

CONSUMER ACCESS COMMITTEE

Expectations of Task Force:

- a. List the State's *assets* relating to this Committee that make an Illinois-based food system plausible.
- b. Individually list present *problems* within Illinois that are thwarting an Illinois based food system in this Committee's arena of expertise.
- c. What is the *solution* to each problem? Each problem should be placed into one of two categories:
Category 1: Problems with solutions specific to this Committee
Category 2: Problems that must be solved in Stage 2 Committees through intermeshing this Committee's strategies with those of others.
- d. What will be the *cost* of addressing this problem?
- e. What are the *obstacles* hindering implementation of our solutions to each of these problems?
- f. Provide *anecdotes* that will personalize each asset and problem (actual stories that pin-point the State's assets and hindrances)
- g. *Prioritize* each category of problems indicating greatest importance to least importance.

Report Outline:

Consumer Access Assets

- Statewide conventional retail outlets
- Statewide food coops and health food stores
- U-Picks and farm stands
- farmers markets,
- CSAs
- Government - prisons, hospitals, schools, universities
- Institutional Buyers – hospitals, factory cafeterias
- Corner stores, bodegas
- Independent grocers
- School programs-Head Start
- Home day care
- Senior day care
- Group homes/retirement complexes
- Soup kitchens
- Food Pantries
- Fast food chains
- Sit down Restaurants
- Gas stations
- Work place cafeterias

- Vending machines
- Airports, Metra, public transportation hubs
- Food Centers (WIC)

Consumer Access Problems

- There are few outlets for locally grown food
- Not enough FARMERS growing/providing food for local consumption
- There is little infrastructure to support farm to fork and institutional buyers
- Fruits and vegetables are expensive or perceived as expensive
- There is not enough education in schools regarding nutrition, diet and the benefits of buying locally produced food
- People are not educated regarding local food and the benefits of supporting a local economy
- We haven't identified which farmers would be willing to transition to growing food
- We haven't surveyed consumer values regarding the purchase of locally grown food.
- People don't know how to cook

Consumer Access Solutions

- Identify potential outlets for locally grown food and link with growers/sellers
- Identify potential institutional buyers and create policy recommendations that reward contracts that support local first
- Establish procedures for farmers to contract with institutional buyers
- Identify consumer values and create an education campaign regarding nutrition and supporting a local economy, e.g. Buy local
- Identify farmers willing to grow food and create program that connects them to buyers or at least what buyers are interested in procuring
- Alleviate food poverty by creating a WIC and food stamp campaign that focuses on local fresh produce and products, e.g. farmers market program
- Create incentives for new farmers to grow food in Illinois and promote them on statewide CSA, farm stand promotional program
- Create consumer education programs and resources to prepare local foods
- Engage youth in hands on activities that teach them about local food, and how to eat and prepare it, e.g. tastings, cooking classes, community garden development
- Create a program that sends chefs into community hubs (grocery stores to food pantries) to teach basic culinary skills
- Fund community kitchens and canning/freezing classes

Consumer Access Obstacles

- Structure of large retail outlets making local purchasing untenable
- Food deserts (some people must travel fifty miles to supermarket)
- Sparse population making larger retail outlets untenable
- Cost of production and infrastructure makes prices too high

- Poverty inhibits buying of fruits and vegetables at current prices
- Not enough food available
- Lack of knowledge on importance of buying local vs. organic in some cases

Funding

- Marketing campaign for consumers (health, agro-tourism, keep \$ local)
- Education programs for families and students on food preparation
- Marketing campaign for institutional buyers
- Marketing campaign for entrepreneurs (infrastructure)
- Marketing campaign for farmers
- Marketing campaign for legislators to finance system supports and change harmful policies
- Policy and incentive changes that reward buyers for local procurement contracts
- Assistance for farmers markets
- Assistance for CSAs
- Assistance for road side stands
- Assistance for farmers coops to supply food deserts
- Local vegetable and fruit WIC and food stamp campaign