



**Pilot Community Food Systems Certification Training
Evaluation and Summary
Report Prepared by Travis Singley
Training Held on May 22-23, 2018 in Elgin, Texas (8:30am - 4pm)**

Purpose: To determine feasibility and replicability of the Community Food Systems Certification training program developed by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach in Texas.

When: May 22-23, 2018 (8:30am - 4pm)

Where: Elgin, TX- Fleming Community Center (802 Avenue C)

Who: 23 Attendees for Day 1 and 15 Attendees for Day 2. 20 Online Registrants

Sponsors: Iowa State University, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Texas Southern University, Texas Center for Local Food, Elgin Economic Development Corporation

Funding: United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development: Rural Business Development Grant and USDA FoodLINC Initiative

Format: Two days of in-person training followed by online modules.

Program: The Iowa State University Community Food Systems Program is intended for intermediate levels of local food practitioners who are interested in the development of their community food system. The program teaches the various phases of the Community Food Systems process that Iowa State University has developed over the last four years. The training was conducted as a two-day intensive and included sessions on: the fundamentals of the Community Food Systems (CFS) program, creative methods for community engagement, coalition development, and community food systems assessment. Day two of the training included: how to determine priority projects, project management, the design process and relationship to food systems; program evaluation; best practices and resources.

Individual participants have the opportunity to participate in online modules specifically developed to offer intensive curriculum that cover community food systems, methods of engagement and leadership, equity and cultural competence, community food systems assessments, creating teams and tools for success, and evaluation following the training. These trainings are specific to Iowa State's curriculum.

Goals: Train local food practitioners in the community food systems process including: Community Food Systems Program, coalition development, creating community food systems assessments through mapping and public input sessions, priority project management and design, best practices for community food system projects, and evaluation basics for project and program success. Individuals will leave with new skills and confidence to work with various communities in the development of their place-based community food system, with resources to both engage and complete projects relating to systemic community food system change.

Outcomes:

- Understand community food systems and how they relate to larger community and economic development goals
- Discern the different sectors of the food system and their impact on community
- Utilize Collective Impact and Strategic Doing methods within their community
- Develop coalitions working toward collective community goals, and strategically partner with organizations for creative collaborations
- Execute community processes including facilitation, project management, partnership, and building successful teams
- Develop community food systems assessments through mapping, interviews, and public input sessions
- Identify primary and secondary data sources for community food systems assessment and priority projects
- Utilize community food system assessments to determine priority projects
- Acknowledge the importance of design in community food systems and where it fits within project development
- Provide partners with tools and resources for various food systems sectors: production, transformation, distribution, consumption, and resource management (grants, best practices, research, etc.)
- Engage and empower community partners to work collectively toward a community food system
- Apply concepts and skills learned within this training program to develop a place-based Community Food Systems Program in their own university or organization.
- Create evaluation methods to understand if projects developed in personal projects are successful

Description of Actual Event:

The Texas Center for Local Food was selected to host a pilot training event on behalf of Iowa State University to test the CFS training program and to assess program content and determine replicability of this program in other states. This training helped to satisfy a training component of the Rural Business Development Grant awarded to the TCLF by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Trainers from Iowa State carried out the actual training itself, which combined lecture, discussion, group activities, and video content. TCLF staff served primarily as event facilitators. More information about the training can be found on Iowa State's Local Food Program [website](#).

Attendees came from across the state of Texas. Representatives from San Antonio, Austin, Elgin, College Station, and other major metropolitan areas of the state were in attendance. While 20 people registered for the training in advance, last minute drop-in attendees place the actual head count closer to 23 on Day 1 of the training and 15 on Day 2. The event was a two-day in-person training and we provided locally sourced lunch to all attendees.

During the two-day training, participants developed a fictional coalition named "SET", standing for South Eastern Texas. The participants were able to identify the coalition's scope and develop potential projects. Many of the participants found the fictional organizational structure developed in the training's exercise as valuable and intended to continue pursuing SET's development. TCLF was asked to convene a statewide collaborative to focus on food system development. There was consensus that equity in food systems training be developed and be established as prerequisite for all collaborative leadership team members.

What Went Well:

Responses regarding what went well were all over the board and quite diverse. A few participants cited that the conversation facilitation provided by the Iowa State trainers was the most valuable aspects of the training. The training's discussion and exploration of Food System leadership skills was also a very valuable aspect of the training. And, of course, networking with the heads of different regional food organizations was a benefit mentioned by multiple participants.

What Could Be Improved Upon:

Many participants mentioned that having a primer "Food Systems 101" course or module, like that included in the post-training online modules, would have been very helpful. This would allow all attendees to have a baseline of knowledge at the start of the program. It would be important to send this out at least a week prior to the training.

