



Building on Seven Years of Grassroots Accomplishments:

A New Approach to Community Development for Illinois

An Illinois Local Food Farms Jobs Council report

By Council directors Johari Cole-Kweli & Bob Heuer

September 2013

DRAFT

TO: Illinois Local Food Farms Jobs Council Board of Directors
FROM: Members of the Council's Executive Committee (spring 2011-2013)
DATE: September 2013

We are pleased to share with fellow directors of the Illinois Local Food Farms and Jobs Council this chronicle of past events that have brought this body to where we stand today.

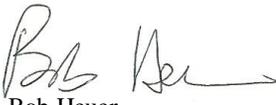
The Council represents an experiment in community empowerment. Authorized through the Illinois Local Food Farms and Jobs Act of 2009, the Council was envisioned by the Illinois General Assembly as a public resource to support statewide efforts in order to revitalize the foundation of the Illinois economy.

It is our intent that this report will inform the work of the Council's new Board of Directors. Recently appointed by Governor Pat Quinn, Council directors can best serve the interests of the people of Illinois by acting with the resolve, transparency and integrity necessary to achieve the Council's 2020 goals.

We request the formation of an ad hoc committee to finalize this report for formal submission to the Illinois General Assembly. The previous Executive Committee had included a motion to this effect on the agenda of our March 2013 meeting in order to ensure Council compliance with a requirement specified in our enabling legislation.



Johari Cole-Kweli



Bob Heuer
Evanston/Skokie School Dist. 65/202 Legislative Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report chronicles efforts to build a partnership between the people of Illinois and our state government in response to the strongest food trend in decades. The report aims to stimulate public dialogue as well as to encourage urban, suburban, exurban and rural communities to capture a larger share of an estimated \$48 billion in Illinois consumers' annual food purchasing.

Since 2007, the Illinois General Assembly has enacted about a dozen "local food" laws. Most focus on removing barriers impeding farmers and other entrepreneurs from supplying unmet consumer demand for products sourced from nearby farms, gardens and food-related businesses. Public health regulations for farmers markets are being streamlined and opportunities have increased for small-scale food producers to sell goods and/or use compostable materials as soil nutrients. This growing body of state legislation promotes decentralization of economic activity that helps satisfy the human need to eat.

Illinois' potential to become a national leader in a new generation of food-and-agriculture policy was accelerated through passage of the Illinois Local Food Farms and Jobs Act of 2009. Signed by Governor Pat Quinn, the law authorized creation of the Illinois Local Food and Farms Council. According to statute, the Council's purpose is:

"To facilitate the growth of an Illinois-based local farm and food product economy that revitalizes rural and urban communities, promotes healthy eating with access to fresh foods, creates jobs, ensures a readily available supply of safe food in an emergency event, and supports economic growth through making local farm or food products available to all Illinois citizens." Public Act 096-0579

Food councils are forming at the municipal, county, regional and state levels nationwide to "identify and advocate for food system change," reports the **Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic**. Its 2012 toolkit— "*Good Laws, Good Food: Putting State Food Policy to Work for Our Communities*"—touts Illinois' "broad-ranging" legislation as a model.

Unfortunately, due to heavy hands in the State's Administration, implementation of this four-year-old law has not measured up to the expectations of the statewide coalition of citizens who envisioned the Council as a state-sanctioned engine for grassroots democracy and community self-determination. Three months into the Council's formation, elements within the government sought to undermine and discredit this instrument for devolving governmental authority into a state-controlled grant-delivery system. These actions fragmented Council directors, thwarted access to funds, and diminished executive-branch support - stalling years of progress. Despite the obstacles and setbacks, the citizen-led Council managed to earn the Illinois Public Health Association of the Year award in 2012 and laid a foundation for effective forward action.

