

INSIGHT 10

BIG “P” AND LITTLE “P” POLICY ARE NECESSARY.

Different types of policy solutions were mentioned throughout many of the conversations. For this insight, we heard big “P” policy reflecting federal, state, and local level legislation. Small “p” policy reflects growth building efforts, cultural shifts, and changes in policy and procedures. In combination, these policies promote a community-based food system where everyone has a role to play.

Small “p” policy was mostly discussed in the urban and rural identity conversations. Participants had concerns about the impact policy change can have if communities aren’t given the ability to enact change. Success of policies is often measured by the impact. However, if organizations lack capacity, it will lead to poor implementation of policy.

Influencing local and community policy is often the starting point for people who want to become involved in policy and advocacy work. Some people want to work within the system, while others want to create entirely new processes. Yet community members need an entry point for their work and a foundation of knowledge to get started.

It was noted that program and policy changes must put people’s voices front and center. There is often a disconnect between the needs of grassroots groups and the actions of the people in leadership. Community members also need to be informed and educated about policy before they can advocate for change.

The recent COVID-19 pandemic created an opportunity for short-term changes to the red tape often found in policy. We need to learn from these changes and

“Farm Bill is crucial – how it drives what we grow in this country. Not sure what to do about it, but the first step is awareness. Our federal dollars are being spent on food that is making people sick.”

- BIPOC

“Local government needs to invest in food security for all, importance of local government budgets reflecting the needs of the Latino community”

- LATINO

shift towards long-term innovations. The desire for transformative systemic change was apparent during the conversations, with suggestions at both the community and policy levels. There was also a sense among participants that we have the “human capital” we need to envision a system we need. Our communities have **energy, passion**, knowledge, experience, and creativity.



Calls to Action:

- We need to address all sides of the policy spectrum, including organizational partnerships and collaborations, changes in procedures, advocacy and mobilization, and legislation at local, state, and federal levels.
- For policy reform to be effective, communities must have a voice and resources to share information and act upon changes.
- By embracing transformative policy change, communities can leverage their existing assets and strengths.
- Develop communication and learning strategies about how policy and politics intersect. This helps to educate communities of how their voting decisions and advocacy are tied to federal, state, and local spending on the food system.