



Food Systems Action Plan

2022 Alaska Food Policy and Beyond

GROWING CONNECTIONS AND NETWORKS FOR GREATER FOOD SECURITY

REGIONAL
FOOD SYSTEMS
PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

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Alaska Food Policy Council and Beyond: Growing Connections and Building Networks for Greater Food Security

2020–2022 USDA REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM PARTNERSHIP PLANNING GRANT
PROJECT REVIEW AND STATEWIDE FOOD SYSTEMS ACTION PLAN

A FOOD SECURITY ACTION PLAN WAS CREATED THROUGH OUR 2020–2022 USDA REGIONAL Food System Partnership Planning Grant Project, *Alaska Food Policy Council and Beyond: Growing Connections and Building Networks for Greater Food Security*. **This multi-stakeholder action plan aims to democratically address food system challenges through inclusive, participatory action, building the capacity for resiliency and sustainability in the Alaskan food system.**

ACTIVITIES INCLUDED REGIONAL COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING WORKSHOPS ACROSS THE state, with over 325 Alaskans representing various aspects of the food stem. While each region articulated cultural and place-specific assets that could be used to leverage positive food systems change, aggregate data indicates significant shared interest areas. To avoid being overly prescriptive and allow for place-based decision-making, the goals are more general, while the objectives provide detail, with potential strategies for achieving the listed goals. Please note, there is no hierarchy in how these goals are listed.

Created on behalf of the Alaska Food Policy Council and the numerous organizations and individuals who contributed to and participated in this project. Thank you for your dedication to improving Alaska's food system for all.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE that opting in to be a member of this asset map takes upfront time and effort to both create a useful profile and learn the system. Additionally, it requires backend maintenance that will require consistent oversight by the Alaska Food Policy Council. This tool will only be as useful as the quality of profiles and frequency of usership. **Increasing awareness and making it easy to access and use will be an iterative process, which has just begun.**

Example of a Systems Shifting Network with Strong Connections to Periphery



Current Alaska Food Systems Network Map



Recommendations

BASED ON ASSET WORKSHOP AGGREGATE DATA

THE DATA GENERATED FROM ALL OF THE REGIONAL ASSET-MAPPING

workshops is archived by AFPC and is openly accessible to all interested parties for continued work. While each region articulated cultural and place-specific assets that could be used to leverage positive food systems change, aggregate data indicates significant shared interest areas.

A REVIEW OF THESE KEY THEMES IS PROVIDED AS A BASIS FOR

developing a statewide food security plan that is inclusive of the interests and assets of each region. After this section, the Action Plan digs deeper into actionable steps. The goals are more general, while the objectives provide detail, with potential strategies for achieving the listed goals.

Please note, there is no hierarchy in how these goals are listed.

THIS PROJECT'S ORIGINAL INTENT was to create a true action plan, with detailed, tangible steps towards meeting objectives. Recognizing that every community is in different phases of food system development, with different assets, barriers, and needs, we created this collaborative statewide action plan, that is not overly prescriptive and allows place-based decision making and planning and community self-determination. It is critical to note that per funding for this project from the USDA, this is a "planning" grant, with the opportunity to apply for "implementation" funding upon the close of this project.

● **PLEASE NOTE: THE "POTENTIAL PARTNERS" LIST IS NOT COMPREHENSIVE; THOSE LISTED SERVE TO PROVIDE EXAMPLES.**

Alaska Food Security Action Plan

GOAL ONE



IMPROVING FOOD SYSTEM LITERACY AND SKILLS TO BUILD GREATER CAPACITY, AWARENESS, AND INTEREST IN FOOD SECURITY

- Youth food education
- Youth and Elder mentorship programs
- Preserving and (re)discovering traditional foods and foodways
- Harvest, production, processing, compost, and healthy consumption skills

GOAL TWO



BUILD/IMPROVE FOOD SYSTEM PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- Community commercial kitchens
- Food storage space
- Food processing/slaughtering facilities
- Community composting
- Food hubs
- Growing season extension options

GOAL THREE



PROMOTE FOOD JUSTICE, FOOD SOVEREIGNTY, GREATER ACCESS, AND CULTURAL AWARENESS OF FOODWAYS AND TRADITIONS

- Preserving and expanding traditional knowledge and foodways
- Food justice and tribal outreach for Alaska Natives
- Food chain relationships
- Create stronger regional food systems networks
- Local food availability awareness
- Food waste recapture (seafood, gardening, animal processing, etc.)