The continued success of the Council to serve as an effective agent of change will need recommitment and senior-level attention from current and future Administrations if Illinois is to achieve goals spelled out in the law. State-agency collaboration is essential to Council efforts to: **1) align community assets 2) improve delivery of public resources 3) address local needs 4) create jobs that cannot be outsourced, and 5) grow Main Street economies from Chicago to Cairo.**

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TIMELINE

NOTE: On July 30, 2013, the Council authorized Cole-Kweli—2011-2013 Co-President—and Heuer—2011-2013 Secretary—to produce the following chronicle of the organization’s history:

2006-2007

A statewide coalition of citizens from urban, suburban, exurban and rural communities persuaded then Rep. Julie Hamos (D-Evanston) to take the lead on writing and passing the Illinois Local and Organic Food and Farm Act. Sen. Jacqueline Collins (D-Chicago) agreed to be the lead sponsor in the Senate. The General Assembly approved the law authorizing formation of the **Illinois Local and Organic Food and Farm Task Force** to produce recommendations to build an Illinois local food system. The law was signed by then Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

2008-2009

The Task Force and its committees met dozens of times. In addition, 18 citizen-led listening sessions were held throughout Illinois. These activities informed development of a report entitled “**Local Food, Farms & Jobs: Growing the Illinois Economy.**” This report became the basis for the Illinois Local Food Farms and Jobs Act of 2009. The law, co-sponsored by then Rep. Hamos and Sen. Collins, won nearly unanimous support in the General Assembly. Gov. Quinn signed the law that August 18th at the Illinois State Fair’s Agriculture Day luncheon. Task Force leadership created the inaugural slate of Council directors that was appointed by the Governor.

2010

In March 2010, the 35 member Council was formed and work began (ten of the 28 non-state employees had previously served on the Task Force). A consultant was retained to facilitate development of a strategic plan. At its second meeting that June, the Council elected its first Executive Committee (EC) (*see list of members of the Council’s three ECs on page x*); formed committees; created by-laws; received Illinois not-for-profit corporation status; began application to become a federal 501c3 tax-exempt entity; wrote letters of support for stakeholder local food projects statewide; and approved the strategic plan.

The plan sought to align the Council’s statutory responsibilities with the Task Force’s vision for “a new team member...chartered specifically to guide and monitor the building of the statewide system.” As spelled out in the Task Force report, the Council was envisioned as a “citizen group authorized by the Illinois General Assembly” to play a facilitation role among and between myriad local food projects whose isolation and disconnection impede stakeholders’ capacity to reach “their fullest potential.”

In late June and the final days of the state’s fiscal year, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) invited the Council to submit a grant proposal. DCEO had been an

invaluable partner for the Task Force and, thus, was expected to continue to play a collaborative role in the implementation of the Task Force's vision. Funding would be used to solidify the organizational structure and begin strategic-plan implementation.

The Council had commitments from non-profit partners, **Illinois Stewardship Alliance and Angelic Organic Learning Center**, to serve as fiscal agents to administer such grant funds. However, DCEO awarded the Council a \$245,000 grant contingent upon the selection of its own fiscal agent— **Business Innovations Services (BIS)**, a Naperville-based subsidiary of the University of Illinois Extension. The EC accepted the partnership terms with BIS pending review of the contract.

The DCEO website soon listed the Council as the grant recipient, yet DCEO officials failed to produce a contract for the Council's consideration. Instead, they began to treat the EC at arms length, doling out small bits of information and slowing the process. The result was a breakdown in communication that fragmented Council leadership. The September Council meeting was cancelled and not rescheduled pending action from DCEO. Furthermore, the EC stopped sending out communications to Council directors.

After much inquiry, some Council directors were able to determine DCEO had given BIS full control over the budget, plan of action and outcomes. As permitted in the by-laws, these directors demanded a special EC meeting at which time the decision was made to inform then DCEO director Warren Ribley via email that the Council was formally withdrawing support for the grant. A meeting of the full Council was called in Springfield.

