



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, non-profit organizations, communities, and governments on a wide range of food law and policy issues, and are challenged to develop creative legal and policy solutions to pressing food system issues. The FLPC has trained nearly 100 clinical students at HLS, as well as dozens of interns, volunteers, and pro bono students from Harvard and other schools across the U.S. 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

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

Some recent successes include:

In October 2015, the FLPC convened 100 law students from 50 law schools around country for the first-ever Food Law Student Leadership Summit. The Summit was the **first conference** to convene law students from around the country who share a passion for food law and policy. During the conference attendees learned in mini-courses taught by national food law and policy experts; conducted hands-on learning via participation in food policy simulations; developed strategies to start or expand student food law organizations; and began discussing strategies for addressing some of society's most pressing food law and policy concerns. FLPC is now working with the Summit attendees to build a national food law student network.

Since 2013, the FLPC has worked with the Navajo Department of Health (DOH) and the Community Outreach & Patient Empowerment Project (COPE) to identify ways to improve health and increase food sovereignty within Navajo Nation. In May 2015, the FLPC **launched a policy toolkit** entitled *Good Laws, Good Food: Putting Food Policy to Work in Navajo Nation* as a tailored resource for those looking to improve the food system in Navajo Nation. The FLPC is now working with COPE, Navajo leaders and community members to implement the policy suggestions in the report.

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 publication of this report has led to ongoing work by FLPC students and staff to reform national and state policies on expiration dates, including creating a short film on the need for expiration date policy change and developing federal and state legislation around expiration dates.

FLPC Initiatives

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

Food Policy Community Empowerment 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 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 projects within this initiative are at the intersection of food and health law and policy. Since 2012, the FLPC has collaborated with the Harvard Health Law and Policy Clinic on 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 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. As a result of the publication of this report, the FLPC has been involved in several key areas of policy advocacy at the state and federal level to foster change in expiration date policy. The FLPC has also expanded its food waste work to address national and state policy changes in other areas that impact food waste and food recovery, such as tax incentives and liability protection for food donors. The FLPC is actively working in ten states and at the federal level to provide policy assistance on reducing food waste.

Sustainable Food Production Initiative

The FLPC assists with addressing the legal and policy challenges facing small-scale and sustainable food producers and food entrepreneur in a variety of ways. Throughout 2013 and 2014, 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. Key issues raised in FLPC and NSAC's comments were incorporated in to the final FSMA rules, which were released in 2015.

