



Food Security Action Plan

PART 1: STATEWIDE PLANNING

2022

Alaska Food Policy & Beyond

GROWING CONNECTIONS & NETWORKS FOR GREATER FOOD SECURITY



PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 2022

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

2020–2022 USDA Regional Food System Partnership Planning
Grant Project Review & Statewide Food Systems Action Plan

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.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED BY USDA Regional Food System Partnership Planning Grant #USDA-AMS-TM-RFSP-G-20-0009, Project Title: *Alaska Food Policy Council and Beyond: Growing Connections and Building Networks for Greater Food Security*. The Alaska Food Policy Council and the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services provided matching funds. AFPC, and numerous partner organizations provided in-kind time.

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



Executive Summary

This USDA Regional Food Systems Partnership planning grant was initiated by the Alaska Food Policy Council (AFPC) to aid the State of Alaska in more objectively, equitably, and sustainably addressing food systems challenges.

Grant activities included:

- The identification and strengthening of regional food systems networks;
- Providing network education and leadership development;
- Engaging residents in the process of collaboration and ideation around food systems solutions;
- Establishing a communications and resource-sharing ecosystem. At the state level, grant funds and activities have catalyzed a dynamic food systems network with the potential to scale across the state.

These activities aided the group in achieving the three proposed objectives outlined in the initial grant application, which are as follows:

- **Objective 1:** Improved connection, communication, and collaboration of food system organizations/ local food policy councils, statewide for collective action at improving Alaska’s food system.
- **Objective 2:** Identification of community food systems assets, barriers, and capacities, to foster connection and collaboration.
- **Objective 3:** Statewide food security action plan, informed by regional Alaskan nodes representing a wide range of locations and stakeholder groups.

The outcomes of this grant were tangible at the community level, and positioned AFPC strongly to scale the resources developed and engage even more Alaskans in their food system. In addition to this report, a digital community was formed—the Alaska Food Systems Network, as well as an accompanying digital, dynamic map to track food knowledge, skillsets, and assets around the state.

At the close of this planning project, much opportunity exists to scale our activities in an implementation phase, funded by the USDA’s RFSP Implementation grant. It was clear from participant discussion and written feedback that there exists much enthusiasm for continuing to foster cross-community connections. Ongoing support will be needed to do so, with a distributed, community-led approach.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE 229 ALASKA NATIVE TRIBES whose ancestral traditional lands and waters upon which we reside and work. We acknowledge this not only in deep gratitude to the Indigenous communities who have held relationship with this land for generations but also in recognition of the historical and ongoing legacy of Colonialism. Additionally, we acknowledge this as a point of reflection for us all as we work towards dismantling Colonial practices.



Alaska Food Policy Council History

In 2010 a small group of Alaskans, concerned with long-term food security came together to form the Alaska Food Policy Council. Through a series of community town hall meetings, AFPC informed its goals and strategies based on statewide stakeholder input. From the beginning, our mission and focus have remained constant: to create a healthier, more secure, and more self-reliant Alaska by improving our food system. Bringing together diverse voices and ideas from throughout Alaska - individuals representing federal and state agencies, tribal entities, food access organizations, schools, university programs, farmers, fisheries, food businesses, and really anyone who eats—AFPC connects, advocates, and informs Alaskans on local, regional and statewide food systems issues.

In 2012, this founding group of Alaskans created a strategic plan to guide the organization, with the following goals (see [Appendix A](#) for full plan).

- **Goal 1:** All Alaskans have access to affordable, healthy (preferably local) foods.
- **Goal 2:** Alaska's food-related industries have a strong workforce and operate in a supportive business environment.
- **Goal 3:** Food is safe, protected, and supplies are secure throughout Alaska.
- **Goal 4:** Alaska's food system is more sustainable.
- **Goal 5:** Alaskans are engaged in our food system.

Many of these original goals remain the same. As AFPC continues to grow and engage more Alaskans in building a stronger food system, additional priorities have emerged, such as supporting Indigenous foods, addressing climate change, and reducing food waste.

Today a volunteer governing board of 15 members and one Executive Director run AFPC and fulfill its mission with the help of over 140 additional volunteers who actively serve on five topic-specific working groups. AFPC has become an impactful, highly relevant, and efficient organization in its first decade, almost exclusively powered by the substantial commitment of its solid core of volunteer

governing board and working group members. In 2020 we contracted our first-ever Executive Director, who became full time in fall 2022.

The AFPC mission and goals are pursued through volunteer committee work, organized in the following topical categories: advocacy & policy, Indigenous foods, food waste; and internal operations committees: board development, finance, leadership, fundraising, conference, and communications.

AFPC is open to anyone interested in improving Alaska's food systems - agencies and individuals representing federal and state agencies, tribal entities, schools, university programs, farmers, fisheries, and food systems businesses. The role of the AFPC is to:

CONNECT: Engage with Alaskans to get input to strengthen our food system, and to connect them with each other to learn and collaborate.

ADVOCATE: Develop recommendations and share them with policy makers at the local, state, federal, and tribal level.

INFORM: Share information, resources, opportunities and risks with all food stakeholders (everyone who eats!)

ADVOCATE:

Through volunteer committee activities, AFPC develops recommendations on policies that will improve food security in Alaska. AFPC has worked especially hard on grassroots campaigns in the following areas to promote recommendations and share messaging for members of the public to contact their legislators on important issues.

- **Advocacy & Policy:** We seek to build a more sustainable, just, equitable, and accessible food system in Alaska by coordinating with other organizations, like the Food Bank of Alaska and the Alaska Farm Bureau, to collectively engage policymakers in Juneau for an annual Food Security Week, and by developing and publishing candidate surveys that let voters know how people running for political office view various food system issues. We provide recommendations on food

system infrastructure and on policies around food access programs and initiatives, at both the state and national levels. AFPC has signed on to and provided testimony on many food system issues. Most recently, we've directly supported state bills aimed at creating an online SNAP application and establishing a Food Security Taskforce.

- **Indigenous Foods:** Additionally, AFPC is furthering work on Indigenous food security in collaboration with Alaska Native/American Indian communities, by advocating for food sovereignty and for policies that affect the access to, production, sale, or trading of traditional foods. In 2020, we launched an Indigenous Foods Committee to work in partnership with Tribal producers and Tribal leaders to ensure AFPC's advocacy was inclusive and supportive of Tribal perspectives and ways of life. With high food costs due to remote locations, the most food-insecure areas tend to be rural, with higher populations of Alaska Natives.
- **Food Waste:** Annually, 108 billion pounds of food is wasted in the United States, equating to 130 billion meals thrown away each year. Almost 40% of all food in America is wasted. AFPC is working to address food waste by acknowledging current statewide and local policies and actions, promoting proactive activities and programs, and looking for additional ideas and replicable solutions.

INFORM:

The Alaska Food Policy Council directs and sponsors the Alaska Food Festival and Conference, held every 18 months in different communities around the state, or virtually for the past two editions. This event is one of AFPC's key outreach and networking events that allow us to connect, educate and advocate broadly on Alaska's diverse food system. Topics include agricultural production, Alaska Native traditional foods and sovereignty, business and farm development, and food access programs. We have partnered with organizations and institutions such as Alaska Pacific University, Alaska Village Initiatives, Alaska Farmers Market Association, University of Alaska, and Intertribal Agriculture Council to broaden our reach across the food system.

AFPC has become one of the go-to sources for information about Alaska's food system. We communicate by aggregating content and creating engaging and informative newsletters, social media posts, press releases, annual reports, and

web pages including guest blogs. We have coordinated Quarterly Food System Webinars on topics such as cold storage and transportation, cottage foods regulations and scaling up, and interstate food transportation, and amplify the work of other food organizations. We have co-promoted and informed programs like Chef at the Farmers Market, which is aimed at teaching low-cost ways to prepare local foods, SNAP double bucks, and local food donation collections at the market. We have also co-sponsored workshops on establishing food access programs at farmers' markets, farm stands, and food hubs.