GOAL FOUR



PROVIDE TECHNICAL EXPERTISE AND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE FOOD SYSTEM CAPACITY

- Exploring Mariculture (sea lettuce, sea asparagus, kelp)
- Exploring kelp harvesting as livestock feed
- Regional website/ resource library development
- Grant-writing workshops and funding resources

GOAL FIVE



ENHANCE, IMPROVE, AND CREATE NEW MARKETS AND FOOD PRODUCTION

- Increase Viability of Local Agriculture
- Build relationships between food producers, institutions, distributors, and local restaurants and breweries
- Address Food Waste



ACTION PLAN GOAL ONE

Improve Food System Literacy and Skills to Build Greater Capacity, Awareness, and Interest in Food Security

Objective 1:

INCREASE YOUTH FOOD LITERACY (FISH, FORAGE, HUNT, FARM, COOK, AND EAT)

STRATEGIES:

Encourage food system literacy by adding relevant materials to school curriculum to prepare the next generation of farmers, fishers, harvesters, foragers, and informed eaters

Create a central clearing house that provides information regarding education/ cooperative extension workshop opportunities

Fund high school agriculture programs, scale this model state-wide

Inform parent groups of existing resources for food systems education, cooking classes, nutrition, foraging, gardening, small-scale hydroponics. Increase awareness of funding for small-scale projects like these.

Encourage USDA Farm to School grant applications

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

FFA, local school districts, Agriculture in the Classroom, 4H, Alaska Native culture camps

CES, AFB, Resiliency Commissions, Garden Clubs, Community Centers, Master gardeners, peer mentorship

High schools (ex. King Tech—Anchorage), Boards of education, FFA, 4H, Dept. of Labor, Community colleges, corporate partners for "food chain internships"

PTAs, sports and social club parents, Tribal culture camps, TCD, SWCD

Kodiak Area Native Association, Alaska Farm to School

Objective 2:

PROMOTE THE PRESERVATION AND (RE)DISCOVERING OF TRADITIONAL FOODS AND FOODWAYS

STRATEGIES:

Support Elder-youth mentoring programs (hunting, fishing, foraging, farming)

Support school-based programs (school gardens, cooking classes, FFA, etc.)

Create seed saving classes, community seed libraries, and Alaska-based Seed Bank

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

Schools, Tribal entities, APIA

CES, museums, community centers, food banks and pantries, farmers markets

DNR Plant Materials Center, Tribal Conservation Districts, AVI, Cooperative Extension

Objective 3:

SUPPORT ADULT EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIES:

Partner with University system for local research and education opportunities

Expand agricultural research center to satellite programs

Create or reintroduce degree programs (undergraduate and graduate) and non-degree community courses in food systems

Create buildable, scalable training programs (a "journeyman's" type educational track), utilizing community specific specialties

Develop workforce for meat processing through community training and internship program for meat processing

Create training program for Veterans focused on next careers in agriculture and food

Implement local hiring preference policies or incentives

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

UA system, with satellite campuses, APU, other adult education providers

UA system, with satellite campuses, APU, SWCD, TCD, local producers and fishermen

Local meat producers and processors, UA system, AFB

Alaska Veteran's Foundation, UA system, with satellite campuses

State legislature, private industry, public entities

Objective 4:

CREATE AWARENESS ABOUT WHAT FOODS ARE AVAILABLE LOCALLY

STRATEGIES:

Create buy-local campaigns

Fund "Chef at the Market" programs to demonstrate low cost recipes utilizing local ingredients

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

DNR, CES, AFB, AFMA, Buy Alaska, DHSS

DNR, CES, AFMA, Buy Alaska, farmers markets, food hubs, local food groups



ACTION PLAN GOAL TWO

Build/Improve Food System Physical Infrastructure

Objective 1:

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL KITCHENS AND THEIR USE

STRATEGIES:

Create a centralized database of available kitchens, with contact information and potentially on demand booking

Expand school district central kitchens to enable easier vegetable processing, to enable more sourcing of whole products from local farmers

Increase local processing to make ability to serve local seafood in nutrition programs more accessible

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

FFA, local school districts, DEC, Municipality of Anchorage

School districts, city councils, state legislature, food hubs

ADFG, DEC, Schools, senior care facilities, hospitals

Objective 2:

BUILD AND FUND FOOD STORAGE SPACES

STRATEGIES:

