



Institute for Sustainable Food Systems

Job Title: Research Associate, Food System Policy

The Institute for Sustainable Food Systems (ISFS) is seeking applications for a one-year Research Associate position focused on food system policy.

About ISFS

ISFS is an applied research and extension unit at Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU). We investigate and support regional food systems as key elements of sustainable communities, focusing predominantly on British Columbia but also extending our programming to other regions. Our applied research focuses on the potential of regional food systems in terms of agriculture and food, economics, community health, policy, and environmental integrity. Our extension programming provides information and support for farmers, communities, business, policy makers, and others. Community collaboration is central to our approach.

ISFS employs a multidisciplinary team of agriculturists and researchers with expertise in food systems, agriculture, economics, farm business management, ecology, and public health. Our office is on KPU's Richmond campus, located at 8771 Lansdowne Road, Richmond BC. The campus is served by rapid transit (Canada Line - Lansdowne Station), by which downtown Vancouver can be reached in about 30 minutes.

More about us and our work is at www.kpu.ca/isfs

Position Overview

- Contract: 35 hours/week for one year, with possibility of renewal
- Salary: \$25-27/hour dependent on qualifications and experience
- Position start date: July 5th, negotiable for the right candidate
- Application deadline: June 5th, 2016

Responsibilities and Tasks

The primary responsibility of the research associate will be project management and execution of the ISFS project: *Building an accessible food system policy database for B.C. communities* (please see the project overview below). This project has been conceptualized and initial work has been undertaken. The research associate will develop and execute a one-year work plan to achieve project goals and deliverables, which are:

- An online, open access searchable bank of B.C. municipal policies related to food systems.
- A report on findings from interviews with planners about what makes food system policy effective.
- A set of indicators municipal governments can use to monitor their progress in advancing local food systems and policy development.
- Workshop or webinar with planners, community groups, food policy councils etc. to launch/share the website, share findings from the interviews, and review the municipal indicators for monitoring advancement of local food systems.

The research associate will also contribute to a second project under way at ISFS, development of a *Regional Food Systems Resources website*. Key tasks on this project include:

- Management and supervision of the development of a resource collection (academic and non-academic resources that will comprise one aspect of the website. This work entails collaboration with the project lead, and supervision of student employees.
- Work with KPU's Marketing Department to develop and test the website as it relates to the resource collection.

The research associate may also develop, in collaboration with other ISFS staff, a near and longer term food system policy and planning research program plan and funding strategy, and prepare grant applications. For the right candidate and dependent on funding there may be opportunity for contract renewal associated with this research program.

Qualifications, Skills and Experience

The successful applicant for this position must:

- Hold a master degree in planning, policy, food system studies, or other relevant discipline
- Be interested in local policy and sustainable food systems
- Be experienced with project development and management
- Have qualitative research experience and training
- Have a demonstrated ability to conceptualize a complex project and effectively plan and execute steps to complete it
- Have strong interpersonal communication skills
- Have strong writing skills demonstrated by their lay and/or academic publication record
- Have demonstrated their ability to work with a high degree of autonomy and with a multi-disciplinary team

The following will be considered assets:

- Experience in a supervisory role including as a TA
- Proficiency working with Atlas.ti qualitative software
- Knowledge of the food system policy landscape of BC
- Experience working in a municipal government setting or with municipal planners
- Grant writing experience and/or training

To Apply

Please submit your cover letter and resume to Kent Mullinix (Director, ISFS) at kent.mullinix@kpu.ca and copy Caitlin Dorward (Senior Research Associate, ISFS) at caitlin.dorward@kpu.ca. Please use the subject line: *Research Associate – Food System Policy*.

Application deadline: June 5th, 2015.

Project Overview: Building an accessible food system policy database for B.C. communities.

Project Proponent: Institute for Sustainable Food Systems (KPU)

Project Goal: To provide a practical tool for municipal staff and local food organizations to use in promotion, development and implementation of policy that enables local food systems.

We will develop an open access, searchable policy bank for use by municipal planners, policy makers and community organizations and members working to advance local food systems. The policy bank will be a compendium of up-to-date British Columbia municipal policy and zoning bylaws that directly and indirectly enable local food systems. Policies and bylaws will include, among others, those related to increasing local production; to developing capacity for processing and distribution of locally produced foods to local consumer markets; food waste management; protection of agricultural land and water; and support for new farmers.

The policy bank will support increased local food production in two ways: first it will benefit municipal planners who are charged with researching, proposing and preparing new policy for their communities. The policy bank will provide examples of policy language that has been successfully adopted in other municipalities. The bank will be accessible to community groups and individuals who want to promote and advocate for local food production policy with their local governments. Examples of existing policy can be used to demonstrate the feasibility and desirability of adopting a specific policy or bylaw. For policy topics where current, enacted examples are not available, the bank will include recommended policy and zoning bylaws and suggested wording. Recommendations will be vetted by local planning practitioners.

The Policy Bank will be housed in KPU's nascent *Regional Food System Resource Hub* which will be a comprehensive, open access, web-based clearing house of tools, resources and information (reports, grey literature and journal articles).

As part of this project we will interview municipal planners to learn 1) which enacted policies have been most useful to date and why; 2) what conditions lead to the adoption of food system related policy; and 3) what policies would they like to see/ need enacted to support local food systems (i.e. identification of policy gaps)? Findings from planner interviews will be incorporated in the policy bank so that users of the bank can benefit from planner insights.

Anticipated Outcome: The desired outcomes of developing the searchable policy bank are 1) that it helps to facilitate an increase in the number of local food production policies adopted in Lower Mainland municipalities; and 2) that it increases overall awareness at the local government and community levels of the policy options available for enabling local food production.