CONNECT:

The Alaska Food Policy Council connects people with each other, financial opportunities, and knowledge resources for food-related initiatives across the state.

We co-sponsor important local initiatives, including a partnership with the Anchorage Mayor's Office to award Local Food Mini-Grants for projects focused on increasing local food production and access in the Municipality of Anchorage. We also provide fiscal sponsorship support of local food groups, like the Fairbanks area-based Interior Alaska Food Network. Various members have served on grant review committees, like the Micro-Grants for Food Security and Specialty Crop Block Grants programs, administered by the Alaska Division of Agriculture.

AFPC also promotes urban agriculture and food security through the Stickleback Farm (formerly known as the Anchorage Urban Sustainability Farm and Native Heritage Garden). With multiple partners including the Municipality of Anchorage and Alaska Seeds of Change, AFPC is revitalizing a long-neglected parcel of land on 3rd Avenue in Anchorage and demonstrating how urban vacant lots can be used to bring communities together and provide healthy foods.

A full history can be found here:

<https://www.akfoodpolicycouncil.org/our-history>

Justification for a Regional Food System Partnership Food System Action Plan

"Alaska" is derived from the Aleut word "Alyeska," meaning "great land,"¹ and provides a variety of local food resources from ocean, land, and sky. Despite this, Alaska imports 95% of its storebought, non-wild foods from outside the state, significant in terms of economic loss and food security. Food insecurity affects residents in every community, of every age and every race.

"In any given week 6,300 Alaska households turn to Food Bank of Alaska's network of food pantries, soup kitchens, senior centers, and other programs for food assistance. An estimated 51,900 unique households or almost 155,000 people are served annually."

—FOOD BANK OF ALASKA

In many communities around the world, hunger is alleviated at the community-level. Resources are directed towards those with on-the-ground experience and relationships. These relationships are what this project is all about. Not just for hunger alleviation, but for all food knowledge and skill sharing. The state's vastness, coupled with limited infrastructure and funding, have left residents with a food system that is isolating and vulnerable to environmental disaster and human error; creating enormous dependency on outside resources to meet nutritional needs for humans and animals.

The Alaska Food Policy Council's goal is to create a healthier, more secure, and resilient Alaska by improving our food system through advocacy, education, and connection. This project connected localized food system individuals and organizations to create a statewide network of "regional nodes" and galvanized connections between these groups and people.

There are over 200 definitions for "food security", making this a complicated and potentially divisive term for community projects and policy creation or reform.² Rather than add to the ever-growing list, this report references well-recognized entities' definitions.

United Nations: Food security, as defined by the United Nations' Committee on World Food Security, means that all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life.³

United States Division of Agriculture: The United States Division of Agriculture (USDA) defines food security as "access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life."⁴

Inuit Circumpolar Council Alaska: ICC issued their own definition of Inuit Food Security in 2016, in the report *Alaskan Inuit Food Security Conceptual Framework: How to Assess the Arctic from an Inuit Perspective*. (See [Appendix H](#) for the ICC food sovereignty recommendations; see next page for overview).⁵

¹ Ransom, J. Ellis. 1940. Derivation of the Word 'Alaska'. *American Anthropologist* n.s., 42: pp. 550-551.

² [Food and Agriculture Organization. Trade Reforms and Food Security - Conceptualizing the Linkages. Accessed June 2022.](#)

³ [International Food Policy Research Institute. Food Security. Accessed July 2022.](#)

⁴ [USDA Economic Research Service. Food Security in the U.S. Accessed July 2022.](#)

⁵ [ICC. Inuit Food Security and Food Sovereignty. Accessed May 2022.](#)

“Alaskan Inuit food security is the natural right of all Inuit to be part of the ecosystem, to access food and to care-take, protect and respect all of life, land, water and air. It allows for all Inuit to obtain, process, store and consume sufficient amounts of healthy and nutritious preferred food—foods physically and spiritually craved and needed from the land, air and water, which provide for families and future generations through the practice of Inuit customs and spirituality, languages, knowledge, policies, management practices and self-governance. It includes the responsibility and ability to pass on knowledge to younger generations, the taste of traditional foods rooted in place and season, knowledge of how to safely obtain and prepare traditional foods for medicinal use, clothing, housing, nutrients and, overall, how to be within one’s environment. It means understanding that food is a lifeline and a connection between the past and today’s self and cultural identity. Inuit food security is characterized by environmental health and is made up of six interconnecting dimensions: 1) **Availability**, 2) **Inuit Culture**, 3) **Decision-Making Power and Management**, 4) **Health and Wellness**, 5) **Stability**, and 6) **Accessibility**. This definition holds the understanding that without food sovereignty, food security will not exist.”

—INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR COUNCIL ALASKA

A clear message from all parties involved in this project was that of self-determination; and this project focused on what can be accomplished at a community-level to build and sustain healthier food systems. An action plan such as this one provides concrete steps towards improving food security, from a variety of perspectives. All food systems affect the environmental, social, and economic well-being of communities. By acknowledging the

range of place-specific community needs, limits, and priorities of a variety of communities, from rural to urban, this action plan reflects a dynamic and complex statewide food system, and suggests changes to increase resilience, equity, representation, and sustainability.

SUCCESS STORIES



Image courtesy of Theresa Brown

Project: Anchor Gardens

RFSP Node: Anchorage/Girdwood

Project Location: The Anchorage Municipality

Mission & Activities: Waste up-cycling

Anchor Gardens is a volunteer network that takes tons of plant, animal and vegetable waste that used to go to the landfill, and has used that waste to build over 500 backyard gardens throughout Anchorage; 1 community garden on I Street; and two teaching gardens, one at the Mountainview Library and one at the Chugiak/Eagle River Sr. Center. Modeling waste as a huge resource is one of Anchor Gardens' main missions along with sharing all of our resources with our neighbors. There is at least one volunteer gardening coach in most community council areas who is there to teach, help mentor new gardeners, and distribute resources. Each new gardener is given access to a directory of all gardening experts in town, so they can also contact any expert for help. Shared extra seeds and extra seedlings help beginners get started in the spring. Many gardeners are offering up their excess food to the Food Bank and Anchorage's new community 'fridge: Food for Thought. Others are now opening booths at farmers markets and selling their surpluses. Anchor Gardens is increasing food security in Anchorage one garden at a time.

Key Partnerships:

- Neighborworks Alaska
- Cooperative Extension
- Yarcucopia

Project Summary

GROWING CONNECTIONS AND BUILDING NETWORKS FOR GREATER FOOD SECURITY

In October 2020 the Alaska Food Policy Council was awarded a two-year planning grant, under the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service's Regional Food System Partnership Program—2020 was the first year the USDA offered this grant program.

The Regional Food System Partnerships (RFSP) Program “supports partnerships that connect public and private resources to plan and develop local or regional food systems.⁶ The program focuses on strengthening the viability and resilience of regional food economies through collaboration and coordination.

Our project aimed to connect localized food system organizations to create a statewide network of “regional nodes.” Through direct facilitation, each node was guided through a series of network planning discussions, including one node-specific asset mapping workshop to identify unique capacities for local food systems, while revealing barriers and system deficiencies. Through regular statewide connection, communication, and collaboration regional nodes collectively identified linkages and partnerships which were leveraged to create a statewide food security action plan.

