evaluated by the Steering Committee taking into consideration diversity of representation and expertise of applicant in topic area. Applicants will be expected to fulfill a two (2) year term of service to the FPAC. There will be no fewer than eleven (11) and no greater than thirty-one (31) voting members of the FPAC. The Steering Committee may terminate a member based on their inability to follow the Governance Principles and Process or failure to satisfy the responsibilities outlined in this document.

iv. Voting Rights: Each member may cast one vote. Organizations with more than one representative at the meeting may cast only one vote.

C. Participating Members.

i. Roles: Participating Members are individuals or organizations who support, inform, and follow FPAC's work but are unable to fully commit to Voting Member responsibilities and roles. Participating Members are ineligible to vote.

ii. Responsibilities: Participating members must:

- Support the mission, vision and objectives of FPAC
- Agree to FPAC's Governance Principles and Process

iii. Selection and Term of Service: Participating Members must submit an application at any time during the FPAC process. There are no term limits or attendance requirements for Participating Members.

III. Meetings

A. **Structure of Meetings.** General meetings are open to the public and Voting Members and Participating members are expected to attend or send a designated proxy. The FPAC operating year is from Sept-May, with a summer break that may be used for strategic planning, staff development, and Chair transition if needed.

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- B. Leadership.** At the initial meeting of FPAC, voting members will nominate and vote on co-chairs to serve leadership functions. The co-chairs will be members of the Steering Committee.
- C. Schedule and Location of Meetings.** The FPAC will meet monthly no fewer than 4 times and no greater than 12 times annually for the policy development process.
- D. Notice of Meetings.** The Coordinator, Chair(s), or Steering Committee will provide public notice of meetings at least 14 days in advance through as many means as possible.
- E. Stakeholder Meetings.** Meetings designed to gather public input will be arranged as determined by the Steering Committee and/or Voting Members. Such meetings will be held in coordination with neighborhood based organization such as neighborhood associations, food pantries, or other non-profit organizations with substantial community involvement. Stakeholder meetings will be held no less than every two years.

IV. Governance Principles and Process

- A. Decision-making.** FPAC strives to make decision by consensus, as defined in the Principles of Collaboration. If consensus cannot be reached, then decisions are made by a simple majority vote of voting members. This process applies to ad-hoc subcommittees and taskforces as created by the Voting Members or the Steering Committee. It is the responsibility of FPAC members to voice concerns throughout the process in order to ensure their support of the final product. Members are strongly encouraged to provide input in whatever means is convenient such as in person, electronically, or phone calls.
- B. Scope of Decision Making.** The FPAC will make decisions on policy recommendations, stakeholder engagement, and input on development of policy priorities.
- C. Dispute Resolution.** Any disputes arising among members or committees will be heard and decided by the Coordinator or Steering Committee.
- D. Process.** The FPAC identifies three primary roles: (1) to identify and research pressing food policy topic areas, (2) to develop policy recommendations and priorities through a process of open discussion and thorough examination, and (3) to advocate and educate legislators, decision-makers, and the public on food and agriculture issues.
 - i. Identification of Priority Areas: Using the Strategic Plan as a guide, the Steering Committee, with input from Voting Members, Participating Members and Stakeholder meetings, shall select food policy topic areas and will bring research along with the support of the Coordinator. If changes need to be made to the Strategic Plan this will be done by the Steering Committee with input from Voting Members, Participating Members and stakeholder meetings, with a final draft to be approved by Voting Members.
 - ii. Development of Policy Recommendations: During regular FPAC meetings policy recommendations will be developed using the Principles of Collaboration as a guide for decision making. The Steering Committee will be responsible for drafting recommendations to be presented at the second to last regularly scheduled meeting of FPAC for final comments

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which will be approved on the final regularly scheduled FPAC meeting date. The final regularly scheduled FPAC meeting will be reserved for approving recommendations and identifying policy priorities.

- iii. Advocacy, Education, and Engagement: For the remainder of the Voting Member's term, they will be engaged in advocating, to the extent possible for each organization, for the agreed upon policy priorities. FPAC will encourage members to share policy priorities and to undertake joint advocacy efforts.

V. Public Engagement

- A. Policy Positions.** Policy positions will only be taken in FPAC's name when consensus of voting members is achieved. FPAC recognizes that its mission relies on unifying the voices of diverse stakeholders who can achieve more by speaking together than alone. In this spirit, the Steering Committee may judge certain policies to be especially central to FPAC's mission and may seek Voting Members' consensus in endorsing such policies in the name of FPAC. FPAC will use such policy positions as a tool to educate and engage the general public on food and agriculture issues.
- B. Media Outreach.** The Steering Committee is responsible for any media outreach on behalf of FPAC and must alert all FPAC members of the media outreach via email or posting on FPAC website and/or social media. Media outreach endorsed by the FPAC may include but is not limited to, information about FPAC's mission and objectives, educational materials, and membership initiatives. Media outreach will only include FPAC endorsements of policy positions that have achieved group consensus from voting members. Individual members with alternative views are responsible for clarifying those views as their own and not endorsed by FPAC.
- C. Using FPAC's name or image.** No member of FPAC may use it's logo or name without permission from the Steering Committee and Chairs(s). Any requests must be put into writing and submitted to Chair(s) for approval from Steering Committee.

VI. Amendments. This document may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) vote of either Steering Committee or Voting Members.

VII. Attachments.

- A.** Principles of Collaboration
- B.** Steering Committee Letter of Intent Request
- C.** Steering Committee Agreement
- D.** Voting Member Agreement
- E.** Participating Member Agreement

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