In late October, the day before Council directors convened at Department of Agriculture headquarters, Ribley informed a Council director that he'd ignored the withdrawal request in order to avoid having to return the funds to the state treasury. No DCEO representatives attended the Council meeting. In an open letter read at the Council meeting by DOA representative Delayne Reeves, Ribley asserted the grant award was turned over to BIS because the Council lacked "**leadership and direction.**" At the meeting, it was also reported that DCEO's action had led two foundations to withdraw their offer of \$175,000 in matching grant funds.

The Council's first year had begun with great promise, momentum and the prospect of \$420,000 in public and private funds to implement the strategic plan. The year ended with no funds, much confusion and a handful of Council directors seeking in vain to forge a collaborative relationship with DCEO and BIS, the Council's new "partner."

2011

In January 2011, several Council directors filed a **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)** request seeking any and all correspondence on this issue from DCEO and BIS. Public records revealed a scheme involving the misappropriation of public funds and an attempt to transfer the Council's legislative authority to University of Illinois Champaign's Cooperative Extension.

BIS—an arm of the century-old Extension service—had been presented to the Council as a passive fiscal agent. The initial concept was that BIS accept a fee to administer a grant written by the Council

for the explicit purpose of initiating our work under the oversight of Governor Quinn's appointed directors. Instead, as FOIA records documented, over a period of several months DCEO had used the power of government to: **1) create confusion and division among Council directors; 2) point to the resulting chaos as evidence of a false perception that the Council was not capable of fulfilling its mandate; and 3) attempt to engineer an arrangement whereby University of Illinois Champaign would assume the Council's core functions.**

Ryan Croke—the Governor's Office liaison to the Council—had provided effective support during the transition from the citizen-led Task Force to the citizen-led Council. DCEO's attempted takeover coincided with an end to the Governor's Office proactive attention to the Council's success.

This Quinn Administration action contradicted the Council's very purpose—and the political philosophy that has animated the Governor's professional career. The Task Force hadn't advocated for a centralizing agent; to the contrary, its statewide outreach activities uncovered the need—spelled out in its legislative report—for a “new team member” that would embrace “subsidiarity.” This foremost Council “organizing principle states that matters ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest, or least centralized competent authority. The Council shall empower local networks.”

Instead, DCEO sought to transfer the legislative authority of the “*new team member*” to the state's century-and-a-half federal land grant university. According to a series of email communications to officials at DCEO and U of I during the summer of 2010 BIS Executive Director Mary Rose Hennessey said DCEO planned to remove the Council from the grant so BIS “*will do the project under the U of I banner.*” *She viewed the DCEO grant as an “investment” in a “core operating budget” that will “help to generate millions of dollars of support for Council stakeholders and the priority objectives in the Council's strategic plan.*”

Revelations about the DCEO/U of I scheme led members of the original EC to withdraw from the leadership team. Many other directors quit or ceased to participate in the Council.

At a March quarterly meeting, the Council elected a new EC (See p.15). In the spirit of collaboration that guided the citizen coalition's interactions with state government since 2007, remaining directors sought to resolve the matter through internal channels.

The EC submitted a memo to the Governor's Office summarizing FOIA findings and then stating: “*We don't want a public scandal, to pick a fight or make enemies. We merely want all agencies within the Quinn Administration to respect the will of the General Assembly by obeying the 2009 law enacted at the behest of a statewide coalition of citizens in order for state government to play a proactive role in encouraging community-based farm economies throughout Illinois.*”

There was no official response. The Governor's deputy legal Counsel Brian Dunn advised a director: “Governors' councils have a lot of leeway in determining quorum and participation.” On May 4th 2011, in an effort of good faith, a Council team went to Springfield to meet with then DCEO Director Ribley and staff. The Council team reiterated its message to the Governor's Office; Ribley agreed to instruct his staff to move forward with active and more transparent participation from DCEO as well as BIS.

