

# FORT LIBERTY & CUMBERLAND COUNTY FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

## BYLAWS



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## **Article I. Name, Logo, and Service Area**

### **Section I. Name**

Under the resolution of the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners, the Fort & Cumberland County Food Policy Council was established in June of 2021. The Fort Liberty & Cumberland County Food Policy Council may also be referred to as the Food Policy Council or the FPC. Hereinafter, the Fort Liberty & Cumberland County Food Policy Council may be referred to as “the Council”.

### **Section II. Logos**

No logo or symbol of the Fort Liberty & Cumberland County Food Policy Council may be altered or incorporated into a larger symbol without the express written permission of one of the Council Co-chairs.

### **Section III. Service Area**

The Fort Liberty & Cumberland County Food Policy Council seeks to implement policy change and initiatives at the local level within the Cumberland County and Fort Liberty communities through working with appropriate governing bodies, community organizations, and residents. Given that some aspects of local food systems are impacted by state and federal level organizations and governing bodies, the Fort Liberty & Cumberland County Food Policy Council may also seek to establish partnerships and to advocate for changes at these levels when necessary.

## **Article II. Mission, Vision, & Goals**

### **Section I. Vision & Mission**

#### **Part A. Vision**

To advance health equity and quality of life by creating a healthy food environment where all members of the Fort Liberty and Cumberland County communities can thrive.

#### **Part B. Mission**

To provide a forum for representatives involved in all aspects of the local food system to foster effective policies, programs, and community collaboration that decreases food insecurity and increases access to healthy foods within Fort Liberty and Cumberland County.

## **Section II. Goals**

1. Increase access to healthy, nutritious, and culturally inclusive foods in both Fort Liberty and Cumberland County by identifying and recommending policy changes to Fort Liberty and Cumberland County leadership; and
2. Incorporate health, equity, and sustainability considerations in policies, processes, and decisions as it relates to food insecurity; and
3. Decrease the current number of adults and children facing food insecurity in the Cumberland County (19%<sup>1</sup>); and
4. Communicate with various food system stakeholders for their expertise and build a better sense of cohesion amongst food system workers; and
5. Collaborate with Community Food Strategies to network with other existing Food Policy Councils in the Southeast Region of North Carolina; and
6. Explore ways to conserve local resources such as plants and soil, water, air quality, farming and agricultural land, local livestock, and capital.

## **Article III. Equity Statement**

The Fort Liberty & Cumberland County Food Policy Council is committed to cultivating an inclusive environment where diversity is valued, respected and celebrated. We strive to embrace all individuals in their identities, beliefs, and personal backgrounds. Membership and participation in the Fort Liberty & Cumberland County Food Policy Council shall be free from discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, economic status, disability, occupation, or status as a veteran. We make every effort to establish a supportive and safe atmosphere that promotes community, growth, and self-expression.

## **Article IV. Conflict of Interest**

Members of the Food Policy Council must avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest. A conflict of interest includes but is not limited to personal, financial, professional, and/or political gain that directly opposes the goals, objectives, vision, and mission of the Joint Fort Liberty Cumberland County Food Policy Council. Members must formally disclose any potential conflict(s) of interest in writing to the current Co-Chairs as soon as they become aware of the conflict(s) of interest. Members shall not participate in any discussion, debate, or vote in any matter in which the subject of discussion is a contract, transaction, or situation where there may be a conflict of interest, or it may be reasonably perceived to others that a conflict of interest may exist.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/north-carolina/2020/rankings/cumberland/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