⁶ [USDA Agricultural Marketing Service. Regional Food Systems Partnerships. Accessed July 2022.](#)

SUCCESS STORIES



Project: Alutiiq Grown

RFSP Node: Kodiak

Project Location: Kodiak Archipelago

Mission & Activities: Alutiiq Grown is a collective of tribal and community owned farms located in the Kodiak Archipelago. Their mission is to increase the region's food security through providing fresh and local foods to Elders and community residents. From hydroponics and soil farming, to raising chickens, and more we are here to feed their people. Alutiiq Grown projects include regenerative mariculture, Qik'rtaq Food Hub, hydroponic development, and other farmer resources. This project includes farms both on and off Kodiak's road system and includes the communities of Larsen Bay, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie, Port Lions, and the city of Kodiak.

Key Partnerships: Funding, planning, implementation, and community partners include:

- Alaska off-road system communities of Larsen Bay, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie, Port Lions, and the city of Kodiak
- Kodiak Archipelago Leadership Institute
- Native American Agricultural Fund
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Native Conservancy
- Alaska Ocean Farms LLC
- University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service
- Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District
- Outreach and Assistance For Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers And Veteran Farmers and Ranchers (2501 Program)
- Oceanside Farms
- Vertical Harvest Hydroponics
- Natural Resources Conservation Service—Alaska

Image & text adapted from: <https://www.alutiiqgrown.com/>

Project Partners

In the fall of 2020, AFPC reached out to communities, groups, and organizations throughout the state to recruit participation for RFSP grant activities. The goal was to create or formalize regional nodes engaged in food systems work that expressed a need for more food knowledge sharing capacity in their communities. After agreeing to be part of the project and signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU), the regional nodes self-determined who would be interested in serving as facilitators for their groups. These regional groups and their leaders then became the foundational voices in this project and grant contributors.

Thirteen regional nodes participated in all phases of the project. Geographically, the nodes included major population areas, small towns, villages, and rural areas including off-road communities. This project established thirteen "nodes" statewide, with at least one individual "leader," and in most cases there were 3-6 leaders per node. These are our original partners, from the beginning of the project:

Node Host Organizations/ Partners:

Plus many more collaborating orgs and individuals!



SUCCESS STORIES



Project: Alaska Food Hub

RFSP Node: Lower Kenai Peninsula—Homer, Anchor Point, and communities around Kachemak Bay

Project Location: Homer, Ninilchik, Anchor Point, Seldovia, and Soldotna

Mission & Activities: The goal of the Food Hub is to provide opportunities for Kenai Peninsula producers and consumers to connect in a way that will create benefit for both, as well as strengthen the Kenai Peninsula's local economy, increase food security, and reduce the carbon footprint created from importing food.

Cook Inletkeeper initiated the concept of the Alaska Food Hub in early 2015, with funding from the Local Foods Promotion Program, a two-year grant provided by the USDA. Through their "online farmers market" have supported over 50 farmers, fishers, and makers in its seven years of operations. Now a go-to resource, the Alaska Food Hub is a leader in food hub execution and leadership, providing technical assistance to others."

Key Partnerships: This project has relied on countless hours from volunteers and in-kind donations from partners, from planning and outreach to promotion and operations. Those partners included:

- The host organization, Cook Inletkeeper
- Local producers, crafters, and fishers
- Planning, outreach, and promotion: Seldovia Village Tribe (SVT), Homer & Kenai Soil & Water Conservation District, Sustainable Homer, Homer Farmers Market
- Transportation: Smoky Bay Air, Jakolof Bay Oyster Co., SVT Ferry
- Distribution sites: Kachemak City, AK Wild Emporium, Two Sisters Bakery, Homer United Methodist Church, Christ Lutheran Church/ Soldotna Food Bank
- Anchorage trials: Church of Love (ANC), Arctic Harvest, Alaska Pacific University

Image: Kyra Harty—www.facebook.com/alaskafoodhub

Adapted Text: www.alaskafoodhub.org



Our thirteen "Participating Regional Node" locations (●) were:

- Anchorage, Girdwood, and neighboring communities
- Utqiagvik and neighboring communities
- Aleutian region
- Nome and neighboring communities
- Palmer, Wasilla, and neighboring communities
- Kenai, Soldotna, and neighboring communities
- Homer, Anchor Point, and communities around Kachemak Bay
- Fairbanks and neighboring communities
- Haines and neighboring communities
- Juneau and neighboring communities
- Sitka and neighboring communities
- Annette Island, Prince of Wales Island, Ketchikan, and neighboring communities
- Kodiak and neighboring communities

SUCCESS STORIES



Project: Pilgrim Hot Springs Garden

RFSP Node: Nome and surrounding communities

Project Location: Approximately 60-miles northeast of Nome, near Mary's Igloo

Mission & Activities: Pilgrim Hot Springs is the site of geothermal activity—which makes for a great garden opportunity! The hot springs are on a 320 acre property, located in remote Northwestern Alaska, nestled between Hen and Chickens Hill and the Kigluaik Mountain range. The sub-Arctic farm has been a site for agriculture and farming activities since the early 1900's. Because of the geothermal activity, the ground doesn't freeze at Pilgrim which makes for perfect early planting. This is one piece of the puzzle for eco- and agritourism on the Hot Springs' site, including historical and natural interpretation tours, cabin and tent camping, and a variety of events throughout the year.

With some revitalization efforts and a renewed desire for localized food security, Pilgrim Hot Springs "dug" back into gardening and food production fairly recently. From 2016–2018, a strong gardening effort was made at Pilgrim Hot Springs to grow local produce for the region. Many impressive vegetables were harvested to the delight of local customers. The gardens rested for a couple years after this effort. In 2021, they tested crops and hired a full-time farmer to expand production and train locals who were interested in food security and farming.

Key Partnerships:

- Bering Straits Native Corporation
- Kawerak Inc.
- AmeriCorps Vista

Image: <https://www.pilgrimhotsprings.com/the-garden?pgid=k8tcmbkj-b823104d-7612-4d40-88cc-262ca16b728f>

Additional partners emerged as the project progressed. Leadership and network weaving partner organizations include:

- Alaska Farmers Market Association
- Alaska Food Policy Council
- Alaska Interior Food Network
- Alaska Village Initiatives
- Anchor Gardens
- APIA Aleutian Pribilof Island Association
- EcoTrust
- Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District
- Foraged and Found
- Grow North Farm
- Haines Economic Development Corporation
- Haines Victory Garden
- Homer Soil and Water Conservation District
- Intertribal Agriculture Council
- Kawerak INC
- Kenai Local Food Connection (Bridges Community Resource Network)
- Kenaitze Indian Tribe
- Ketchikan Agricultural Producers Association
- Kodiak Archipelago Leadership Institute (KALI)
- Kodiak Harvest Co-op
- Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center (UAF)
- Metlakatla
- Rosanna's Garden
- Sitka Local Foods Network
- Skagway Development Corporation
- Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition
- Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

Project Participants

These core participants from each of the nodes acted as network weavers, who contributed to networking workshops and assisted in organizing and leading:

Amanda Anjum
Amy Seitz
Anahma Shannon
Ashley Withrow
Barb Gray
Brian Himelbloom
Cara Durr
Carol Oliver
Charles Bingham
Cindee Karns

Danny Consenstein
Dena Selby
Diane Peck
Emma Haney
Erika Merklin
Evie Witten
Gatgyeda Haayk
Glenna Gannon
Grayson Wallis
Heidi Chay

Heidi Rader
Ian Johnson
Jeanette Pedginski
Jenn Brown
Jennifer Nu
Jodie Anderson
Kaitlyn Jared
Kyra Wagner
Laura Thomas
Lindsey Pierce

Lisa Trocchia
Lorinda Lhotka
Marissa Wilson
Meghan Geary
Meghan Stangeland
Mel Sikes
Melissa Chlupach
Melissa Clampitt
Miakah Nix
Mikayla Clarke

Monica Kopp
Nick Bachman
Nicole Arevalo
Rachael Miller
Robbi Mixon
Robyn Burnside
Ronalda Angasan
Rosanna McInnes
Sara Renard
Shana Theobald

Siene Allen
Sue Chasen
Sue Unger
Tia Holley
Tikaan Galbrath
Tony Strong
Tracy J. Stewart
Tyler Kornelis
Willow King



IN ADDITION TO THE NODE LEADERS, OVER 325 INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATED IN 12 REGIONAL ASSET MAPPING WORKSHOPS.



