

**Cumberland County Food System Alliance  
Strategic Vision and 2021-2022 Work Plan**

**Purpose**

The purpose of the Cumberland County Food System Alliance is to support a sustainable local food system that promotes economic vitality, increases food security, promotes wellness and advances community resilience in Cumberland County.

**Guiding Principles**

- **Food Security:** All people have the right to food security, which means having reliable access to nutritious food. We seek approaches to addressing food insecurity that go beyond the immediate task of feeding people who are hungry to working toward developing sustainable, systemic solutions to end hunger.
- **Systems Change:** Our pursuits will include systems change strategies that empower and educate people, build on strengths within families and communities, challenge mindsets and structural barriers to social equity with an emphasis on ending poverty and systemic racism, by offering alternatives to business as usual.
- **Sustainability:** We will prioritize approaches and solutions that can be implemented and sustained over the long term and where possible, we will pursue solutions that coordinate with and support our local food economy and enhance the interconnectivity of our larger local food system.

**Current Objectives**

1. Foster networking and food systems education
2. Coordinate local food systems efforts.
3. Explore food systems collaboration and pooling of resources where appropriate.
4. Stay apprised of important food systems health and access issues and serve as a repository of relevant data and resources.
5. Advance food policy and advocacy work.

**Strategic Focus Areas**

The following strategic focus areas were identified by the CCFSA Leadership Council. Those strategies included in the 2021-2022 work plan are listed in regular text; *future work plan strategies are listed in italics.*

1. **Networking and Collaboration:** Serve as a convener to provide opportunities for members of the local food system to work together.
  - a. Use website, social media and other outreach to ensure that all members/partners are linked and can engage in dialogue.
  - b. Be a presence with partner organizations to reinforce each other's roles and build a collective agenda. Identify ways to share credit.
  - c. *Bring local groups together around common goals, grant opportunities, etc.*
  - d. *Offer educational sessions that are responsive to emerging trends and have targeted outcomes.*
2. **Policy:** Create broader understanding in the community and among policymakers of both favorable policies and those that disadvantage members of the local food system.

- a. Investigate and identify policy issues that have specific impacts within the local food system. Explore the intersectionality of racial injustice, social inequity and climate change with the food system
  - b. *Educate stakeholders, community leaders, and interested community members to foster grassroots initiatives and legislative advocacy*
  - c. *Encourage more representation in policy discussions and on policy-making groups from members of the local food system such as farmers, producers, and those who are food-insecure. Identify strategies such as honoraria that will encourage participation.*
  - d. *Convene a regional summit on food policy.*
3. **Data and Assessment:** Provide research and data to increase understanding of the local food system.
    - a. Stay apprised of important food-related health and access issues and develop infrastructure to serve as a repository of relevant data and resources.
    - b. Work with higher education institutions to identify and meet research and data needs, such as assessments and mapping, and to connect with the community.
    - c. Connect with regional/local hospitals and others conducting community health assessments and outreach.
  4. **Improving the Food System:** Identify and foster targeted initiatives to address gaps, weaknesses or redundancies in the local food system.
    - a. Support the work of nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and others in addressing food insecurity, particularly in marginalized populations.
    - b. Identify resource/capacity gaps and opportunities within the local food system.
    - c. *Encourage the expansion of the Fresh Match program that connects local consumers and producers.*
    - d. *Explore possibilities for increasing fresh local food in public schools through Common Market.*

### **Organizational Requirements**

The following steps have been identified to support implementation of the work plan.

1. **Backbone organization** – Continuation of the Center for Land Use and Sustainability as a facilitator of the Alliance.
2. **Working structure** – Creation of work groups or other methods for approaching the selected action steps in the work plan.
3. **Recruitment** – Development and implementation of strategies to bring more parties to the table to participate in the work of the Alliance.
4. **Fund development** – Develop a funding strategy to support the work of the Alliance and its partners to provide financial stability.