Without resources, staff or political support, the Council EC focused on securing its 501-c-3 status and implementation of the first of five Council functions: *“Serve as a forum and clearinghouse for discussing farm and food issues.”* The Department of Agriculture hosted the quarterly meetings and staff participated in EC calls. Staff from the Department of Human Services was also active in the EC. The quarterly meeting structure provided the building block to develop a community-led organization.

The June meeting convened government agencies to present local food initiatives. June’s forum allowed representatives of eight state entities as well as USDA’s Rural Development agency to reflect on significant—albeit uncoordinated—governmental activity to support the strongest food trend in decades. Representatives from all eight of the state agencies described promising local food activities. The benefits of increased collaboration facilitated by the Council were discussed. Yet, a year later, only four of the agencies attended a Council meeting to share their progress.

The Council’s statutory responsibility to facilitate “interagency policies, initiatives, and procedures” represents a strategic opportunity for the Quinn Administration to harness the energy of community leaders statewide to spark governmental innovation. The Council was unable to muster senior-level attention within the Quinn Administration to better align state resources to meet local need.

Officials from Central Management Services did initiate contact with the Council. CMS made a good faith effort to secure guidance from the Council as to how state agencies can meet the General Assembly’s goal in the statute to ensure that state-owned institutions source 20% of food from Illinois-owned businesses by 2020. Dialogue ensued between CMS officials and directors with expertise on wholesale market dynamics. The institutional sourcing goals were discussed at the September meeting. A vegetable grower and director said farmers have no trouble selling product to nearby wholesale buyers with cash in hand. Institutions take longer to compensate producers and, thus, will remain less attractive markets until supply increases. He said the institutional sourcing goals try to solve “the wrong problem,” and that the focus should be to encourage more people to “plant seeds in the ground.”

The Council’s core strength—as a convener that draws together a multitude of perspectives from throughout the state—was evident in that meeting attended by about 35 people. Another Council director observed that the 2009 law’s emphasis on institutional sourcing was intended to signal state government’s interest in an emerging market. Instead, the coalition’s efforts were themselves part of what an Illinois Farm Bureau board member described as “the snowballing effect” of the local food phenomenon. Others pointed to the Council’s unique position as an intermediary between the community and state and a potential information clearinghouse helping constituencies find their niche in an economy requiring transparency and **“a 360 degree perspective”** in stakeholder participation.

The December meeting included a forum to support implementation of new state laws that would benefit from collaborative approaches between public health departments and farmers markets constituencies. Entitled *“Finding the Balance: Local Food and Public Health,”* the forum convened representatives from four levels of government (the U.S. Center for Disease Control; Illinois Department of Public Health; Cook County Department of Public Health; City of Chicago’s Mayor’s Office.) Also participating were representatives from Illinois Stewardship Alliance, Illinois Farmers Market Network, Illinois Farm Bureau, and Feeding Illinois.

The Council's political problems did not prove insurmountable. Indeed, the "Finding the Balance" forum led to the Council's recognition as the Illinois Public Health Association's organization of the year.

2012

A Strategic Plan Working Group produced a plan to channel the energies of directors into activities that accelerate development of a statewide network of community-based local food economies. Working groups were proposed to address seven priorities identified in the 2010 strategic plan: **asset mapping, data management, farmer training, state procurement, legal/regulatory barriers (public policy), public awareness, and funding.** *(Several previously cited priorities—Illinois food label, farmland preservation, and farm-to-school—were temporarily shelved to focus on the most achievable outcomes.)*

Five director-led working groups reported regularly to the EC and made presentations at quarterly meetings. Here's a summary of their 2012 efforts:

FARMER TRAINING

A series of regional roundtables was envisioned as a means to build a statewide stakeholder network of farmers and educators to identify opportunities for collaborative action (sharing of program models, curriculum, HR, financial resources, etc.) that will benefit prospective, beginning and transitioning farmers.

The first roundtable event brought about 50 people to Prairie Crossing in Grayslake—including farmers, educators, non-profit representatives and Council directors. The current capacity of farmer training programs was deemed insufficient to meet the estimated need of approximately 10,000 new farmers by 2020 to reach the state goal.

