

**Governance Document
for the
New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council**

Revisions Adopted by the Governance Committee on April 29, 2025

I. Name, Location and Current Status

The full name of the Policy Council is **New Mexico Food & Agricultural Policy Council** (Policy Council). The address of the **Policy Council** is 518 Old Santa Fe Trail, Suite# 1, Box 171, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505. The Policy Council is a program of and is coordinated by Farm to Table, a New Mexico, a not-for-profit 501(c)(3).

The **Policy Council** is a program of Farm to Table New Mexico.

In its formation, current and anticipated activities, the Policy Council acts, and intends to act, in compliance with the requirements of its status as a program of Farm to Table, a nonprofit corporation with 501(c)(3) IRS tax exempt status. The Policy Council functions in an advisory capacity only.

Farm to Table's mission is to build a local, healthy, equitable and sustainable food system through education and advocacy. Farm to Table firmly believes that access to food is a basic human right. We also affirm that access to regionally grown healthy and culturally relevant food is paramount to the health and economic wellbeing and sustainability of communities. As such, our work is centered on investing in New Mexico's communities, farmers, children, and the environment.

At the heart of what Farm to Table strives to achieve is a just, equitable, and sustainable food system; one that provides physical, economic and community health; regenerates, protects, and respects natural resources and animals; and ensures that all people live with dignity and freedom from oppression and exploitation.

The Policy Council purpose, goals, and values align with Farm to Table. Through a rigorous and inclusive process, the Policy Council developed its own mission statement, preamble, vision, purpose, values and equity statements to guide its membership by providing principles and articulating its role in the food and agricultural systems, and in the conduct of all of its activities and endeavors, to generally recognized educational and charitable purposes; in alignment with Farm to Table. This document serves as the guidelines of its internal governance.

I. Preamble

The New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council is a democratically based organization, composed of a variety of groups and individuals, working on issues arising from the food and agriculture systems. The Policy Council will perform its work and activities in a collaborative manner. It will bring forward to the public eye a discussion of these issues/or more comprehensive examination. It intends to educate and inform the public, those directly affected by food and agriculture programs, and public and legislative decision-makers, about selected policy issues, openly arrived at by deliberations of its members. It will advocate for these policy issues in a variety of forums and will develop and disseminate viable policy recommendations and alternatives.

III. Mission, Vision, and Purpose

The mission of the Policy Council is to: Advocate for food systems that strengthen the food and farm economies in New Mexico, and encourage and advance keeping food grown, raised, processed and consumed in New Mexico, through support, education, and policy. Through our work we strive to enhance the health and wellness of people and communities, and to sustain natural resources.

Vision: The New Mexico food supply and farm economies are prosperous, and support the economic, cultural, environmental and social well-being of farmers, ranchers, workers, consumers and communities.

Purpose:

The NM Food & Agriculture Policy Council is initiated to:

- Broaden the discussion of issues to examine more comprehensively the food and agriculture systems, and how federal, state and local government and public bodies shape the food system.
- Focus on equitable food access, production, distribution, and consumption issues through a value chain philosophy.
- Create a forum by which people and the public, in conjunction with institutions involved in food and agricultural systems, including government, can meet to learn more about what each one does and consider how their actions impact other parts of the systems.
- Strive to balance a safe, nutritious, affordable and adequate food supply for all New Mexicans that will prevent food insecurity and hunger.
- Strive for fair food and agricultural systems that support the needs of producers and consumers economically, culturally, environmentally, and socially.
- Advocate for selected food and agricultural policy issues in various forums and venues.
- Coordinate education and outreach activities, and events as designated by the Policy Council.

IV. Values Statement

A just, equitable, and sustainable food system is one that provides physical, economic and community health; regenerates, protects, and respects natural resources and animals; and ensures that all people live with dignity and freedom from oppression and exploitation.