## **Article V. Organizational Structure**

### **Section I. General Council Membership Provisions**

1. The Fort Liberty & Cumberland County Food Policy Council will have a maximum of 15 members, including two Co-chairs and 13 general council members; and
2. One Co-chair shall represent Fort Liberty and one Co-chair shall represent the communities of Cumberland County. The Council's Co-chairs will be selected by the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners.
3. The Council shall have one secretary. The role of Secretary will be filled internally by a general council member, liaison or employee of the Cumberland County Public Health Department; and
4. The Council should be composed of individuals who are connected within their organizations or community and who can offer subject matter expertise, information, and individual perspectives that enhance the Council; and
5. With equity at the forefront, members will be recruited with the aim to reflect the racial, economic, and geographic diversity of Cumberland County and Fort Liberty, including those who have experienced food insecurity; and
6. Prospective members can join the council through an open application process through the Cumberland County Department of Public Health website. Once the application is received, they will be asked to forward a biography detailing who they are and why they would like to be a part of the FPC. Then, they will be invited to a regular monthly meeting to get to know council members. The Council will then publicly vote on their membership during the meeting. After Council approval, members will be appointed by the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners to serve a three-year term.
7. Co-chairs may renew their term once, but it must be voted on and approved by the council members. Due to the transitional nature of active-duty military service, the Council recognizes that some members may only be able to commit to an initial one-year term. Members may seek reappointment after the expiration of their term, and shall serve no more than three consecutive terms; and
8. Term end dates will be staggered to ensure at least three members with experience will remain on the Council to pass on knowledge to new members; and
9. All council members shall be residents of Fort Liberty or Cumberland County.

### **Section II. Membership Duties & Expectations**

#### **Part A. Co-Chair Duties & Expectations**

The Co-chairs serve as the leadership team of the Council in conjunction with the Secretary. One Co-chair shall represent Fort Liberty and one Co-chair shall represent the communities of Cumberland County. The Council's Co-chairs will be selected by the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners. Co-chairs of the Fort Liberty & Cumberland County Food Policy Council shall be required to:

1. Hold in their respective roles for the entirety of their appointed terms; and
2. Cultivate an environment of mutual respect and active participation during council

meetings as well as uphold the mission and values of the Council as well as decisions made by the Council; and

3. Convene outside of council meetings along with the Secretary to plan for council meetings and to support the needs of members of the Council; and
4. Ensure that at least one co-chair shall be present at all meetings of the Council; and

5. Set the agenda for each council; and
6. Meet with Admin Officer III of the Cumberland County Department of Public Health and the Secretary the week prior to regularly scheduled meetings to discuss the agenda; and
7. Conduct all meetings in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order; and
8. Facilitate voting for the Council; and
9. Serve as liaisons between the Council, Cumberland County, and Fort Liberty; and
10. Guide the Council in developing long-term plans, policies, and programs; and
11. Monitor the progress of activities and initiatives in between regularly scheduled council meetings; and
12. Expect to spend 8-10 hours per month fulfilling their roles and duties.

### **Part B. Secretary Duties & Expectations**

The role of Secretary shall be filled internally by a general council member. Upon vacancy of the Secretary position, a new Secretary shall be appointed within one regularly scheduled council meeting. Candidates for Secretary shall receive a nomination and a second to be considered for election. The Secretary shall be appointed by a majority vote from the council. In the absence of the Secretary, the Co-chair(s) may temporarily select a council member to fulfill necessary duties and/or select an assistant secretary. The Secretary of the Fort Liberty & Cumberland Council Food Policy Council shall be required to:

1. Serve on the leadership team of the Council in conjunction with the Co-chairs; and
2. Hold in their respective roles for the entirety of their appointed term; and
3. Cultivate an environment of mutual respect and active participation during council meetings as well as uphold the mission and values of the Council as well as decisions made by the Council; and
4. Convene outside of council meetings along with the Co-chairs to plan for council meetings and to support the needs of members of the Council; and
5. Be present and vote at all council meetings; and
6. Take minutes at all council meeting; and
7. Work with the Admin Officer III of the Cumberland County Department of Public Health to submit the sunshine list meeting notice to the Cumberland County Department of Health at least 48 hours prior to regularly scheduled council meetings; and
8. Meet with Admin Officer III of the Cumberland County Department of Public Health and the Co-chairs the week prior to regularly scheduled meetings to discuss the agenda; and
9. Work with the Co-chairs and Admin Officer III of the Cumberland County Department of Public Health to distribute the agenda and meeting details (e.g., meeting time, date, and location) to council members for council meetings at least 7 days prior to regularly scheduled meetings; and
10. Distribute council meeting minutes to the council members within 7 days after a regularly scheduled meeting; and
11. Keep records of council member attendance at regularly scheduled meetings; and



12. Work with Admin Officer III of the Cumberland County Department of Public Health to keep other documents and records pertinent to the Council; and
13. Draft reports and council communications as necessary; and
14. Maintain council records and information on the Cumberland County Department of Public Health website; and
15. Expect to spend 8-10 hours per month fulfilling their roles and duties.