STATE PROCUREMENT

Dialogue with state agencies focused on defining and identifying Illinois goods in the state food-contracts buying stream. There was discussion about the feasibility of tracking individual ingredients within value-added products and incorporating this information into the 2020 goal accounting.

The most immediate opportunity is to facilitate direct sales to individual facilities—e.g. IDOA's outreach to buyers at four Veterans Administration facilities in Quincy, Marion, Anna, and LaSalle. These institutions have small purchase money that offers some flexibility in terms of purchasing fresh produce from Illinois farmers.

ASSET MAPPING

A team of University of Illinois-Chicago interns for the Council used a University of Chicago computer model to create an interactive online map that could become a foundational component of the Council's future activities.

Initial data collection efforts at <http://bit.ly/YNpEZH> includes health inspection facilities and economic networks—e.g. University of Illinois Champaign’s MarketMaker.

Mapping needs include regional components for a statewide network of community-based local food economies—e.g. DCEO’s food hub projects, farmers markets, Feeding Illinois’ food pantries, IL Department of Human Services facilities, regional planning councils, soil and water conservation districts, and farmer training programs.

POLICY

An October “Healthy People Healthy Farms” symposium drew 100 people to Springfield’s Statehouse Inn. Building on public health/local food synergies identified at the Council’s “Finding the Balance” forum, the event was organized by several Council stakeholders and the Illinois Public Health Institute. Keynote speaker Ken Meter showed how local food can be a building block for community self-determination. Another takeaway was the public health benefits of building small-market farm infrastructure—including effective implementation of new state cottage food laws.

Council directors participated in Advocates for Urban Agriculture forum in Chicago where the need was clarified for state composting legislation in 2013.

FINANCE

Fundraising efforts were tabled pending IRS determination on our 501 c 3 application.

To enhance economic development strategy, DCEO staff requested a spreadsheet of aggregated federal spending data that promotes local food demand, access, production and infrastructure for Illinois. An initial baseline figure of \$10.6 million was identified. The question of how to leverage public funds to spur private investment was explored as a means to carry out recommendations from the 2009 Task Force report.

At the December meeting, an ad hoc committee was formed to explore options for contracting an organization to provide an executive function. The committee’s charge was to present a proposal for an RFP at the next quarterly meeting on March 6, 2013.

2013

Plans to make strategic use of the Council’s four quarterly meetings surfaced last winter through EC dialogues with Carbondale-based **Food Works**. This non-profit agency was scheduled to make a presentation about its 23-county Southern Illinois regional food plan at the Council’s March meeting. The EC realized that an ongoing commitment to support one region’s food plan could be a boost for food planning in all regions of Illinois.

The Food Works’ initiative is based on a study by Ken Meter—a nationally recognized community development analyst who demonstrates the economic benefit for local economies from leveraging consumer food dollars. Meter had previously been commissioned by Central Illinois groups to conduct a

similar analysis, and was in discussion with northeastern Illinois groups about a study to identify the food purchasing power of Chicago region.

The EC envisioned the Food Works presentation as a means to jumpstart a sequence of events at subsequent quarterly meeting. The Southern Illinois food plan had the potential to spur coordination among state agencies which would be invited to make presentations for the third year in a row at the Council's June meeting. It was understood that positive engagement with state agencies could accelerate strategic plan implementation and drive working group activity to the regional level. Meter's work could provide an intellectual framework for the Council to engage the Quinn Administration in an ongoing effort to promote an alignment of state assets to support regional initiatives.

A snowstorm forced cancellation of the March 6 meeting. The EC used the public listserv to announce its re-scheduling with the same agenda for **April 10**.