To achieve this the Policy Council must work to change policies, systems and institutional practices that:

- Focus resources and benefits toward historically disinvested communities with particular attention to the health and well-being of all people in these communities.
- Promote resilient local food and farm economies, and strengthen the practice of sustainable agriculture and distribution of economic benefits in an equitable manner.
- Support environmental stewardship, which protects our cultural and economic assets and natural resources.
- Respect and sustain New Mexico's traditional, cultural, and indigenous foodways.
- Create engagement around racial and social equity work, a process which is a journey and is not linear.
- Recognize the need for creative adaptation as we encounter new perspectives and additional information. Our process is to learn, practice, reflect and innovate. As such, our guiding documents are a "living framework" to be reviewed and amended as we gain new understanding.
- Encourage the viewpoints and consultations of diverse groups, agencies, organizations, and policy makers, which provide the greatest potential for sharing, learning, and developing policies that benefit our food system, enhance our local economies, honor our social integrity, and value our environment and its resources.
- Acknowledge that Policy Council members and stakeholders compose a network of organizations and coalitions striving to fulfill the goal of racial and social equity within food, farming, and ranching systems.
- Hold each other accountable to these values and work together to collaboratively address equity (gender, racial, social, and economic) issues that affect our communities and those we represent.

- Support the leadership, decision-making, and community self-determination of Policy Council stakeholders and members by ensuring full-participation, representation, and voice of diverse populations, sectors, and communities within the food system, inclusive of small and medium scale farmers, ranchers, laborers and workers across the food chain, communities of color, indigenous peoples and sovereign nations, low-income individuals, women, people of differing sexual orientation, of non-confirming gender, veterans, people with disabilities, youth, and future leaders.

V. Equity Statement

A just, equitable, and sustainable food system is one that provides physical, economic and community health; regenerates, protects, and respects natural resources and animals; and ensures that all people live with dignity and freedom from oppression and exploitation. As defined by food equity advocates, health equity within the food system supports opportunities for everyone to be as healthy as possible, physically, mentally, socially, culturally, and spiritually.

The Policy Council comprises a network of diverse organizations, coalitions, and individuals that come together to fulfill the goal of racial and social equity within food, farming, and ranching systems. Policy Council members hold each other accountable to these values and work collectively to address equity (gender, racial, social and economic) issues that affect our communities and those we represent.

VI. Guiding Principles for Decision-Making

In keeping with our purposes and reflecting our implicit values, we recognize and support the following principles in our decision making:

1. "Conflict Resolution:" Conflict is a predictable result of collaboration and provides positive benefits when it is cooperatively resolved. If conflict arises the Policy Council will use consensus to move forward.
1. "Consensus and Decision Making:" Decisions that advance the work and efforts of the Policy Council will be made by consensus and general agreement by all participating whenever possible. This principle stresses a cooperative development of a decision with group members working together in good faith. It requires that all present avoid obstruction in a common search for agreement. Our consensus does not require complete unanimity in order to be a decision accepted by the Policy Council. If there is not unanimity, it will go to a majority vote. (See the next section VI on consensus regarding legislative policy issues for which the Policy Council will support and advocate.)
1. "Full Disclosure, Accountability, and Transparency:" The Policy Council depends on the open and honest sharing of information; analysis that looks with a critical eye into systemic issues in the food and agriculture systems that are developed with accuracy, clarity, and accessibility. This principle seeks to generate the most opportunity for both individuals and the community as a whole and to advance the work and efforts of the Policy Council.
1. "Participation and Decision Making:" The Policy Council values the contributions of all that choose to commit to participation in the purposes and work of the Council. The Policy Council wants to develop and improve procedures that encourage community participation in the education, deliberation and decision-making processes. Democratic ethics are at the base of decision making. We will attempt to include as many members as possible through the use of technology and electronic voting.

VII. The Process for Selecting Legislative and Policy Priorities -Timeline for Deliberation and Selection for the Current Year

The Policy Council identifies four primary roles throughout the year, during legislative sessions, and interim committees: (1) the support and advocacy before pertinent forums and committees on policy issues that are

introduced as bills and appropriations: (2) the consideration of policy alternatives, that arise from the Policy Council's knowledge of the workings of the food and agriculture systems. (3) the gathering and gleaning through a process of open discussion, review and analysis, from its members and other credible sources, for the selection of issues for support and advocacy and for placement on the tiers outlined below, and (4) the education of the Council members and the general public about food and agriculture issues at state and federal levels.