### **Part C. General Council Membership Seats**

The breakdown of the thirteen general council member seats are as follows:

- a) Three community members who do not work in local government or health agencies; and
- b) Two members involved in local farming and agriculture; and
- c) One member representing local higher education (e.g., Fayetteville State University, Methodist University, or Fayetteville Technical Community College); and
- d) One member representing Fort Liberty Schools; and
- e) One member representing the Cumberland County School District; and
- f) Three members who work in the fields of healthcare, public health, food insecurity/food access, or child and adult care; and
- g) Two members who work in local government.

### **Part D. General Council Duties & Expectations**

Members of the general council serve as representatives for the communities and professions from which they were appointed. They are expected to connect with their constituents to best represent their needs. Members of the general council shall be required to:

1. Conduct themselves with the utmost respect and professionalism; and
2. Be responsive to communications from the Co-chairs and Secretary; and
3. Be present and vote at all council meetings; and
4. Communicate meeting absences with the Co-chairs and Secretary; and
5. Serve and participate in on Ad-hoc committees as desired; and
6. Expect to spend 6-8 hours per month fulfilling their roles and duties.

### **Section IV. Resignation & Removal of Council Members**

The Fort Liberty and Cumberland County Food Policy Council shall operate with the utmost respect and flexibility for extenuating circumstances that may limit council members ability to participate in the activities and proceedings of the Council. Council members are encouraged to prioritize their health and wellbeing and to notify the Co-chairs of extenuating circumstances. Missing 50% or more regular council meetings without excusal from the Co-chairs as well as failure to uphold the duties and expectations of membership will accrue grounds for removal or resignation. In the case of resignation, council members shall communicate their intention to resign in writing to the Co-chairs. Removal of council members must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Council. The Cumberland County commissioners have the authority to appoint and remove all members of the Board. The Board provides the commissioners with recommendations of Board appointees and

removal. A majority vote will determine appointees and removals that are recommended to the commissioners.

## **Section V. Vacancies**

Vacancies of Co-chair and general council member positions shall be made publicly available through the Cumberland County website within one month of the opening. The Secretary shall work with Admin Officer III of the Cumberland County Department of Public Health to post the application on the website. The Council shall internally review applications and submit the names of applicants for appointment consideration to the Admin Officer III of the Cumberland County Department of Public Health. The Admin Officer III of the Cumberland County Department of Public Health will submit the names via a Novus Agenda to the Clerk to the Board for approval by the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners. The Co-chairs and Secretary shall work with the Cumberland County Department of Public Health Admin Officer III to ensure the timely review and appointment of applicants.

## **Section VI. Public Records**

The records of the Council shall be subject to the applicable provisions of the North Carolina Public Records Law. Members of the Council shall be subject to the applicable provisions of the North Carolina Code of Ethics of Public Officers and Employees, including but not limited to, G.S. 14-234.

## **Article VI. Committees**

### **Section I. Working Groups**

To achieve specific goals, tasks or projects, the Council may instate a working group with the majority vote of the council. For example, a working group may form to create a policy recommendation for a community program or to research innovative new ideas for a specific project. Working group membership shall be open to any member who lives or works in the Fort Liberty and Cumberland County communities. Unless terminated or extended by a majority vote from the Council, working groups shall dissolve at completion of goal or one year following their instatement.

### **Part A. Working Group Structure and Leadership**

1. Members of the Fort Liberty and Cumberland County Food Policy Council are encouraged to serve on working groups. Attendance to all working group meetings shall be open to any member of the Council; and
2. Each working group shall elect a chair by a majority vote of its active membership during the first working group meeting. The chairs shall hold their positions until the expiration of their appointed terms. One of the Co-chairs shall facilitate chair election process; and

3. Each chair shall set the agenda for each meeting as well as convene and preside over the working group. The chair is responsible for setting the meeting schedule as well as communicating meeting details (e.g., meeting time, date, and location); and
4. Quorum must be met in order for an working group to vote. Quorum shall be defined as a one-half attendance of the active membership of the working group.

