

California Food & Justice Coalition

:: Introducing Grow Local::

Our New Campaign: Grow Local

After working with our state-wide members to influence the [2008 Federal Farm Bill](#), we are turning our attention to the local level. We are pleased to announce our latest campaign, **Grow Local**, which will be our main focus for the next three years.

The **goal** of Grow Local is to increase access to land and resources (such as processing and distribution infrastructure, education programs, and markets), for local food production and consumption, by empowering low-income communities, and their grassroots leaders, to influence relevant policy. Increased access to land and resources will enable our communities to rebuild local food systems that are just, and environmentally and economically sound.

We all know the food system is in crisis, but our member organizations, and the communities in which they work, have developed innovative and effective solutions to the crisis in the form of community gardens, farmers' markets, education, backyard gardening, gleaning programs, and much more. These models have been successful in addressing the broken food system by increasing healthy food access in low-income areas, reducing greenhouse gas emissions related to food miles, strengthening local economies, and creating green collar jobs. Because these models are worthy of replication and scaling-up, we think that local-level policy should support them. And, who should be involved in assuring that policy supports our ground-level solutions? The communities that created them.

To this effect, Grow Local will have two main areas of activity:

1. A **training** program that offers both day-long and on-going series of workshops that build the skills and capacity of community leaders and food system organizers to understand how policy affects all aspects of food systems work, and gain the skills to carry out successful policy campaigns; and
2. Intensive partnerships between CFJC and local-level groups to create **policy change** through policy campaigns and community organizing.

In these early stages of Grow Local, we will be mostly focused on the training aspects of the campaign. From these trainings, as individuals and groups interested in pursuing a policy campaign organically emerge, we will expand Grow Local to begin the policy campaign phase. As part of Grow Local, one of the tools CFJC will be providing is a "model" policies document. We've compiled policies from around the US that were written with the goal of increasing access to land and resources for local food production and consumption. We are currently analyzing each of those policies to determine if they are indeed models worthy of replication.

In compiling these policies, and in talking with our members, a few policy focus areas kept appearing:

- :: [land use / zoning in urban and peri-urban areas](#),
- :: [farmland preservation](#), and
- :: [funding mechanisms for food systems development \(a soda tax, for example\)](#).

Because these policy areas have been used so widely by other efforts around the country, we will also utilize them as a foundation for trainings and possible campaigns. Despite lack of precedence, we are also including one other area of focus: **climate action planning**. We see immense opportunity for furthering a food system re-localization agenda through these plans that many CA municipalities are developing.