

Dear Kansas Food Council Leaders:

In May 2018, partners across Kansas hosted the *Harvesting Opportunity in Kansas Symposium* at the University of Kansas School of Business. 150+ farmers, bankers, economic development professionals, extension professionals, and community development advocates gathered to learn, share, and discuss a key idea: **How can we build true community wealth in Kansas through food and farming?**

The event was inspired by the explosion of interest in food systems change in Kansas. In recent years, Kansans have become interested in local food systems to diversify our agricultural systems, support our communities, and provide healthy food for our residents. Community-based food councils have advanced local policy solutions to support farmers, entrepreneurs, and families in their communities.

But you know this! You're already leading one of these innovative councils, now covering 42 counties in Kansas.

One of the key goals of the Harvesting Opportunity event was to provide a space for economic development professionals in the state to connect with those of us working on food and farm councils, and to brainstorm ways to work together to build our local food economy.

Through this process, we heard from you that: 1) you love this idea! but 2) you need some tools and resources to start the conversation with economic development professionals in your community.

So, ta da! This resource, ***Eco Devo 101: A Discussion Guide for Kansas Food Councils***, was created to help you build capacity in your council to engage with local economic development partners, learn more about the organizations in our state to help you in this work, and fuel your council's work towards a robust local food economy.

The Discussion Guide includes:

- **The accompanying slideshow** - meant as a visual discussion guide to use in one of your food council meetings. The slides themselves have the key points and questions. It can be used as a projected slide show, or you can print these handouts for use in a meeting.
- **A facilitator's guide** - to help your council chair or other leader walk the council through the questions and discussion.

We sincerely hope this helps you continue the exciting conversations started at Harvesting Opportunity in Kansas and gives you the concrete tools you need to move forward! If you have any questions or feedback, please contact Helen Schnoes, hschnoes@douglascountyks.org or 785-551-9436.

Sincerely,

Your fellow food council partners in Douglas County



Discussion Guide for Facilitators

Note: Anyone can facilitate this discussion! You don't have to be an expert on the topic. You just need to guide the group through the ideas shared in the slideshow and create space for everyone to share their thoughts and reactions to the material.

You can either project the slides as a slideshow or print them out for your council meeting. The facilitator notes below are meant to help you walk your council through the discussion!

Materials: In addition to the slideshow (or print outs of the slideshow), you may also want to have a flip chart with markers to capture council responses.

First, set the stage with your council members:

As consumers across Kansas and the nation express a growing interest in a closer connection to their food producers, cities and regions have begun to recognize that growing local food markets is an important economic development strategy.

As a food and farm council, it can be part of our mission to:

1. Learn about economic development tools to build the local food system,
2. Engage with our economic development professionals so they can educate us and learn with us,
3. Propose policies/programs/investments to help support local food businesses and farmers in our communities.

[Add any other background here as introduction that ties this to your council's previous work, how this connects with what you learned at Harvesting Opportunity in Kansas if you attended, etc.]

Slide 1	Facilitator Notes: Today, we're going to use this discussion guide developed for Kansas Food Councils. This discussion guide will help us figure out: → What we already know about economic development, → what we need to learn, → and generate some ideas for what to do next as a council. →
Slide 2	This slide provides a little background about the Harvesting Opportunity event sponsors and how this Discussion Guide came about.