## **Article VII. Meetings**

### **Section I. Scheduling**

At a minimum, the Council shall convene monthly to conduct a regular council meeting on dates and times chosen by the Co-chairs. Ad-hoc committees should also meet monthly, opposite of the regular meetings. All regular council meetings shall be open to the public. Notice of any regular council meetings shall be given at least 14 days prior by written notice, email, or mail to each council member at their business or home address. Regular council meetings may be conducted in a format agreed upon by the Co-chairs (e.g., in-person, by video conference, or by conference call). The Co-chairs shall provide an opportunity at the end of each regular council meeting for introductions of the public and brief comments or questions from members of the public. A proposed agenda for each regular council meeting shall be created by the Co-chairs and made available to the public at least 48 hours in advance of each meeting. Requests for changes to the proposed meeting agenda can be made to the Secretary at any time prior to approval of the agenda at the beginning of the meeting.

### **Section II. Public Announcement**

All regularly council meetings shall be open to the public in accordance with the North Carolina Open Meetings Law, Article 33C, Chapter 143, G.S. 143-318.9-10. The Council may conduct a closed meeting in accordance with the North Carolina Open Meeting Law, Article 33C, Chapter 14, G.S. 143-318.11. Meeting dates, times, and locations should be posted on the Council's page on the Cumberland County Department of Health Website. Additionally, the Secretary shall be responsible for submitting the sunshine list public meeting notice to the Cumberland County Department of Health at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting date.

### **Section III. Public Comment**

All comments and suggestions addressed to the Council during the public comment period shall be subject to the following guidelines:

1. The public comment period shall be held during each regular council meeting and shall last no longer than 15 minutes. The time of the public comment period may be extended at the discretion of the Co-chairs.
2. Any persons who wish to address the council shall notify Admin Officer III of the Cumberland County Department of Public Health at least 48 hours prior to the

regularly scheduled council meeting to be placed on the agenda. Contact information for Admin Officer III shall be made publicly available.

3. Each speaker will have a maximum of three minutes to make remarks.
4. Speakers will be acknowledged in the order in which they placed their public comment requests.
5. Public comment is not intended to require the Council to address impromptu questions. Any action on items brought up during public comment are at the discretion of the Council.
6. Speakers shall not discuss matters deemed to be “closed session” type issues (i.g., personal matters, litigation, property acquisition, attorney-client privilege, matters made confidential by law), and speakers shall be courteous in their language.
7. Written comments and supporting documents may be left with the Secretary to read or distribute.
8. Public comments shall be summarized in the meeting minutes.

#### **Section IV. Agenda**

The agenda of regular council meetings shall include but is not limited to the following:

- I. Call to Order
  - a. Roll Call
  - b. Approval of Agenda
  - c. Approval of Minutes
- II. Executive Reports
  - a. Co-chairs
  - b. Secretary
  - c. Committee Chairs
- III. Informal Discussion
- IV. Old Business
- V. New Business
- VI. Public Comment
  - a. Introduction of Visitors
  - b. Questions & Comments
- VII. Announcements
- VIII. Adjournment

#### **Section V. Parliamentary Authority**

The current edition of Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern meetings in which actions will be deliberated. The Council is an advisory body to the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners. The Council has no regulatory authority. The Council’s influence is through coordination, recommendation, and advocacy.

#### **Section VI. Decisions**

Quorum must be reached in order for the Council to vote and conduct a formal meeting. Quorum shall be defined as greater than 50% attendance of the active council membership, including at

least one Co-chair. For a formal meeting to precede, quorum must be met within 15 minutes of the established meeting time.

### **Part A. Formal Decisions**

Formal decisions of the council shall be made by a majority (greater than 50%) vote. All council members, including the Co-chairs, shall be considered voting members of the Council. The Secretary shall be responsible for tallying votes. When voting on formal proposals or legislation, the proposal or legislation shall be sent to each council member at least two working days before the meeting at which such action is to take place. Council members may cast their vote on formal proposals and legislation via email before a council meeting if they are unable to attend.

### **Part B. Decisions outside of Meetings**

Decisions made outside of meetings, for example agenda ideas, meeting times, may be used for matters that have been discussed at a regular meeting where a decision was not reached; or for new matters requiring action before the next regular council meeting, but which the Co- chairs determine do not warrant calling a special meeting. Decisions made outside of meetings shall be transparent and equitable, with a minimum of two working days given to members to cast a vote and tallied votes by roll distributed to all council members after a decision has been reached. Any decision made outside of meetings shall be included in the minutes of the next regular meeting.