Differently than the Local Food Leadership training, however, one participant indicated that they would like for the training to move *faster*. This sentiment was mirrored in person by multiple other participants who indicated that they found the video content to be a waste of time. They also indicated that they felt that the training it would be improved by moving faster to get to the actual group project work sooner.

Multiple participants indicated that it would be helpful if the trainers have a working knowledge of regional resources prior to the training event and that regional resources be incorporated more into the training and the final group project- creating the coalition.

Additionally, participants suggested that training materials/ presentation slides be included in the training binder provided to all attendees.

Key Training Take-Away's

- Create a “Food Systems 101” style primer module and give it to all participants before the training. This ensures that all attendees have a baseline of knowledge at the start of the program.
- Fewer people attended the second day of training. The second day of training is also the day that program evaluations were given. In future iterations of the training, consider that fewer people will be in attendance when planning meals, timing evaluations, and considering course planning.
- Provide training slides in the course materials to allow attendees to follow along.
- Move faster! Skip the video content and get to the group projects as soon as possible. After an entire day of lecture and discussion, by day 2 the group wanted activities.
- Participants also expressed an interest in having more regional resource discussion and provided in the training itself.
- Participants identified a wide array of possible price ranges for the training. With an average cost of \$49.
- Two unexpected and key take-aways involved future state-wide work to improve our food systems:
 - There was consensus of among the group to form a statewide collaborative to work on creating more equitable and viable local food systems in Texas.
 - There was also strong consensus that a training program be developed to address equity in food systems.
 - The Texas Center for Local Food was asked to convene the group to develop the equity training and develop the collaborative. The equity training must come first and be required of all leadership in the future statewide collaborative.

Training and Certification- Iowa State Curriculum Outline

Day 1

Module 1: Community Food Systems Program 101

- Community Core Values | Food System Sectors
- Operating Principles | Common Language
- Process
 - o Phase 1: Coalition, Leadership and Assessment
 - o Phase 2: Project Development and Implementation
- Research + Community Food Systems Tactics

Module 2: Creative Methods for Community Food Systems Development

- Overview
- Collective Impact
- Strategic Doing

Module 3: Community Coalition Development

- Leadership and Roles
- Getting to know the community:
 - o Interviews
 - o Clarifying questions
- Creating Vision, Mission and Core Values

Module 4: Community Food Systems Assessment

- Mapping 101
 - o GIS Basics
 - o Primary and secondary data
- Design Software
 - o Adobe Illustrator
 - o Adobe InDesign
- Qualitative input o Public Input Sessions o Surveys
- Making the Document
 - o Community Food Systems Assessment Template
 - o Community Food Systems Snapshot + Report
- Additional Assessments:
 - o Feasibility Studies
 - o Assessments
 - o Precedent Reports

Day 2

Module 5: Determining Priority Projects

- Framework to make decisions
- Internal and External Review of priorities
- Evaluation of projects
 - o Quick wins, intermediate and long term projects

Module 6: Effective Project Teams

- Getting people to the table
- Developing mission, objectives, and metrics
- Assigning Project Chair
- Monthly meeting templates
- Design and community development to implement projects
- Best Practices: implemented projects

Module 7: What's Design Got to Do With It

- Design and community development to implement projects
- Design Process
- Partnership with Community Design Lab and Design Firms
- Technical assistance and other program development

Module 8: Evaluation

- What does it mean to be successful
- Prioritize projects for systems impact
- Project and Community metrics

Module 9: Digging Deep

- Overview start to finish in community
- Highlight successes and challenges

Module 10: Resources

- Transferable Templates
- 1:1 Assistance
- Creating your community's TA Directory
- Program Partnerships
- Question | Answer

Community Food Systems Training Agenda

Day 1

- 8:30-Networking + Registration
- 9:00- Introductions
- 9:30- Community Food Systems Framework
 - Transferable Process
- 10:15- Collective Strategies
 - Vision, Mission, Core Values
- 11:00- Networking Break
- 11:15- Creative Methods
 - Strategic Engagement + Input
- 12:15- Lunch
- 1:00- Assessment, Mapping, Report
 - Mapping
 - Data Gathering
 - Visualization + Decision Making
 - Snapshot + Reports
- 4:00- Bringing It Together

Day 2

- 8:30-Networking + Registration
- 9:00- ReCap
- 9:30- Priority Projects
 - Decision Making Framework
- 10:30- Project Management
 - Collective Action
- 11:15- Networking Break
- 11:30- Dynamic Teams
- 12:15- Working Lunch
 - Why Design Matters
- 1:00- Design Thinking
- 1:45- Evaluation
- 2:30- Resources and Next Steps
- 2:45- Conclusions and Survey