On March 13, an EC member briefed an enthusiastic Gov. Quinn on the Council's 2013 work plan that would involve:

- **Inviting the Council's four state agency partners—Agriculture, Human Services, Public Health and Economic Development—to lead Administration efforts to align existing state resources to support the Southern Illinois initiative.**
- **Using quarterly meetings to promote implementation of the SI regional strategy and to encourage replication in other regions statewide**
- **Encouraging Council working-group facilitators to invite public participation at the state, regional and local level in these activities**

The Work Plan—which was to be refined at the April 10 meeting—sought to encourage **1) inter-agency coordination; 2) regional initiatives; 3) comprehensive financial infrastructure, and; 4) food & watershed development.**

A plan summary was presented to Quinn Administration officials and legislators. The EC sought a meeting with IDOA director Robert Flider to discuss how he could best deliver on his promise (made publicly at two quarterly meetings in 2012) to broker a Council dialogue with his peers at IDHS, IDPH and IDCEO.

Flider's staff did not schedule a meeting. The EC made many futile attempts to dialogue with Administration officials. Nobody in state government has acknowledged the proposal, let alone been willing to discuss its merits.

Instead, the Quinn Administration's interaction with the EC seemed focused on halting forward progress:

- First, DOA staff said the Council was out of compliance with Open Meeting Act (OMA) requirements that the Department had neglected to bring to our attention for over a year.
- The EC complied with the OMA by agreeing to a DOA request to cease communications involving more than two directors.

- **On April 8**, IDOA abruptly cancelled the April 10 quarterly meeting citing OMA requirements that were scheduled to be spelled out to be the first item on the agenda.
- No meeting was rescheduled as IDOA staff identified a new roadblock—the issue of gubernatorial appointments to the Council board of directors. **Starting in March 2010**, the 28-non state employees to the 35-person Council had been appointed to one-, two-, and three-year terms. In the wake of DCEO/U of I Champaign fiasco, many directors had resigned and others neglected to submit letters of resignation after missing three or more consecutive Council meetings. Lawyers in the Governor’s Office advised the EC of the proper protocol for filling vacancies or reappointing directors whose terms were about to expire. The Council dealt with the terms appropriately, notifying all directors, reappointing those who indicated that they wished to continue to serve, and selecting new directors to replace those who did not. Many nominees were interested in participating but said they would not do so unless formally appointed. **In May 2012, the EC formally submitted a slate for a new board.** It made countless futile attempts to communicate on this issue with the Council’s liaison in the Governor’s Office—Ryan Croke.
- With March 2013 marking the end of the first three-year cycle of gubernatorial appointments, DOA staff informed the EC that the Governor’s Office was preparing to select a new slate of directors to guide Council activities through 2016. The EC had been following the advice of the Governor’s Office on the appointments issue for two years—but there was none of the reciprocation that had characterized the formative days of the Council. In 2010, the Governor’s Office had deferred to the Task Force on all appointments to the Council’s first board of directors. Now the Council’s elected leadership team was ignored. Last spring, Croke didn’t reply to any of the EC’s numerous phone calls and emails.
- DOA staff claimed to not have any insight or influence on the selection process. Instead in an undercurrent of communications with individual directors, DOA planned to ‘jump start’ the Council. In mid-May, individual EC members were contacted and told to cease functioning as their positions were defunct because their gubernatorial appointments had expired. **The Quinn Administration had assumed control of the Illinois Local Food Farms and Jobs Council.**
- **On June 18**, the established precedent of a five-year, citizen-led local food planning process was disrupted when IDOA staff and Justin Cajindos from the Governor’s Office convened a “Council” meeting of the newly appointed board of directors. They set the agenda and established a process for directors electing a new leadership team. There was no consideration, communication or acknowledgement of the previous EC as a basis for transition. Their cursory efforts to describe the Council’s work displayed indifference to the seven years of grassroots accomplishment that should be the lifeblood of the Council’s work.
- The new slate includes excellent appointments that could help the Council realize its potential as a facilitator of local food system development in communities statewide. The new slate also includes numerous weaknesses reflecting the Quinn Administration’s

failure to be responsive to its appointed directors who have volunteered so much of their time to faithfully implement the 2009 statute. The Governor's Office made appointments of people who had: **originally resigned, who asked not to be re-appointed and who neglected to submit letters of resignation after missing three or more consecutive Council meetings.**

