



Allegheny County Food Policy Audit - Key Findings

Background: Throughout the country, many cities, counties, and states have created plan to develop their local food system. The Pittsburgh Food Policy Council is leading the first effort of this kind in Allegheny County through the Greater Pittsburgh Food Action Plan. As part of this plan, to better understand what food policies currently exist in Allegheny County, a Food Policy Audit was conducted in early 2019.

Overview: A Food Policy Audit is a tool originally developed at the University of Virginia to assess the strengths, gaps and opportunities in local food system policies, and to identify community priorities for next steps to strengthen the local food system. Since its creation in 2010, the tool has been modified and adopted by a number of different entities.

The Allegheny County Food Policy Audit was developed and distributed in collaboration between the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council, Allegheny County Government Community Relations Office, and the Allegheny County Councils of Government (COG). The audit consists of a 40 question survey, which was sent to all 130 municipalities within Allegheny County. The questions were covered 6 different categories:

1. Coordination and Communication (5 questions)
2. Public Health (4 questions)
3. Economic Development (8 questions)
4. Environmental Impacts (5 questions)
5. Social Equity (7 questions)
6. Land Conservation (11 questions)

Responses: A total of 24 valid responses were received, representing an 18.5% response rate. Nearly 60% of responses came from two COGs, the Steel Rivers COG, and the Turtle Creek Valley COG.

Figure 2: Councils of Governments in Allegheny County

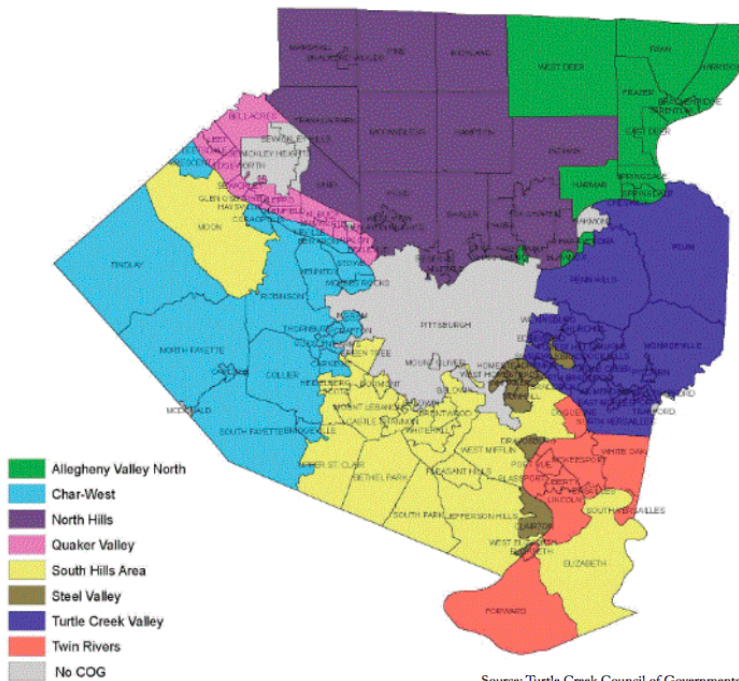


Table 2: Councils of Governments Participation

| Council of Governments | Number of Municipalities | Number of Survey Participants | Participation from Within CoG (%) | Participation from Total Responses (%) |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Steel Rivers | 19 | 7 | 37% | 29% |
| Turtle Creek Valley | 20 | 7 | 35% | 29% |
| Char-West | 17 | 4 | 24% | 17% |
| South Hills Area | 21 | 3 | 14% | 13% |
| North Hills | 18 | 1 | 6% | 4% |
| Quaker Valley | 16 | 1 | 6% | 4% |
| Allegheny Valley North | 14 | 0 | 0% | 0% |
| Total | 125 | 23 | 18% | 96% |

Key Findings:

- The most frequently cited policies are in the areas of healthy food and food access initiatives. For example:
 - 47% of municipalities have a comprehensive plan or zoning code that allow local farmers' markets, tailgate markets, or farm stands.
 - 43% of municipalities are Live Well Allegheny Communities.
 - 37% of municipalities have farmers markets or grocery stores that accomodate WIC, Senior Nutrition coupons, or EBT.

- 33% of municipalities play a role in childhood nutrition programs, such as hosting sites for summer or afterschool meals.
2. The least frequently cited policies are in areas relating to environmental impacts. For example:
- Only 3% of municipalities have a policy to support and encourage land conservation, including easements for food production, such agricultural security areas.
 - Only 3% of municipalities are aware of preserved farms in their community.
 - Only 3% of municipalities have a policy or goal to fence out all livestock from streamways?
 - Only 3% of municipalities have policies or goal to reduce its "foodprint" (i.e., the environmental impact of food, including the amount of land required to sustain a diet).
3. Many municipalities expressed interest in opportunities to better collaborate and communicate about food resources. For example:
- 33% of municipalities are interested in having a directory of emergency food providers.
 - 30% of municipalities are interested in having procedures and/or guidelines for directing or referring people in need of food to the places that can offer assistance.
 - 27% of municipalities are interested in collaborating with food focused non-profits on local or regional projects.
 - 27% of municipalities are interested in publishing a local food guide.
 - 23% of municipalities are interested in offering programs or resources to encourage composting.