Project Context

In 1955, 55% of the food consumed in Alaska was produced in Alaska.⁷ Today, in 2022, that number is just 5%. Reports commissioned by the Alaska Food Policy Council in both 2014 and 2018, detailing Alaska’s state of food security and infrastructure development opportunities, respectively, depict a concerning reality but also a hopeful future with much room for increases and improvements in production, transportation, storage, processing, and market-based incentives for commercial policies on local purchase preference.

Opportunities detailed in these reports include:

- Expanding food production on state-owned land to increase access
- Increase non-traditional agricultural workforce training, to reflect a new profile of Alaska farmers who are part-time, small-scale (less than 1 acre), and still learning how to farm in the north.
- Create a network of physical food hubs or nodes around the state for processing, packing, and storing in a distributed manner, rather than relying on centralized food caches in Anchorage or Fairbanks-based warehouses.
- Increase resources for farmers and fishermen who sell direct-to-market
- Incentivize institutional local preference purchasing, such as farm to school, hospital, senior center, day care, etc.

Moreover, the 2017 USDA Agricultural Census revealed exciting growth for Alaska, including⁸:

- Alaska leads the nation in new farmers (includes agricultural, including flower producers)
- Alaska leads the nation in female farmers
- Direct-to-market sales more than doubled between 2012–2017
- The number of Alaska farms grew 30% in the face of a national 3% decrease

There is no shortage of reports and stories on food security in Alaska. However, statewide sustained investment directly in the entire food system (not simply one piece of the puzzle such as farmland) has yet to take place.

However, much policy activity has happened and after a significant earthquake in southcentral Alaska in 2018 and the subsequent COVID-19 global pandemic, leaders have signaled that food security is firmly front of mind for them. This RFSP Planning project took place from 2020–2022. During that time, a variety of administrative and legislative actions took place to set the groundwork for a more food-secure Alaska.

- The Alaska Food and Farm Caucus (formally known as the Alaska Grown Caucus), a bipartisan, joint caucus was formed in the state legislature.⁹
- House Bill 22 passed which empowered herd share managers to create value-add products to shareholders.¹⁰
- Administrative Order 334 was signed, establishing the short-term Alaska Food Security & Independence Task Force, which will issue a report in October 2022.¹¹
- House Bill 298 was passed, which established an Alaska Food Security Task Force, beginning November 2022.
- Community-led meetings and informal networks popped up around the state, unrelated to this project. These were often facilitated by larger organizations seeking to help Alaskans coordinate, such as the Mat-Su Health Foundation’s virtual discussion meet-ups and Rural Alaska Community Action Program’s (RurAL CAP) session on establishing a food security task force.

Because of these heartening efforts by policy makers, paired with a renewed consumer enthusiasm for Alaska-grown products, the time is ripe to offer an action plan to the State and public, with recommendations on how to build and sustain a more secure Alaska food system.

⁷ [The Redoubt Reporter. Homegrown revolution — Gardeners expand to tackle Alaska’s food insecurity. Accessed July 2022.](#)

⁸ [USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service. 2017 Census of Agriculture. Accessed May 2022.](#)

⁹ [Alaska House Coalition. Legislators Announce Formation Of Alaska Grown Caucus. Accessed July 2022.](#)

¹⁰ [Legiscan. AK HB22 | 2021-2022 | 32nd Legislature. Accessed June 2022.](#)

¹¹ [Alaska Office of the Governor. Administrative Order 334. Accessed May 2022.](#)



Project Methodology

The foundation of this project was about democratizing the food system through network weaving: building intentional relationships and cooperative structures that can create change in a complex adaptive system. Assumptions of this project included:

- Knowledge and learning are situated in a diversity of opinions and places
- Building the capacity to know is as critical as what is currently known
- Systems shifting networks focus on equity, inclusion, and nurturing values-based connections

This project focused on place-based working “regional nodes” with statewide connections. All scopes from hyper-local to borough-level, were considered. A systems approach to food security planning was used to illuminate how parts are all connected. Asset mapping helped to identify food system assets in a community and beyond, and brainstormed potential leverage points, resulting in inventories of food systems capital—from financial and social, to infrastructure and governance. These inventories were examined for recurring themes, perspectives, solutions, and barriers, and distilled into a preliminary food security action plan.

Through digital, facilitated meetings, thirteen “regional nodes” were guided through a series of planning discussions, including node-specific asset mapping to identify unique capacities for local food systems, which also revealed barriers and system deficiencies. Through regular statewide meetups, communication, and collaboration, regional nodes identified linkages and partnerships through community asset mapping, which was leveraged to create a food security action plan.

Project Phases

ALASKA FOOD POLICY COUNCIL BEGAN PLANNING FOR THE PROJECT IN EARLY 2020 and created a grant proposal for their project, which was awarded in September 2020. To begin, we spent four months solidifying partnerships and preparing Network Building Workshops, Asset Mapping Sessions, and social mapping details, as well as building out participant communication tools and presentations.



PHASE ONE: MARCH 2021–NOVEMBER 2021

GOAL: Improved connection, communication, and collaboration of food system organizations/local food policy councils, statewide for collective action at improving Alaska’s food system.

Over 50 regional node leaders participated in six virtual educational workshops, designed to support an awareness that food systems are complex and ever-changing. Content included aspects of network theory, design, and facilitation, and most importantly, the development of trusting peer relationships.

Network Building Workshop Series: **Building and Nurturing Food System Networks**; these sessions included the following topics (see [Appendix B](#) for full workshop content):

- **Session 1:** Food Systems and Networked Theory of Change; The Complexity Worldview
- **Session 2:** Understanding Network Growth and Building
- **Session 3:** Facilitating and Supporting a Network
- **Session 4:** Asset Mapping and Affinity Groups
- **Session 5:** Bioregional Food Systems Network Activation and Design
- **Session 6:** Reflection and Shared Vision



PHASE TWO: JANUARY 2022–APRIL 2022

GOAL: Identification of community food systems assets, barriers, and capacities (skills, social, political, natural, built, cultural, etc.); identification of leverage points.

Node Specific Mapping Workshops: A planning consultation, an asset-mapping workshop, and a post-workshop consultation was facilitated for each regional node. The asset mapping workshop engaged diverse stakeholders in each region in a process to recognize existing “capitals” (social, political, built, cultural, and economic), to serve as a foundation for identifying opportunities and partnership possibilities that can contribute to a sustainable food future. With this data, regional nodes established basic goals and action steps that will inform their regional food systems work and the co-creation of a statewide food security action plan.

These sessions provided opportunities for each regional “node” to map out priorities for a sustainable food future for Alaska. This was key to amplifying voices on the ground in the process. To varying degrees, each node came away with some basic goals and action steps. These data (from all nodes) has been examined and utilized to create a statewide action plan based on this information.

See [Appendix D](#) for an aggregated list of assets and [Appendix E](#) for an aggregated list of grants and funding resources, compiled during mapping workshops.



PRIOR TO CONDUCTING THE WORKSHOPS, individual consultations between the project facilitator and the regional node leaders revealed strong cultural differences. These included approaches to group work, hierarchies, interpersonal interactions, language, and concepts and opinions about what constitutes a food system. As well, a significant feeling of historically not being part of changes that impact them was articulated. **These are important data points moving forward for all manner of food systems work on the state level.**

PHASE THREE: MARCH 2022-ONGOING

GOAL: To increase connection at the local, regional, and statewide levels; create a visual representation of people working throughout Alaska's food system.