- This rush to “jump start” the Council, as one director stated, rendered many official administrative tasks and obligations dangling and many questions unanswered. During the subsequent meeting, DOA staff refused to acknowledge or entertain the suggestion made to extend the previous EC members officiating capacity until a new executive committee was elected in order to properly transition loose ends.
- **On June 18**, the Council selected a nominating committee to form a new EC.
- **On July 30**, at the first-ever Council meeting held in Chicago, the nominating committee proposed a new leadership team that was elected by voice vote. The new EC's charge—is spelled out in the Council's by-laws—is to lead the organization into 2015.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Illinois Local Food Farms and Jobs Council is a “governor's council”—i.e. one of about 240 such advisory bodies created by state statute. These entities are distinct from the approximately 100 paid boards, many of which are comprised of directors who require appointment by the State Senate. Governors councils are convened to address public need articulated by Illinois constituencies and passed into law. Efforts by these myriad advisory bodies to implement their statutory responsibilities are contingent upon the oversight and support from a time-strapped executive branch.

Apparently the Quinn Administration doesn't have a strategy to coordinate the often overlapping functions of these advisory bodies. Maybe it's unfeasible to harness the volunteer efforts of many citizens working on myriad issues at many tables.

The table that never fails to attract a crowd is the one with food. That's why the Council has potential to become a unifying force for spurring stronger partnerships between the people of Illinois and our state government. Efforts are taking root in urban, suburban, exurban and rural communities to respond to the many benefits from the strongest food trend in decades. Illinois' potential to capture a larger share of an estimated \$48 billion in Illinois consumers' annual food purchasing was a key selling point in passage of the Illinois Local Food Farms and Jobs Act of 2009.

The law's broader goals advocate grassroots-democracy principles that have animated Gov. Quinn's entire professional career. Yet, thus far, his Administration's implementation record demonstrates no clearly articulated strategic plan beyond DCEO's 2010 effort to cripple this community-empowerment

experiment before it even had a chance to walk. In 2011, gubernatorial appointees committed to the Task Force's vision regained control of the Council and—as documented in this report to the new slate of directors—made positive forward steps despite steep barriers. This year, the Quinn Administration dismissed the Council's leadership team for no clear and justifiable cause.

The new EC appears to be making a good faith effort to ensure the Council's development into a viable organization. Learning from the past is a formula for success; ignoring the past is not. Success depends on leadership from the Governor's Office.

In March 2011, the last EC sought to overcome the Council's tumultuous beginning through collaboration with the Quinn Administration. The question on the table remains: Does Gov. Quinn want the Council to become a creature of state bureaucracy or will he direct state agencies to fully support a community-led organization exercising its mission as envisioned in the Illinois Local Food Farms and Jobs Act of 2009?

The new Council may choose to take the easy path and water down its mission and become just another top-down grant delivery system. Such a course of action would represent a betrayal of the vision of the private citizens who first saw the need for this public initiative seven years ago. And it would represent a missed opportunity to create an instrument that decentralizes authority and decision-making in response to efforts taking root in communities statewide to revitalize the foundation of the Illinois economy.

The Council will need senior-level attention within this and future Administrations if Illinois is to achieve goals spelled out in the law. State-agency collaboration is essential to Council efforts to 1) align community assets; 2) improve delivery of public resources; 3) address local needs; 4) create jobs that cannot be outsourced, and; 5) grow Main Street economies from Chicago to Cairo.