1. Early Spring Meeting

1. Mid-Summer Meeting

At this meeting all members are encouraged to bring issues for consideration that speak to their concerns that they perceive within the food and agricultural systems. and that fall generally within the contours of the Policy Council enunciated preamble, mission, vision, purposes, values, equity statement and guiding principles. This summer meeting will be conducted openly and democratically with an emphasis on robust debate, and an opportunity to hear all concerns and opportunities that can reasonably and proportionately be heard within the constraints of time and practicality. Members, in their discussions, will winnow out the concerns. focusing on those that significantly affect the food and agricultural systems, and define more clearly the emerging policy issues.

1. Pre-Legislative Session

At subsequent meetings of the Policy Council, those policy issues, occurring within weeks of the upcoming Legislative Session, particular bills and appropriations that are proposed for introduction at the upcoming legislative session will receive further consideration and deliberation. They will be placed on one of the Tiers described below. The Governance Committee will decide whether to select a Legislative Team (which can include Governance Committee members) or designate particular members of the Governance Committee to act in the capacity to implement the Tier placement selections. It is given discretion to make immediate decisions during the Legislative Session with the obligation to report back formally to the Policy Council at its Early Spring Meeting.

1. Placement

The placement on one of the Tiers-which demonstrates the level of support and advocacy efforts the Policy Council will commit to a particular bill or appropriation--- will be decided, where possible, by a consensus and overall agreement by the members present and participation at the selection meeting of the full Policy Council.

It is recognized that some policy issues-as formulated in bills and appropriations-may cause disagreement and controversy. Thus, when agreement or complete consensus cannot be reached by forthright discussion and deliberation, a decision on the issue can be made either by the 'sense of the meeting' or if this is not clear, then by a majority vote of the members attending. A majority of the vote will determine the Policy Council's position and where it is placed on the Tier for the next legislative session.

Any member of the Policy Council maintains the right to support and advocate, or to oppose, any bill or appropriation, separate from the Policy Council, as determined by the member's own internal decision-making process. The member will in a clear manner, support, advocate or oppose a bill or appropriation in its own name and designation.

In any event these selected policy issues, particular bills. and appropriations should concern the enhancement and improvement of the food and agriculture systems, and may include but are not limited to areas which support the Policy Council's Theory of Change or other guiding criteria, such as health and nutrition, food security, environment, and stewardship, retention and recruitment of small farmers and ranchers, expansion of New Mexico food initiatives, and relate to and connect with state, tribal relations. and cultural traditions. These are not exclusive or vested forever. As new policy issues arise with the approaching legislative session the Governance Committee/Legislative Session Team is charged to consider, review and as necessary, inform the

Policy Council members.

5. Policy Council Tier Placement-Designation

The **Policy Council** reviews requests for potential legislation using the following criteria:

- Have statewide or potential statewide focus or impact.
- Supports the Values Statement
- Supports the Equity Statement
- Supports and aligns with the New Mexico Food Charter

AND any of the following:

- Advance keeping food grown, raised, processed and consumed in NM.
- Does the issue already have sufficient lobbying support?
- Does the issue have support of the food and agriculture communities?
- Does it fit within the capacity of our lobbyist to contribute actual lobbying support (aside from tracking)?
- Is it politically viable?
- Is the policy presented by a NMFAPC active and paid member?

Tier placement options include the following:

1st Tier - Lead

NM Food & Agriculture Policy Council (NMFAPC) takes the lead and is responsible for all organizing, advocacy, outreach and communications for these bills. We will track these bills and provide regular updates and action alerts. We will encourage NMFAPC members to attend legislative hearings and visit legislators. They may include bills of the NMFAPC members who ask us to take the lead.

2nd Tier - Endorse

Other organizations take lead on organizing and advocating for the communications and ask the NM food & Ag Policy Council to stand in support, add to any advocacy communications, and tracking. NMFAPC's name may be used by sponsoring organization(s). NMFAPC may support by signing on to endorsement letters but will work less directly on these bills.