Enhance food hub operations by supporting collaboration across regional food hubs, including shared infrastructure, knowledge sharing, and distribution system; consider creating a statewide working group

Identify locations and needs per community for constructing community storage facility for root crops

Form collaborative small farmers co-operative to maximize use

Research ideas for cold storage accessible to entire community—a community food locker, incorporating traditional cold storage technology (sigluaqs) in villages as model

Encourage space use to be maximized through off season partnerships

Position disaster preparedness with food production, storage, and processing

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

CES, SBDC, MEP, AFMA, Wallace Center

UAF, CES, local and regional food networks, food banks, food hubs, city councils, farmer co-ops

AFB, food hubs

UAF Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station (AFES)

Personal use and subsistence communities, farmers, including peony growers

ACEFCS, food hubs

Objective 3:

CREATE ADDITIONAL FOOD PROCESSING AND SLAUGHTER FACILITIES

STRATEGIES:

Create plans and partnerships to house a USDA or state approved mobile animal slaughter in every borough

Explore farmer cooperative models as a place where produce grown can be aggregated for wholesale or distribution at the community level

Promote self organization among producers to negotiate contracts pre-season, ensuring a market for local products

Provide facilitation for connecting local suppliers to local growers and fishers

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

Local meat processors/ producers, AFB, SWCD, TCD

AFB, food hubs, retail grocery stores

Grower co-ops

UAF

Objective 4:

ADDRESS FOOD WASTE

STRATEGIES:

Design/replicate community composting programs

Coordinated and incentivized composting at the municipal- or borough-level composting programs

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

Local and regional food networks, gardening clubs

Cities/towns (ex. Municipal of Anchorage has a muni composting program) and borough assemblies

Objective 5:

DIVERSIFY PRODUCTION METHODS AND CROPS

STRATEGIES:

Invest and develop in vertically integrated farms, that do not rely on imported nutrients

Diversify production approaches through hydroponics

Continue support for mariculture industry capacity with further research for animal feed, including pets, and processing/storage, soil amendments for farming

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

Alaska Seeds of Change

Fairbanks SWCD, AVI, Alaska Seeds of Change

AMA, DNR, ADFG, private industry

Objective 6:

CREATE BETTER-CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

STRATEGIES:

Increase broadband access

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

AFN, Tribal Broadband, other telecom providers, Federak Trade Commission, UA system



ACTION PLAN GOAL THREE

Promote Food Justice, Food Sovereignty, Greater Access, and Cultural Awareness of Foodways and Traditions

Objective 1:

PRESERVE, HONOR, AND EXPAND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND FOODWAYS

STRATEGIES:

Incorporate Traditional Ecological Knowledge into all parts of the food system, from planning to implementation

Tribal consultation on all projects that may affect Traditional hunting/gathering/fishing areas

Co-management/Tribal management of lands and waters

Employ culturally relevant methods and strategies for research, outreach, and collaboration

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

IAC, APIA, ICC, AVI, AFN, ANTHC, Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program (UAF), TCD, AFN, Ketchikan Indian Community, Sustainable Southeast Partnership

Objective 2:

SUPPORT FOOD JUSTICE FOR ALASKA NATIVES AND IMPROVE TRIBAL COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGIES:

Protect subsistence rights

Support tribal food system development

Support development of additional Tribal Conservation Districts

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

IAC, ICC, AVI, AFN, ANTHC, APIA, AFPC, TCD, SWCD, Ketchikan Indian Community

Objective 3:

SUPPORT IMMIGRANT FARMERS AND FOOD PROCESSORS

STRATEGIES:

Create programs and outreach efforts to meet specific needs of these communities

Provide translation services and create materials in multiple languages

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

ACLT (Grow North Farm), CSS Catholic Social Services

Alaska Institute for Justice—Language Interpreter Center, Alaska Native Language Center (UAF)

Objective 4:

SUPPORT STATEWIDE CONNECTION AND RELATIONSHIPS

STRATEGIES:

Create programs and outreach efforts to meet specific needs of these communities

Create forums/ opportunities for statewide growers/ foragers/ fisheries to meet with each other

Support Farm to School + Farm to Institution through local food procurement purchasing preference

Create stronger regional food systems networks by expanding the Regional Food System Partnership project into the Alaska Food Network, developing goals and objectives collaboratively

Better leverage existing community resources through creation of regional website/ resource library development, with dedicated funding to keep up to date

