Guidance in modifying KFTC's platform

What is the KFTC Platform: The platform is a statement of KFTC's public position on issues. We're not necessarily working actively on every item in the platform but these are issues and concerns that have been identified by the membership over the years upon which we've taken a position. If something is in the platform, chapters can engage in work on that issue.

What the Platform is NOT: It is not our public vision or mission statement. It is an internal document used to help allow chapters and clusters of members to work in KFTC's name on issues.

Platform Modification Process

(a) At the Chapter Annual Meetings, each chapter discusses the KFTC platform and makes recommendations to the Steering Committee about important changes.

(b) Steering Committee discusses these suggestions and decides how to handle each one. They generally accept the recommendation, or revise the language but still accept the recommendation, or they may decide to not accept the recommendation. The Steering Committee adopts a draft platform to recommend to the members at the Annual Meeting. Those proposed changes are printed in the KFTC newsletter, balancing the scales.

(c) Members at the KFTC Annual Meeting can make recommendations to the draft platform during the business portion of the meeting. All of these recommendations are explained, discussed and considered. Each recommendation is voted on unless there is a motion to accept the entire platform as proposed. If there is discussion on individual platform changes, at the end there is a vote to accept the entire platform as proposed or amended.

KFTC's Executive Committee's Criteria for adopting new planks

(a) Does the proposed change actually clarify our position on an issue? Does it make more clear what a chapter can or cannot do in the name of KFTC?

(b) Does the proposed change reflect the shared values of KFTC, as we understand them? Is it aligned with our vision?

(c) Does the proposed platform change reflect current organizing by our members or chapters, or that members and chapters have a clear intention to initiate?

(d) Do we believe the proposed change reflects broadly shared agreement within KFTC's membership?

(e) Is the proposed change likely to be divisive with the KFTC membership? If so, are we in a good position to manage that division and discussion at this time?

(f) Do we have the capacity – the time, knowledge, and staff & leader resources – at this time to take on the additional work required for the addition of this platform recommendation?

Cautionary Notes

(a) The platform works better when it reflects what the membership has agreed to: when we radically change the platform without educating and listening to the members we sometimes create an argument instead of a learning opportunity.
   a. Example: Death Penalty. A couple members announced at 2010 Annual Meeting that they wanted to work over the next year to educate members and then bring a proposed plank to the 2011 Annual Meeting. They spent the next year doing some workshops and KFTC newsletter articles. In 2011, their plank passed.

(b) Please limit editing of the document. The platform has been generated from scores of committees and chapters over many years. It's long and clunky and there probably are grammar mistakes or word choices that could be better. Just think carefully before offering minor editing changes. Use what discussion time you have to discuss the value and content of the statements, not editing.

(c) If you want to offer up a new plank, please be sure that idea isn't already covered elsewhere.

(d) Propose specific language; not just ideas. It's not helpful to the Steering Committee if all they get is "let's add a plank on local foods." The Steering Committee needs specific language to consider. Also, please help the Steering Committee understand the intent behind your recommendation by providing background information about what you are recommending and include that along with the specific recommendation itself.

(e) Be careful not to over-do it. Most chapters submit 0-3 suggestions. If all 14 chapters submitted 10 new planks each, the platform would be unmanageable. Think hard about what the top modification priorities are coming out of your chapter. And remember, there's already a lot in the platform. Likely some of what your chapter wants to propose is already represented somewhere in the platform. Please use discretion.

Tips on Process

At the annual chapter meetings, there simply isn't enough time to do all that really needs done.

One idea is that you might discuss the purpose and process for the platform, review it, and then have a brainstorm about what folks think. If there are lots of ideas, maybe take a minute or two to prioritize those ideas.

Then, assign a small work team to work with a KFTC staff person to further develop the ideas (i.e. write the language; narrow the list from 10 proposed planks to two proposed planks, provide background information, etc).