3rd Tier - Support

Bills that we are for or against that the membership wants us to track, but not take a position on. Depending on the number and types of legislation in Tiers 1 and 2, NMFAPC may not have the capacity to track Tier 3 bills.

4th Tier - Neutral

Legislation that we do not have enough evidence for members to take a position or that we choose to not take action.

5th Tier- Oppose

The membership can choose to actively oppose.

VIII. Governance

1. Council Membership

The membership of the **Policy Council** is democratically constituted and open to private organizations and providers, public and governmental agencies, tribal entities, groupings of people who have come together around common interests and beliefs about the food and agricultural systems, and individuals including those

who are recipients of various food and agricultural benefit programs.

The **Policy Council** focuses on state, federal and tribal policy issues that are brought forth, reviewed, and worked on throughout the year as deemed appropriate.

This recitation of the sources of potential members is not exhaustive. All groups are considered equal in the deliberations of the Policy Council. It is open to individuals and their contributions. Members may be designated by their group or organization to represent them in the deliberations of the Policy Council. When a vote is necessary each organization is allowed one vote.

Members are encouraged to participate in the work of the Policy Council and its committees. Members, by attending and deliberating at the meetings and gatherings, agree in good faith to participate and act in accordance with the Policy Council's preamble, goals and purposes and principles, or, through the deliberative process, in an open manner, to alter and amend them as circumstances necessitate.

All members who pay annual membership dues shall attest that they have read and agree to the Governance Document and will act in accordance with the document.

Paid members are voting members.

The membership structure and agreement is determined by consensus by the Governance Committee. The guidelines for membership will be published on the Policy Council's website. Membership annual dues are structured on a tier system to provide for equity and inclusion, and can be waived by the Governance Committee if there is a financial consideration.

a. Meetings

General meetings of the NM Policy Council are held at least quarterly and include those enumerated in Section VI. All general meetings are open to the public.

Annual Meeting: The annual meeting for the **Policy Council** will be held at a time, date, and place designated by the Governance Committee. This meeting will include all **Policy Council's** members who are participating in the Council's work. Participation includes actively contributing to committee work, making one's views known during deliberations and discussion and generally any good faith work done for the **Policy Council**.

Notice to Members: Notice of each meeting must be given to each member not less than five (5) or more than thirty (30) days prior to the day on which the meeting is to be held.

Governance Committee and Committee Meetings: Regular meetings of the Committees and **Governance Committee** will be held at a time and place to be determined respectively by the members of the Committees and the Governance Committee.

Notice: Notice of each meeting of the **Governance Committee** must be given to each member not less than five (5) or more than twenty (20) days prior to the day on which the meeting is to be held.

Quorum for Governance Committee: The presence at any meeting of a majority of the **Governance Committee** will be necessary and sufficient to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Proxy voting is prohibited. Electronic votes as requested by the Governance Committee are allowed.

Annual Report: The **Governance Committee** will present at each annual meeting a report of the **Policy Council's** activities during the preceding year.

Conduct of Meetings: All meetings of the **Governance Committee** will follow the principals as set forth under Section VI.

b. Rights and Responsibilities

The rights and responsibilities of members are to:

- i. Create new and innovative ideas and plans for food and agricultural systems and support the advocacy of those selected policy issues as described above in Section VII.
- ii. Vote for the members or the **Governance Committee** as provided by electronic voting.
- iii. Help to maintain the direction, purposes and goals, functions, and responsibilities of the **Policy Council** through participation in the committee structure and deliberations.
- iv. Members may sign as an individual, organization or as an agency, and shall participate in at least two (2) Policy Council meetings per year.
- v. Members may vote electronically per section VI. Guiding Principles for Decision Making. One vote per organization.

c. Benefits of Membership

- i. **Policy Council** members benefit from the opportunity to work with a broad based grouping of individuals, agencies, and organizations centered on food and agriculture issues:
- ii. Members will glean a greater understanding of food and agriculture systems from working together on issues.
- iii. By working together there is a greater likelihood that food and agriculture issues that are important to **Policy Council** members will get the needed recognition, and reform from relevant decision makers and institutions: and,
- iv. Education of food policy issues at State and Federal levels.

d. Committee Structure

Committees may be appointed as needed.

