



About the FLPC

Established in 2010, the Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic (FLPC) addresses the health, environmental, and economic consequences of the laws and policies that govern our food system. The FLPC utilizes substantive expertise in food law and policy and a robust policy skill set to assist nonprofit and governmental clients in a variety of local, state, federal, and international settings in understanding and improving the laws impacting the food system. As the **oldest food law clinical program** in the United States, the FLPC is a **pioneer in the field** of food law and policy, and serves as a counselor and model for lawyers and law schools entering this field. The FLPC is a division of the Harvard Law School Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation.

The FLPC actively **collaborates with prominent leaders and thinkers** across many distinct areas of law (such as FDA law, agricultural law, health law, environmental law, and constitutional law). Because the field of food law and policy is intrinsically interdisciplinary, the FLPC also works closely with colleagues from across Harvard University (including from the Schools of Public Health, Medicine, Design, Education, and Business) and other universities who are striving to improve the food system.

Law students enrolled in the FLPC get hands-on learning experience conducting legal and policy research for individuals, communities, and governments on a wide range of food law and policy issues. The FLPC has trained more than 60 clinical students at HLS, as well as dozens of interns, volunteers, and pro bono students from Harvard and other schools across the United States. Working in the FLPC allows students to provide public service as law students, while honing their legal skills in order to continue addressing food policy concerns and other pressing social issues post-graduation.

Recent Accomplishments

The FLPC projects have seen a **high level of success**, including passing new legislation, regulations, and ordinances at the state and local levels; providing legal and policy trainings to a broad range of community and advocacy groups; and participating in key dialogues about improving the food system at all levels of government.

Some recent successes include:

In September 2013, the FLPC published (in partnership with the Natural Resources Defense Council) a **groundbreaking report** about misleading expiration date labels on food products. *The Dating Game: How Confusing Date Labels Lead to Food Waste in America* received significant national media attention from over 300 media outlets, including CNN, The Today Show, TIME, NPR, and The Washington Post. The FLPC is now engaged in a broad range of projects aimed at achieving the key reforms identified in the report, including developing federal legislation around expiration dates.

In its ongoing work providing policy recommendations and guidance to the Mississippi Food Policy Council (MFPC), the FLPC has assisted the MFPC in the **passage of six new state laws** improving Mississippi's food system, including eliminating the sales tax for food sold at farmers markets, establishing a statewide Farm to School Week, creating an Interagency Farm to School Council (tasked with reducing barriers to local food procurement), and permitting the sales of low-risk "cottage foods" produced in home kitchens, among others. The MFPC is made up of a range of food system stakeholders in Mississippi, including food producers, educators, advocates, health providers, and other concerned citizens.

FLPC Initiatives

The FLPC strives to increase access to healthy foods, prevent diet-related diseases such as obesity and type 2 diabetes, and assist small-scale and sustainable farmers in breaking into new commercial markets. The FLPC currently focuses its work on the following four priority areas:

Food Policy Councils & Food Systems Planning Initiative

The FLPC works to empower state, local, and tribal communities to identify challenges in their food system, understand the legal and policy changes that could address the root causes of those problems, and implement such changes through policy advocacy. To support community food policy advocates' capacity, the FLPC has provided assistance to food policy councils both domestically and internationally. This assistance includes helping to launch new food policy councils as well as providing policy research and guidance to existing councils. The FLPC has also published comprehensive local and state food policy toolkits, and has conducted numerous food policy trainings based on these toolkits to varied audiences of producers, retail vendors, educators, advocates, and consumers.

Food Access & Obesity Prevention Initiative

The FLPC works to identify and promote key legal and policy levers that help to increase access to healthy foods and prevent diet-related diseases such as obesity and type 2 diabetes. Many of the specific projects within this initiative are at the intersection of food and health law and policy. The FLPC is currently engaged in a type 2 diabetes policy project entitled *Providing Access to Healthy Solutions*, which aims to target necessary health and food-related legal and policy interventions at the federal, state, and local level, revolutionizing the treatment and prevention of type 2 diabetes.

Food Waste Initiative

The FLPC is at the forefront of policy research on reducing food waste in the United States and globally. Our September 2013 report, *The Dating Game: How Confusing Date Labels Lead to Food Waste in America* (published in partnership with the Natural Resources Defense Council), examined how expiration date labels are misleading and cause significant food waste. The FLPC is continuing to work on implementation of better expiration date policies, and is expanding its food waste work by recommending policy changes in other key areas, such as tax incentives and liability protection for food donors, which could significantly decrease food waste.

Sustainable Food Production Initiative

The FLPC works to assist small-scale and sustainable food producers and food entrepreneurs with breaking into local and regional markets, and to otherwise support healthier and more sustainable food production. In 2013, the FLPC worked with the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition to analyze and draft comments to the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on ways to make the proposed regulations under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) friendlier to small-scale and sustainable food producers. In response to these and other comments, the FDA has agreed to issue revised proposed rules for FSMA in 2014.