Statewide Network Questionnaire & Asset Mapping Workshops: An interactive statewide social system network map was created utilizing softwares Kumu and SumApp survey, illustrating the existing connections within the food system. This living resource community networks and sector interconnectedness, as well as highlights emerging leaders and opportunities to strengthen and enhance network relationships.

Data from the map and network participants enable self organized collaboration and network development opportunities. Map information and feedback on Phases I and II activities will form the basis for future collaboration between the regional nodes and the Alaska Food Policy council and partners in the process of collectively identifying food policy issues and the priorities of Alaskans.

An additional online meeting was added at the end of these first three phases of activities to provide participants with opportunities for reflection and sense-making. From this final session, it was determined that additional opportunities to meet would be facilitated by AFPC and plans are in place to enable the regional nodes to continue to convene on a regular basis, as a mid-level "network of networks." This is an ongoing process and will continue to be built upon in later phases of food network development.

The asset-mapping workshops created the opportunity for regional organizers

to convene a diverse group of individuals interested in, or actively engaged with, food systems issues. Participants stated the value in this was that by gathering together, it was the first time their regional food system became visible. This process helped to establish a greater relational appreciation for the work that is being done and the collaborative possibilities for the future.

The workshops also provided a framework to shift the trend in evaluation away from needs or challenges and toward appreciating what exists as an asset and a foundation for building change. Coming from the diverse perspective represented in each group, many features were discussed, such as individuals, skill sets, talents, culture, spirituality, stories, groups and organizations, the physical and natural environment, and notions of how wealth is shared and held, as well as alternative economies.

These assets were categorized and then discussed in terms of how they might serve the interests of creating an equitable, food secure, and sustainable food system in their region. All regional workshops generated a significant list of assets as well as leverage points for change, although this was somewhat challenging for the participants at first. However, with good facilitation by regional node leaders and through open discussion, the dovetails became more clear. The outcome of this process was relationship building in a collaborative context, which was achieved.

PHASE FOUR: JUNE 2022–SEPTEMBER 2022

GOAL: To identify ways of working between communities to build a more robust Alaskan food system; co-creation of a multi-stakeholder action plan to address food system deficiencies through collective action. Utilizing what was gleaned from workshops and surveys, facilitators, and the AFPC board, collaborators, partners, created a statewide action plan (note: this will be an ongoing process and a living document).

This Initial Statewide Food Security Action Plan was informed by regional asset mapping workshops. Participation included a wide range of locations and stakeholder groups. This report was also informed by a review of existing assessments and reports.

Points of action are determined through the process with the nodes, as well as the statewide network questionnaire and map. This document represents a food systems network that will be resilient and serve as a democratic way to bring forward the issues and priorities of Alaskans, relative to food policy.

Some of the topics presented in the educational workshops contained conceptually new material and language, which may have been difficult to process without additional support. It was helpful that AFPC provided optional sessions, offered over the summer of 2021, while the formal workshop schedule was paused. This demonstrated an engagement with self-organizing and created opportunities for building relationships in a less structured manner. These ad hoc sessions helped to establish a stronger peer learning and sharing environment and a cooperative framework for understanding and developing new concepts.

PHASE FIVE: COMING UP...

GOAL: Implementation!



Project Challenges & Limitations

The Alaska Food Policy Council made every effort to create this report using inclusive methods, resulting in project outcomes that reflect the diversity of Alaska. The project was not without complications and challenges. These learnings will be integrated into the Implementation phase of this project. The following details the most significant challenge areas for meaningful network development.

Budget: USDA funding for this project was \$106,710, with AFPC providing \$27,278 in matching funds.¹² Total Project Amount: \$133,988. While this is a significant amount of money to most Alaskans, it is a thin budget to meaningfully engage 13 communities, contract necessary services, and adequately compensate contributors for their time and expertise.

COVID-19: Given that this project was executed during a pandemic, all networking sessions and mapping workshops were held virtually, with some locations opting for a hybrid approach for specific workshop sessions. Several group members expressed their desire to meet in person.

Digital infrastructure: Not all areas in the state have reliable internet, nor do some communities communicate best through virtual means. While modest stipends were provided to nodes to cover the cost of renting space or equipment or purchasing additional bandwidth, that type of funding is just a short-term stopgap until more communities come online and can have seamless and synchronous communications.

A WORD ON WORDS

Language was the topic of discussion in early node meetings. Frustrations were expressed about the geographical versus cultural organization of this project. For this project, “regional” was geographically defined, however it is recommended that the USDA consider and welcome other definitions of “regional” in future RFSP grant applications, that incorporate concepts from ecology, culture, other non-geographical categories.

Furthermore, many participants expressed their desire to simplify language, due to the challenges of using food industry-related jargon.

“What is a “food system” anyways?!”
“Food security... for who? How secure is secure?”
“What’s a ‘food system asset’?”

Language shapes how humans perceive and experience the world and diversity of language yields diversity of thought and problem-solving. According to the 2020 US Census, Alaska is the twelfth most diverse state in the United States.¹³ As of 2010, Anchorage’s Mountain View neighborhood was the most diverse census tract in the entire U.S.¹⁴ Alaska is home to people of many cultures, which means diversity in foods, thinking, ways of knowing, family structures, business norms, and most pertinent—how food is sourced, stored, consumed, and honored. However, this diversity is not always celebrated or reflected in all food security conversations around the state. Much remains to be done with creating truly welcoming spaces for all to access food and food knowledge as well as create equitable access to resources.

Guidance for recommendations at the end of this report:

1. Clearly communicate grant parameters in writing and host discussion to explain external boundaries. Do this during project launch to ensure the latest inclusive language and practices are being employed and that participants are well informed.¹⁵
2. Incorporate more Indigenous partners to draft implementation stage grant proposal.
3. Secure funding for both Indigenous language translation and distribution, if it is needed and supported by members of the Alaska Native community.
4. Secure funding for food diversity, equity, and inclusion training for project leaders/participants.

¹² [USDA Regional Food System Partnership Programs. Fiscal Year 2020 Description of Funded Projects. Accessed July 2022.](#)

¹³ [US Census Bureau. Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the United States: 2010 Census and 2020 Census. Accessed June 2022.](#)

¹⁴ [Data show Mountain View is most diverse neighborhood in America. UAA Green & Gold News. April 10, 2013.](#)

¹⁵ This was done for this project, it is recommended to keep this practice in subsequent phases.



Food System Mapping



The focus of Phase II was the planning, facilitation, and reflection activities relative to the individualized asset mapping workshops conducted for each regional node. Node leaders consulted with the project facilitator to schedule a **pre-workshop consultation**, the **asset workshop event**, and a **post-workshop consultation**.

The **pre-workshop consultation** was involved with planning for the asset mapping event with the project facilitator, who was the lead facilitator for the workshop. During this consultation, workshop design was customized to the preferences of the regional node leaders. Planning logistics, such as who to invite, how to publicize and create a multi-stakeholder event, and how to conduct an inclusive and interactive virtual assembly were discussed. Node leaders were encouraged to adjust the language and format of the asset mapping workshop to ensure a regionally and culturally appropriate gathering.

The two-hour **asset mapping workshops** were open to anyone in each region who had an interest in the food system. The emphasis was on creating a broad and inclusive group of participants who would bring multiple perspectives to the process. The asset mapping workshops were held primarily online, although in two cases, these were hybrid events, with node leaders simultaneously hosting both online and in-person events. Because COVID-19 was still a concern in some communities, most regions held virtual workshops.

Asset mapping, as applied in this context, is a process-oriented activity that helps to build community. The goal is to frame what exists within a community

as an asset, challenging participants to see their region from a positive lens, despite existing challenges. After the various lists described below were created, the group discussed ways in which these assets might be used to further the work of increasing food security in the region and build a more sustainable food future for Alaska.