2. Governance Committee

Number and Classes of Governance Committee members: The **Governance Committee** will consist of a broad representation from the **Policy Council**. There will be two classes; voting members and non-voting ex officios. The full Governance Committee will consist of a minimum of 9 and up to 13 voting members and up to seven (7) non-voting ex-officios. Voting members will be either individual **Policy Council** members or those members who represent private, non-governmental organizations, groups, or industry associations. Non-Voting Ex Officios will consist of representatives from governmental agencies and organizations. The latter will educate, advise, and participate equally in all decisions other than to vote. At the request of voting members of the **Governance Committee**, non-voting ex-officios will be asked to serve on the **Governance Committee**.

Governance Committee elections will be held annually in May or June via online voting starting in June of 2026.

Governance Committee Members Responsibilities: The activities, affairs and property of the **Policy Council** will be managed and directed by the **Governance Committee** except for the provisions and roles of the Council

membership and Committees as otherwise directed in this document.

The **Governance Committee** will be responsible for:

1. setting the guidelines and rules of deliberation and discussions;
2. ensuring that the processes of the **Policy Council** are in alignment with and follow the principles outlined in this document;
3. reviewing annual budget specific to **Policy Council** activities and providing recommendations to Farm to Table staff that are based on Policy Council priorities
- 4.. appointing the Legislative Session Team and working with it during the Legislative Session: and;
- 5.. supporting education and outreach efforts.

The **Governance Committee** or its authorized designee(s) will speak on behalf of the **Policy Council** and its issues. No one member has the authority to speak for the **Policy Council**.

Term Limits: Governance Committee members can be elected for up to (3) three (2) two-year consecutive terms.

The **Governance Committee** will be elected by the **Policy Council** membership who are current with their annual membership dues, via electronic voting. The **Governance Committee** will be elected for a two (2) year term. A Governance Committee member must receive a minimum of 2 votes to be invited to join the Governance Committee.

To create a staggered term system since the adoption of these guidelines during the 2024 election cycle, eight (8) of the positions will serve under the “A” class and be entitled to a two-year term. Seven (7) of the positions will serve under the “B” class and be entitled to a three-year term. Upon the B Class’ reelection cycle, the term shall revert to the standard two (2) year term, thus creating a staggered election process for continuity and succession.

Officers: Officers will consist of a Chair, Vice Chair, Immediate Past Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. All officers will be elected by eligible voting members. Each position is voted on annually and can only serve two (2) consecutive annual terms in the respective position. Should the immediate Past Chair complete their allowed maximum term limit, they shall be given a one-year emeritus status to serve as an Officer.

Resignations: Any **Governance Committee** member may resign at any time by delivering a written resignation to the chair.

Removal: Any **Governance Committee** member may be removed at any time for cause. Notice of proposed removal shall be sent to the subject **Governance Committee** member and the member will have the right to be heard at a special meeting called by the chair. Missing three (3) consecutive meetings without informing the Chair is considered cause.

Vacancies: Vacancies, whether caused by death, illness, resignation, removal or changes as approved by the Governance Committee will be filled for the remainder of the term by a **Policy Council** participant who will be voted on by a majority vote of the remaining **Governance Committee**.

IX. Amendments to Internal Governance Document

This Internal Governance document may be amended, altered, changed, added to or repealed by the affirmative vote or a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the members or the **Policy Council Governance Committee** at any regular or special meetings of the voting members of the Policy Board if the notice or the proposed change,

amendment, alteration, addition or repeal is contained in the notice of the meeting at least five (5) days prior to such meeting.

ADOPTION OF DOCUMENT

This Governance document of the **New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council** was discussed, amended and approved in all essential provisions by the members of the **Policy Council** present at the meeting held on the 29th of April, 2025.

This Governance document was reviewed and approved for compliance with the amendments/attachments from the **Policy Council Governance Committee** on this date April 29, 2025.

Signed by:

Print Name: Lawrence D. Gallegos

NMFAPC Chair