ILLINOIS LOCAL FOOD FARMS AND JOBS COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

June 2010-March 2011

Co-Presidents	Lonnie Doan	Illinois Workforce Investment Board (LaSalle)
	Hero Tammeling	Illinois Department of Human Services (Sangamon)
Vice-President	Johari Cole-Kweli	Organic Farmer (Kankakee)
Treasurer	Lindsay Record	Illinois Stewardship Alliance (Sangamon)
Secretary	Brandon Johnson	Washington Park Consortium (Cook)
At-Large Members	Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant	University of Illinois Extension (Menard)
	Jody Osmond	Farmer (LaSalle)

March 2011-May 2013

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Co-Presidents	Johari Cole-Kweli	Farmer (Kankakee)
	Jim Braun	Community Organizer (Sangamon)
Vice President	Jody Osmond	Farmer (LaSalle)
Treasurer	Keith Bolin	American Corn Growers Association (Bureau)
Secretary	Bob Heuer	Evanston/Skokie School Dist. 65/202 (Cook)
At-large members	Barbara Rose	Angelica Organic Learning Center (Cook)
	Marjorie Sawicki	Turkey Hill Grange (St. Clair)

July 2013-present

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President	Wes King	Illinois Stewardship Alliance (Sangamon)
Vice President	Julia Govis	University of Illinois Extension (Cook)
Treasurer	Jen Walling	Illinois Environmental Council (Cook)
Secretary	Karen Lehman	Fresh Taste (Cook)
At-large members	Johari Cole-Kweli	Farmer (Kankakee)
	Naomi Davis	Blacks in Green (Cook)

REPORT CO-AUTHORS

Johari Cole-Kweli has dedicated her life to building on the natural connections between man, food and land. In the early 1990's, she and her husband spearheaded an all organic produce co-op store on Chicago's south side and the Garvey Festival in northeastern Illinois' Kankakee County. Over the past 15 years, she her husband and two children have raised organic produce on the five-acre Iyabo Farms in Kankakee's Pembroke Township. Their reputation as mentors for sustainable living has drawn hundreds of students, interns, and weekend farmers. Johari was honored as one of Organic Style's 10 Women of the Year (2005) and Bank of America's Local Hero Award (2010). She was co-collaborator of a white paper with Leopold Center on Revitalizing Rural America; and keynote speaker to several national food and sustainability conferences. From 2007 to 2013, she served as an Organic Farm Research Foundation director, and in 2008, she became a founding member of the Illinois Local and Organic Food and Farm Task Force. Active participation in the work of building a statewide local food system led to her gubernatorial appointment to the Illinois Local Food Farm and Jobs Council. She served as co-president for two years and continues to serve on the Council executive committee.

Born in Chicago, she grew up in a Michigan farming community and earned a degree in microbiology from Michigan State University. She has worked as a research microbiologist for pharmaceutical companies and as a professional model. In addition to farming, Johari does IT training in the Tri-state area.

Bob Heuer brings more than two decades of experience writing about agriculture, finance and regional economies to his work as a public policy/marketing strategist. In the 1990s, he organized regional transportation reform coalitions in metropolitan Chicago for Center for Neighborhood Technology and Environmental Law and Policy Center while contributing dozens of articles to Crain's Chicago Business, Chicago Reader, Illinois Issues and AgLender Magazine. From 2003 to 2010, he consulted for Farm Credit Council, national trade organization for America's largest agricultural lending network. He currently is producing a report for Wallace Center to increase wholesaler buyers' interest in sourcing product from "food hubs." In 2009, he led efforts by the Evanston/Skokie School Dist. 65/202 legislative committee to improve school meals. Since 2010, he has served as a gubernatorial appointee to the Illinois Local Food Farms and Jobs Council.

Born in Springfield, Illinois, he grew in suburban Chicago's DuPage County and earned a degree from Marquette University's College of Journalism. Fluent Spanish was his entrée to chronicling baseball's Latin Americans for such outlets as the Washington Post, National Public Radio's Morning Edition, New York Times, and Hispanic Link News Syndicate. He now lives with his wife and children about a half mile from land homesteaded by his great-great-grandparents.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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