Stressing the validity of “multiple-ways of knowing,” participants were asked to list the individuals, associations, and groups they knew in their region. As well, they were asked to list physical attributes, which included the built environment as well as the natural environment. Another category for listing assets was that which is cultural, spiritual, or contained in story. And finally, participants were asked to list the ways wealth is generated, held, and shared in their region.

The review and analysis of the data by those attending the event resulted in the identification of new ideas for regional food systems work, collaborative opportunities to enhance existing work, and several “next step” priorities for the region. This is available by request.

The **post-workshop consultation** with the project facilitator provided the node leaders with an opportunity to process the experience, reflect on what worked and what might have gone better, and discuss next steps for the node in terms of how to use the data that was generated.

Each node leader was invited to participate in a short survey to assess the value of the asset-mapping workshops.



While the value of these activities was intended to engage with the process, it did generate an information and concept rich document. There may be a “sense-making” challenge for some regional nodes, because of the density of this data in terms of identifying their “next steps.” However, it was clear from post workshop surveys that overall it was considered a valuable experience and would likely create opportunities for action.

Post workshop feedback from participants included:

- “We received quality feedback from participants that will be helpful information moving forward.”
- “I made new connections that I was unaware of in my region, and I know that the other leaders did the same.”
- “So many good ideas were shared and having them on one document gives us a way to move forward.”
- “There were a great number of participants but lacked some key voices/entities who would have helped us come up with a more complete picture.”
- “Next steps emerged ... We have begun a conversation and momentum and with other local organizations can step forward to build the food system.”

Recommendations here are summarized from interactions between project facilitator, project staff, and all node leaders involved. While they are broad, they are intended to complement the Action Plan included in this report and direct the implementation phase of this project.

- AFPC and state-level governance should engage with regional leaders at all phases of any policy planning or food systems project planning.
- AFPC and state-level governance should provide opportunities for community-level contribution and feedback on all food systems initiatives.
- Cultural sensitivities must be central to all project design and implementation.
- Support is suggested for additional regional food systems network building. Creating opportunities for regional food systems leadership development is key to building a resilient and sustainable statewide food system.
- Continued support is required to help regional food systems networks to identify, activate, and facilitate collaborations and partnerships.
- Regional leadership may benefit from support with information management and identifying “next steps” using the data generated in the asset-mapping workshops.

Social Asset Mapping

HOW WE DEVELOPED THE MAP: *Who knows what? Who can do what?*

The overarching goals of this grant project were to engage individuals in experiences, learning environments, and opportunities for relationship building that would contribute to building a diverse and inclusive, democratic, food systems network--one where all voices would be heard and respected, and where opportunities for collaboration, collective ideation, and peer-learning and sharing would contribute to a resilient, sustainable, and food secure Alaska.

To this end, Phase II activities consisted of two parts: the creation of an open survey on the platform sumApp and the subsequent formation of a social system network map on the platform Kumu.

The sumApp survey is a prerequisite to constructing the Kumu map. Information from the survey was collected and aggregated, then uploaded into Kumu to create an interactive data visualization tool.

To create the survey, members of the AFPC leadership team worked with a consultant to design questions that would lead to the creation of a social system network map that would be as useful and accessible as possible. The survey is constructed so that it is iterative in nature, allowing additional questions to be added at any time, with the results immediately reflected in the Kumu social system network map.

The Kumu social system network map is the key element of this phase of the project. Because it is accessible to all who participate in the sumApp survey, the map provides real-time opportunities to see the existing statewide food system network.

From visualizing this data, it is then possible to see where collaboration is possible and how to work strategically to build the network into one that is resilient, sustainable, diverse, and inclusive. While the map is only a "snapshot" of the network at any given moment, it can be used to evaluate growth and development over time. The social system network map is a living document. As designed, the data fields can be iterative, building on what is discovered or gaps in information that emerge. It is open to expansion, and as such, any analysis must be considered in the context of visualizing the active state of the network.

To date, the map that has been created is a useful data visualization tool. By using basic filtering options, the map displays basic demographic information on each participant, the relationships individuals have with each other and to various organizations across the state, and provides mechanisms to determine where interests, skill sets, and resources exist.

As with all new digital platforms, there is a small learning curve required to access the data. The map is designed to encourage self-organizing and with the assistance of network members who have indicated an interest in becoming network guardians, widespread use of the map by all members will become more comfortable. There are many free resources available to assist in deepening an understanding of what data the map can provide the network.

Information may be visualized that includes:

- Geographic representation of network participants
- Personal skills, interests, and areas of expertise
- Connections between individuals and organizations
- Existing food systems projects or interest areas

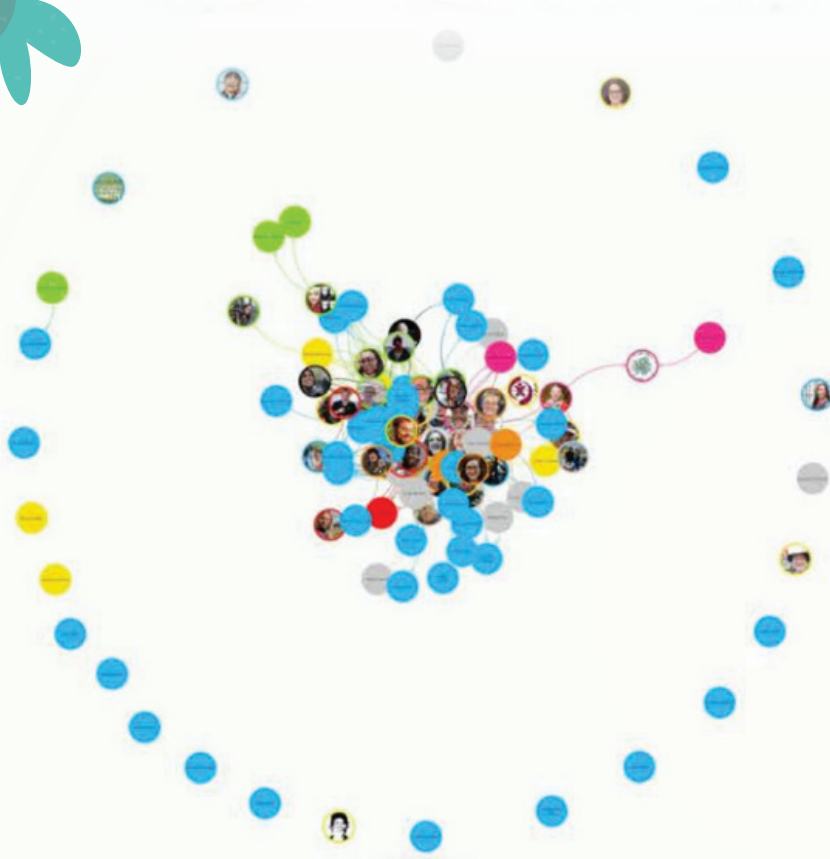
Alaska Food System Network Map

The map currently shows a strong interconnected core network exists. In terms of network theory, the relationships depicted is poised to manifest a core-periphery structure.

Utilizing a core-periphery model can provide the structure necessary for networks to achieve the ultimate goal of being self-sustaining, self-organized, and capable of transformative change. Intentional strategies are needed for the Alaska Food Systems Network to become this type of vibrant system shifting network and are detailed in the recommendations section.

Additional map views demonstrate the functionality of the map as a self organizing tool. For example, filtering by borough allows network participants to visualize where in the state others in the network live. This is useful for planning partnerships and collaborations.