### **Section VII. Attendance**

Council members should notify the Secretary and Co-chairs of an expected absence prior to regularly scheduled meetings. When an appointed member is absent from more than 50% of regularly scheduled meetings during the Council's calendar year, the Co-chairs may request that the appointed member provide a written explanation of the absences. If the Co-chairs find the explanation acceptable, the absences shall be considered excused and will not accrue for purposes of resignation from the Council. If the Co-chairs reject the explanation, the absences will accrue for purposes of resignation. Members may take a leave of absence of a predetermined length by delivering written notice to the Co-chairs.

### **Section VIII. Special Meetings**

The Co-chairs can call a special meeting at any time. Special meetings are not subject to prior 14 day written notice to all council members; however, the Secretary should make a reasonable effort to promptly distribute meeting details, agendas, and to notify the public. Quorum must be met to vote in a special meeting, but all council member absences shall be considered excused.

### **Article VIII. Funding**

The Council does not have a formal funding source from Cumberland County or Fort Liberty; however, the Council may actively seek grant funding to support its activities and

proceedings. It is recommended that the Council seek guidance from the Cumberland County Department of Public Health to aid in the grant writing and management process.

## **Article IX. Advisors & Community Partners**

The Cumberland County Department of Public Health, the Fort Liberty Department of Public Health, and the University of North Carolina System as well as other local institutions of higher education will provide staff support to the Council as available. The Council is encouraged to actively seek community participation and partnerships.

## **Article X. By-Laws**

### **Section I. General**

The bylaws of the Fort Liberty and Cumberland County Food Policy Council shall be a living document, and may be adapted, changed, or modified as needed with a two-thirds vote of the Council.

### **Section II. Formal Review**

Formal reviews and updates to the bylaws shall be conducted each January. By-laws should be made available to the public through the Fort Liberty & Cumberland County Food Policy Council's page on the Cumberland County Department of Public Health website.

### **Section III. Dissolution**

The Fort Liberty & Cumberland County Food Policy Council shall remain active unless terminated by a majority vote from the Council and a majority vote by the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners.

## **Article XI. History**

As of June 2019, Cumberland County is home to 335,509 people, and Fort Liberty is one of the largest military installations in the world. The post supports a population of roughly 140,500, including the military, their families, Department of Army civilians, and contractors. In 2015, 20 census tracts within Cumberland County met the definition of a food desert, including five census tracts located on Ft. Liberty. In Cumberland County, 13% of residents have limited access to healthy food and nearly one in five (19%) of residents are considered food insecure. Poverty is an underlying barrier to access healthy food, and 42.9% of single mothers in Cumberland County live in poverty. From 2008 to 2018, the percent of Cumberland County Schools students eligible for the free and reduced lunch program increased from 55% to 75%. It is imperative to first note that food insecurity data among military families is severely limited. Secondly, specific information regarding installation eligibility and access to federal food assistance

programs is inaccessible. A national 2015 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report indicated that 45% of children in all Department of Defense (DoD) schools are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Further, \$21 million in SNAP benefits were spent in commissaires from September 2014 to August 2015. In summary, this data indicates that both military families and residents of Cumberland County are having difficulty accessing food.

In June 2020, the Aetna Foundation awarded Cumberland County Department of Public Health with the \$100,000 Healthiest Cities and Counties Challenge (HCCC) grant to address food insecurity and healthy food access. The goals of the HCCC grant were to 1.) conduct a food environment assessment of Cumberland County and Fort Liberty, 2.) start a local food policy council, and 3.) help the council implement two food policy recommendations. The HCCC grant was awarded with the help and leadership of Colonel Sheryl Bedno of Fort Liberty Department of Public Health, Dr. Jared McGuirt of University of North Carolina-Greensboro, Dr. Jennifer Green, Director of the Cumberland County Department of Public Health, and Ashley Curtice, Deputy Director of the Cumberland County Department of Public Health. Upon ratification of a resolution in June of 2021 by the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners, the Fort Liberty & Cumberland County Food Policy Council was created and became the first joint county-military food policy council in the U.S. Further through HCCC grant, a food environment assessment was conducted in Cumberland County and Fort Liberty. More than 15 community partners were involved in the planning process for the food environment assessment and the formation of the food policy council. More than 40 community members aided in the data collection for the food environment assessment. As the Council develops, dreams, and goes forth, it is important to remember that the Fort Liberty & Cumberland County Food Policy Council is community-driven and community-focused.