<p>Slide 3</p>	<p>Just so we are all on the same page, let's review the definition of economic development.</p> <p>Facilitator's note: At this point, you can point out how economic development is different than just pure economic growth. While economic growth is an increase in # and \$, economic development also takes into account community development and community prosperity.</p>
<p>Slide 4</p>	<p>Review: Common economic development tools used by cities, counties, chambers of commerce, and economic development councils. There are more than this, but these are some common examples.</p>
<p>Slide 5</p>	<p>DISCUSS: What are some of the economic development programs in our community? What does our local government, economic development council or chamber of commerce do to attract and retain businesses?</p> <p><i>Consider having another council member take notes of the examples, questions, and other key points generated at this time.</i></p>
<p>Slide 6</p>	<p>The point of this slide is to tie economic development to community food systems. You may have council members who are unsure of how they are connected.</p> <p><u>The key point here:</u> It is <u>definitely</u> within your council's scope to look for economic development policies and programs that help build food and farm sector businesses.</p>
<p>Slide 7</p>	<p>And the economic benefits of community food systems are clear. Review list.</p>
<p>Slide 8</p>	<p>DISCUSS: Get the council thinking about concrete examples of local food businesses in your community and how they contribute to local economic development. These examples are critical to sharing the potential of food systems to your eco devo contacts.</p> <p><i>Ask your fellow council member again to take notes of the examples.</i></p>
<p>Slide 9</p>	<p>As we think about building the case for the economic development benefits of local food systems, it's important to use the right vocabulary. There are a few terms that we should familiarize ourselves with so that we can convey our message.</p>
<p>Slide 10</p>	<p><u>Buy Local.</u> With current market conditions, it's often cheaper to buy goods from far away (think: Wal Mart), but the return to buying local is a movement that has helped revitalize downtowns and has the potential to re-connect consumers with the source of their food.</p>

<p>Slide 11</p>	<p><u>Local multiplier.</u> [explanation of graphic: farmers spend money on seeds, inputs, equipment, etc.] Therefore, more money in the hands of local farmers = more money circulating in businesses throughout the community.</p> <p>Studies estimate multiplier effects for spending on locally produced foods to be between \$1.32 and \$1.90, <u>meaning that for every dollar spent on local products, between \$.32 and \$.90 worth of additional local economic activity takes place</u> (Meter 2010; Jablonski, Schmit, and Kay 2015; Martinez et al. 2010).</p>
<p>Slide 12</p>	<p><u>Import substitution.</u> Basically, when someone buys a locally grown or produced product, they aren't buying an imported version of that same product.</p>
<p>Slide 13</p>	<p><u>Transition slide:</u> So, what do we do with this information? How are food and farm councils in Kansas working on economic development issues in our state?</p>
<p>Slide 14</p>	<p>DISCUSS:</p> <p>Engaging with economic development professionals is a great way to start the conversation. As your group brainstorms answers to the questions on the slide, you could share a few ideas to get them thinking: Consider inviting your economic development director (or equivalent) to your next council meeting to present what they're working on, learn what the council is interested in, and make connections. Or, attend their board meeting and introduce yourselves.</p> <p><i>If you have large flip-chart, put #1 at the top and document the ideas generated--let them flow!</i></p>
<p>Slide 15</p>	<p>DISCUSS:</p> <p>To determine what role the council might play and what policies, programs, or investments might help, it's critical to hear from those in your community working in this area. Consider hosting a panel of local food entrepreneurs and farmers in your community. Ask them to share their stories, highlighting the challenges and barriers they've faced.</p> <p><i>Start a second large page from your flip-chart, put #2 at the top and document the ideas generated--let them flow!</i></p>

Slide 16	<p>DISCUSS:</p> <p>So what actions should we take next? What is the situation like in your community, and what are some concrete next steps to take? Also, be sure to identify if the full council (or a subcommittee) wants to take this and run with it!</p> <p><i>Use the flip-charts to review what was discussed--consider circling or drawing stars next to the ideas with the most enthusiasm.</i></p>
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[Optional additional content: If your council is really interested in this topic, and ready to get to work, then slides 17 and 18 can provide an overview of available resources to tap into. Or, if you want to save this for a future meeting or sub-committee meeting, that works too!]

Slide 17	<p>The Harvesting Opportunity in Kansas Symposium was based on some recent publications about the economic benefits of local food systems. These are great reads when your council is ready to dig deep.</p>
Slide 18	<p>These are some federal and state programs available to support food and farm businesses in Kansas - from technical assistance to grants to loans. There is a lot of interest in funding local foods both in the federal Farm Bill and in our state!</p>