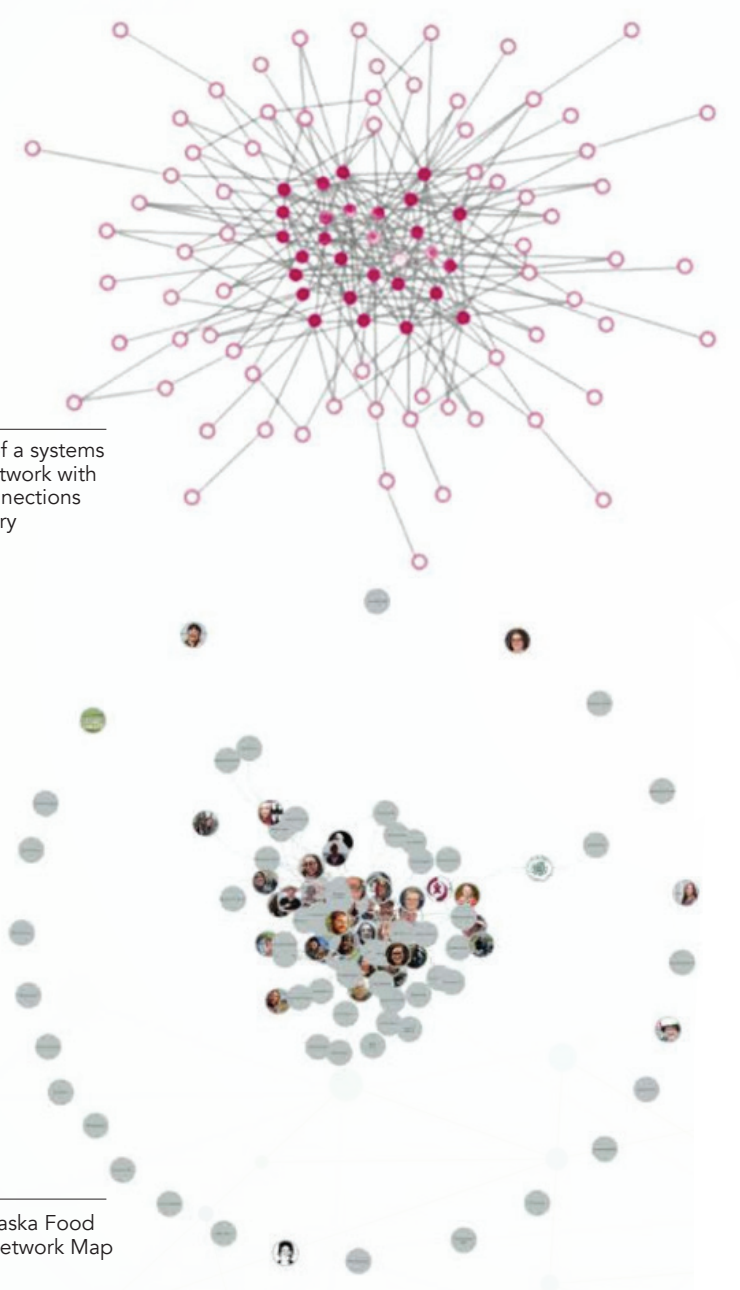
Filtering the map to show the skill sets network participants are willing to share is especially useful in a self-organizing context. For example, those interested in finding network members with expertise in education (farm-based, experiential education, and school-based), can select out those individuals, as seen below.



Legend

- Opposite
- Other
- Anchorage Municipality
- Aleutian & Pribilof Islands Region
- Juneau City & Borough
- Kenai Peninsula Borough
- Sitka City & Borough
- Fairbanks North Star Borough





Example of a systems shifting network with strong connections to periphery

Current Alaska Food Systems Network Map

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.**

Alaska Food Security Action Plan

THE GOAL OF THE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ACTION PLAN is to democratically address food system challenges through inclusive, participatory action, building the capacity for resiliency and sustainability in the Alaskan food system.

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.



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



BUILD/IMPROVE FOOD SYSTEM PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

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



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.)



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



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



Project: Traditional Foods and Wellness Programs at Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association

RFSP Node: Aleutian Region

Project Location: Aleutian Pribilof Islands, Anchorage

Mission & Activities: The goal of the Traditional Foods Program is to promote the use of traditional foods as part of a healthy diet and for overall well-being. Traditional foods must be celebrated. The harvesting, preservation, and preparation of traditional foods have been a vital part of Unangax life from time immemorial. Many traditional values are expressed through the harvesting and preparation of local foods: the importance of sharing, respect for Elders, helping and taking care of others, not being greedy, and taking care of the land, air and water, to name a few. The Traditional Foods and Wellness Programs work in tandem to carry out food-related initiatives and are dedicated to supporting the health and wellness of the Unangax people. Current projects are focused on working with Elders and community leaders to preserve traditional food knowledge and address food access and food security throughout the region.

Key Partnerships: The Aleutian Islands extend westward over 1,100 miles from the southwestern corner of the Alaska mainland, and include the Pribilof Islands which lie to the north. The Aleut people have traditionally been stewards of the land, coastal waters, and the resources in the Aleutian/Pribilof Region. The 13 communities represented by APIA are Akutan, Atka, Belkofski, False Pass, King Cove, Nelson Lagoon, Nikolski, Pauloff Harbor, Sand Point, St. George, St. Paul, Unalaska, and Unga. Other communities that are a part of the Aleutian Chain, but not a part of APIA are: Adak, Amchitka, and Attu.

Image: Sally Swetzof in Atka

Text Adapted from: <https://www.apiai.org/community-services/traditional-foods-program/>



Action Plan

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.

NOTES:

- Please see [Appendix C](#) for a list of organizational acronyms and websites.
- The "potential partners" list is not comprehensive; those listed serve to provide examples.



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

SUCCESS STORIES



Image: <https://www.grownorthfarm.com/about>

Project: Grow North Farm

RFSP Node: Anchorage/Girdwood

Project Location: Mountain View, Anchorage

Mission & Activities: Grow North Farm is the result of years of collaboration between the Anchorage Community Land Trust and Catholic Social Services. The site is a place for food production, community gathering, and entrepreneur development. During the 2022 season, over 20 neighborhood farmers, including nine independent businesses, farmed on-site, all of whom were of refugee or immigrant backgrounds. All of the farmers receive food business and agriculture training hosted by ACLT's Set Up Shop and partner agency, the Refugee Assistance and Immigration Services program at Catholic Social Services.

Anchorage's largest urban farm at 28,000 sqft., the site is a seasonal host to immigrant and refugee farmers seeking rentable land to grow food for their families and for sale. Produce is sold at a regular, seasonal farmers market, hosted on-site and made more affordable by accepting WIC and SNAP. In 2022 they added a licensed food truck to the mix, and farmers who are also food entrepreneurs can reserve space to test their recipes and tap into a broader market.

Key Partnerships:

- Anchorage Community Land Trust
- Catholic Social Services



GOAL ONE CONTINUED

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 specialities

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



Project: Moby the Mobile Greenhouse

RFSP Node: Juneau and neighboring communities

Project Location: Southeast Alaska

Mission & Activities: "Moby the Mobile Greenhouse travels to a different rural Southeast Alaska community, each growing season to kickstart interest in growing local produce, especially among young people. We hope that the greenhouse inspires a new wave of vegetable gardeners, builders, local food system advocates in Sitka and beyond. Moby will mobilize a longer-term vision as a local food system learning center for educators around the region." —Jennifer Nu

Since its launch in 2016, Moby has travelled to Kake, Hoonah, Yakutat, and Sitka

Key Partnerships: Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition, Sustainable Southeast Partnership (SSP), Grow Southeast, rural Southeast Alaskan communities and schools

Image: Mark Browning

Text Adapted from:

<http://sustainablesoutheast.net/moby-the-mobile-greenhouse-cultivating-community-around-opportunities-to-grow-food-knowledge-and-skills/>

<https://sitkalocalfoodsnetwork.org/2019/02/19/moby-the-mobile-greenhouse-to-spend-rest-of-year-at-pacific-high-school-in-sitka/>

Objective 4: CREATE AWARENESS OF 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



Image: Hank Moore teaching a cooking class

Photo credit: Charles Bingham

Project: Sitka Kitch

RFSP Node: Sitka and neighboring communities

Project Location: Sitka

Mission & Activities: The Sitka Kitch is a DEC certified community kitchen that fosters a sustainable and healthy community and food system through education, business incubation and community building. The Kitch is located at the Sitka Lutheran Church.