Training Feedback- Elgin, TX May 2018

Please indicate which training you completed: Local Food Leader Community Food Systems

Please rate the following items on a scale from 1 to 5 by circling the appropriate number:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The training was a good use of my time.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I think this training should be provided in Texas.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I would recommend this training to others.	1	2	3	4	5
4. What was the most valuable aspect of the training?					
5. What can we do to improve the training for a Texas audience? What would you suggest that we do differently?					
6. What organizations or groups would most benefit from this training:					
7. What do you think is a reasonable fee to charge per person for this training in Texas? (Note: It will be challenging to provide at no charge.)					
8. Now that you have completed this training, how will you apply what you have learned?					
9. Additional comments or suggestions:					
10. I'd like to stay in touch as this project develops. Please contact me.					

Participant Evaluation

1. The training was a good use of my time.

Average Score: 3.9

Item 1	Answer Options	Response Count	Response Percent
	1 (Strongly Disagree)	1	11%
	2 (Disagree)	0	0%
	3 (Not Sure)	0	0%
	4 (Agree)	6	67%
	5 (Strongly Agree)	2	22%

2. I think this training should be provided in Texas.

Average Score: 3.9

Item 2	Answer Options	Response Count	Response Percent
	1 (Strongly Disagree)	1	11%
	2 (Disagree)	0	0%
	3 (Not Sure)	1	11%
	4 (Agree)	4	44%
	5 (Strongly Agree)	3	33%

3. I would recommend this training to others.

Average Composite Score: 3.8

Item 3	Answer Options	Response Count	Response Percent
	1 (Strongly Disagree)	1	11%
	2 (Disagree)	0	0%
	3 (Not Sure)	2	22%
	4 (Agree)	3	33%
	5 (Strongly Agree)	3	33%

Responses to Open-Ended Questions:

4. What was the most valuable aspect of the training?

- Communicating with other food leaders with a facilitator.
- Working through exercises.
- Getting the overview of food systems.
- Networking
- Facilitation! Skill share, resource share.
- Learning from other participants. Good facilitation
- Mission/ Values. Phase 2: Design and Implementation
- Learning how to lead a group
- Networking with others across the state

5. What can we do to improve the training for a Texas audience? What would you suggest that we do differently?

- Modules ahead of time.
- Definitely incorporate Tx Food Systems 101
- Create a better road map- definitely food systems 101 and Texas 101
- Have regional resources available. ORGANIZATION.
- Needs to be more and make progress fast (no videos)
- I'd like to follow along a little better. With the info in the binder while you speak.

6. What organizations or groups would most benefit from this training?

- All stakeholders around the stake.
- Please consider reaching out to Food Pantry Directors. Bastrop County Cares has all the Bastrop County contact info ready to go.
- Leaders in food system and community leaders.
- All food system players
- More reps from all industries beyond those already present.
- Lots of farm, community and edu groups
- Our city grant writer. Our community garden worker.
- Governments, food banks, churches, county extension, schools, producers

7. What do you think is a reasonable fee to charge per person for this training in Texas? (Note: It will be challenging to provide at no charge.)

- \$25-\$35
- Sliding scale and scholarships
- \$100
- \$50/org \$30 indiv, with funding available for those in need.

- Depends- community or personal
- \$25
- \$60

8. Now that you have completed this training, how will you apply what you have learned?

- All the coalition building info I will use regularly.
- At work! Hopefully, a coalition
- Start figuring out what extension can do to engage
- I will implement a community food system design and school gardens. SHAC
- Not sure yet. This will help with starting any new project.
- Continue working with classmates on future projects

9. Additional comments or suggestions:

- Make the coalition
- Need to introduce online tools for groups to use for collaboration

Final Thoughts To Consider If Replicating Training:

- Provide a pre-training “Food Systems 101” training module.
- Include presentation slides in binder.
- Speed Up! Get to the in-person discussions and projects faster.
- Concerning Lunch:
 - Many of the participants were pleased with the catered breakfast and lunch at the LFL training.
 - At potential future LFL trainings:
 - Ensure that all materials are compostable and that recycling receptacles are obvious and clearly available.
 - If providing breakfast on one day, provide it on all days or ensure that an announcement is made
 - Expect to order, at least, 15% of the expected group size as a vegetarian option. We ordered 15% and barely had enough vegetarian options.
 - Make sure to ask for food preference in initial registration emails.
 - Ensure that vegetarian option does not include cheese.