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

Anchorage Community Land Trust, Catholic Social Services

DNR, TCD, SWCD

DNR, school districts, hospitals

AFPC, local and regional food network groups

AFPC, CES, AVI

Objective 5:

INCREASE ACCESS TO LOCAL FOOD FOR ALL ALASKANS

STRATEGIES:

Create SNAP, WIC, SFMNP double up programs at farmers markets, farmstands, food hubs, and CSAs

Revise policy/permitting to allow for greater direct to consumer sales

Create policies and resources that would aide commercial fishers to sell straight to consumers rather than shipping seafood to outside

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

DHSS, FBA, AFMA, AFB

DEC, AFPC, AFB, AFMA

ADFG, DEC, AFPC, regional economic development corps



ACTION PLAN GOAL FOUR

Provide Technical Expertise and Grant Opportunities to Increase Food System Capacity

Objective 1: PROVIDE FARMERS WITH ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES AND CONNECTIONS

STRATEGIES:

- Create and maintain resource list for new farmers who are just starting to know where to begin and all the steps needed to start a farm
- Create networking opportunities for new and beginning farmers to interact with established farmers
- Increase awareness of local food production and methods at the community level through micro-grant support and network coordination

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

- UAF AFES, AFT, SWCD, TCD, AVI, AFB, local and regional food Networks
- UAF AFES, AFT, SWCD, TCD, AVI, AFB, local and regional food Networks
- DNR, USDA, state and local governments

Objective 2: SUPPORT EMERGING MARICULTURE INDUSTRY

STRATEGIES:

- Promote research on kelp harvesting as livestock feed
- Research value-added kelp product development

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

- UA system, DNR, MEP, AMA, AMCC, Economic Development Corporations

Objective 3: ORGANIZE GRANT-WRITING WORKSHOPS & FUNDING RESOURCES

STRATEGIES:

- Create a clearing house/ database that provides information regarding grants
- Advocate for grant cycles that do not overlap with busy farming/ fishing seasons
- Create statewide accessible grant language for organizations writing federal grants

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

- AFPC, AFB, SWCD, TCD
- AFPC, AFB, Alaska Food Coalition
- AFPC, AFMA, AFB, FBA, Alaska Food Coalition

Objective 4: SUPPORT FOOD ENTREPRENEURS

STRATEGIES:

- Establish grant programs for investing in start-up costs
- Provide beginning businesses with technical resources and business plan assistance

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

- MEP, SpruceRoot
- MEP, DEC



ACTION PLAN GOAL FIVE

Enhance, Improve, and Create New Markets and Food Production

Objective 1: INCREASE VIABILITY OF LOCAL AGRICULTURE

STRATEGIES:

- Develop affordable agriculture land in sustainable and informed ways, with local input honored
- Create a mechanism for connecting people that want to farm with affordable or leased land that is set aside for agriculture
- Diversify and support agencies promoting local food
- Engage community members in small-scale/ microproduction like community gardens
- Develop additional activities around agriculture, like agrotourism
- Promote programs like Salmon Safe Agriculture
- Create and track metrics for consumption needs and production output—create qualifiers/methods for tracking imports (ex. how do we get that 95% imported stat and how do we measure change)
- Support the improvement of the transportation system to reduce the cost of shipping food in this state

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

- Tribal entities, TCD, DNR
- AFT, DNR
- State of Alaska, non-profits, regional and local food groups
- Yarducopia, Anchor Gardens
- AFT, AFMA, regional and local food groups
- NOAA, CIK, DNR
- UA system, state agencies (ex. commerce, natural resources, fish and game)
- AK Department of Transportation

Objective 2: BUILD RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FOOD PRODUCERS, INSTITUTIONS, DISTRIBUTORS, RESTAURANTS, BREWERIES, GROCERIES, AND SCHOOLS

STRATEGIES:

- Create forums/ opportunities for producers to network with restaurants and institutional buyers
- Support Farm to School + Farm to Institution through local food procurement purchasing preference

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

- SWCD, TCD, food hubs, Alaska MEP, BuyAlaska
- State agencies DHSS- Child Nutrition, Commerce, DNR

Objective 3: CONNECT SEAFOOD PROCESSORS WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO ADD VALUE TO INDUSTRY WASTE

STRATEGIES:

- Create working group to explore industry waste in fisheries' working group priorities

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

- SeaGrant, AMCC, Alaska MEP, DEC, NW Pacific Fisheries Commission