Potential renters must apply and complete a kitchen orientation. A variety of community courses in food skills such as “campfire cooking” are offered, and the kitchen’s partners’ members sometimes enjoy discounts on events and classes. While the space is primarily educational, food entrepreneurs who need a certified kitchen space may inquire about rentals.

Key Partnerships: The Sitka Kitch is a collaborative effort that would not be possible without the support of partnerships.

- Sitka Local Foods Network
- Sitka Lutheran Church
- First Presbyterian Church
- Sitka Local Foods Network
- Sitka Food Co-op
- UAF Cooperative Extension
- Sitka Health Summit
- all Kitch Instructors

Image: <https://sitkalocalfoodsnetwork.org/2018/01/18/scenes-from-the-seasonal-cooking-cooking-with-hank-moore-class-at-the-sitka-kitch/>

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



Image: Singing Nettle Farms, credit Rachael Miller

Project: 2020 Alaska TILTH—Funding our Farmers, Feeding our Families

RFSP Node: Palmer, Wasilla, and neighboring communities

Project Location: Palmer, AK

Mission & Activities: Alaska TILTH began with a twofold goal of training more Alaska farmers and alleviating hunger with local foods. The project began with a partnership between two universities and has operated differently every year, depending on available resources. TILTH runs rather informally, with leadership shifting between partners every year, based on availability of time, space, and production. In most years, it looked like this:

1. Mat-Su farmers grow food and one of the TILTH partners purchases or collects donated food. Farmers could also drop off produce at the farm.
2. All produce was collected at the UAF Experiment Farm and stored in their cold storage, where a SNAP-ed nutrition educator weighed, sorted, and distributed vegetables and knowledge to Wasilla & Palmer anti-hunger organizations.

2020 was a big year for TILTH and partners were able to test out a new idea—uniform farmer compensation. This was extra important in times of COVID for those producers who could not attend regular markets. The Mat-Su Health Foundation funded Alaska Pacific University to hire a TILTH Coordinator to recruit farmers, collect produce weekly, then transport produce to the UAF Farm. Farmers were provided an alternative market in uncertain times and in total that year 1,900 recipe bags (with ingredients and instructions) were distributed and the TILTH produce was used in 100,000 Kids Kupboard meals, a local anti-hunger organization.

Key Partnerships: Partnerships are especially critical when no one entity “owns” the project.

- Alaska Pacific University
- Mat-Su Health Foundation
- University of Alaska Fairbanks
- UAF Cooperative Extension Services

GOAL TWO CONTINUED



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)

SUCCESS STORIES



Project: Kenaitze Indian Tribe Food Cache Program

RFSP Node: Central Kenai Peninsula—Kenai, Soldotna, and neighboring communities

Project Location: Homer, Ninilchik, Anchor Point, Seldovia, and Soldotna

Mission & Activities: The Kenaitze Indian Tribe was federally recognized as a sovereign, independent nation in 1971 under the Indian Reorganization Act as amended for Alaska. Today, they have more than 1,800 Tribal Members who live across the Kenai Peninsula and beyond. The Tribe's mission is "to assure Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina thrive forever."

Offering care to those in need is one of the Tribe's top priorities. The Tribe delivers a variety of programs and services that promote the wellness of their people and the community. The tribe's food cache is open to all members of the community. Donations from the community as well as fish that come to us in the Tribal net help stock the food cache. To ensure they have enough provisions for everyone, the food cache is available on a once-per-month basis.

Key Partnerships: The Tribe also offers a wild game harvest program, which is operated in partnership with state and community agencies. Through this program, they are able to harvest meat from roadkill moose and other wildlife and make it available to those in need.



Images and Adapted Text:
<https://www.kenaitze.org/services/food-bank/>



GOAL THREE CONTINUED



SUCCESS STORIES



Objective 4: SUPPORT STATEWIDE CONNECTION AND RELATIONSHIPS

Strategies:

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

Potential Partners:

Anchorage Community Land Trust, Catholic Social Services

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

DNR, TCD, SWCD

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

DNR, school districts, hospitals

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

AFPC, local and regional food network groups

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

AFPC, CES, AVI

Project: S'ndooyntgm Galts'ap Metlakatla community garden & compost

RFSP Node: Annette Island, Prince of Wales Island, Ketchikan, and neighboring communities

Project Location: Metlakatla

Mission & Activities: Located 20 miles south of Ketchikan, The Metlakatla Indian Community (MIC) is located on Annette Islands and is the only Indian Reserve in the State of Alaska. Here, a community garden has taken root and garnered state-wide interest. The site hosts a 80'x40' high tunnel for the garden & community use and a 40'x20' greenhouse for commercial use for the garden to produce food for the community.

In 2021, two nonprofits collaborated to launch a food catalyst fellowship program in support of Alaska Native and Native American leaders around Southeast Alaska—Gatgyeda Haayk, Metlakatla's community garden champion, was one of the recipients. Soil amendments can be expensive to purchase and ship around Alaska. She has expanded the garden project and incorporated composting into this site—demonstrating that local leadership is critical to sustaining and scaling local food production.

Key Partnerships:

- Metlakatla Indian Community
- Residents of Metlakatla
- Gatgyeda Haayk— local food champion
- RurAl Cap

Image: Gatgyeda Haayk

Text Adapted from: <https://www.apiai.org/community-services/traditional-foods-program/>

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

Potential Partners:

DHSS, FBA, AFMA, AFB

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

DEC, AFPC, AFB, AFMA

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

ADFG, DEC, AFPC, regional economic development corps



Project: Interior Alaska Food Network’s Golden Heart Grown—Local branding for local farmers

RFSP Node: Fairbanks Area

Project Location: Interior Region

Mission & Activities: Interior Alaska Food Network (IAFN) is made up of a wide variety of people that are gathered to share resources and to bring awareness of Interior Alaska food policies, failures, successes, changes, and opportunities. The network hopes to facilitate projects in the community that addresses areas of food security. In 2016, IAFN in collaboration with its community partners established the Golden Heart Grown program to help distinguish locally produced items in the marketplace for those Interior residents who want to keep their dollars in their community. The Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation is the arbiter of the Golden Heart Grown program by reviewing applications and accepting businesses interested in using the brand or logo, as well as some promotional activities.

- The mission of the promotional program is to support and nurture a healthy secure food system that benefits all Interior Alaskans
- If every Alaskan spent just \$5 a week on Alaskan Grown products it would bring over \$188 million dollars into the local Interior economy.
- In 2022, there were 30 Golden Heart Grown members that included both local farms and businesses.

IAFN sponsors a Taste of Golden Heart Grown event at the Tanana Valley State Fair in collaboration with Tanana Valley Farmers Market and other local farmers.

These projects have helped highlight and promote Interior Farmers and businesses who sell Interior grown products. The logo is visible in the community and displayed in many food businesses and on local menus. Local partnerships are what made this happen.

Key Partnerships: Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation, Fairbanks North Star Borough, Tanana Valley Farmers Market, Fairbanks Farm Bureau, Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Breadline Stone Soup, University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Fairbanks Community Food Bank.

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

Potential Partners:

UAF AFES, AFT, SWCD, TCD, AVI, AFB, local and regional food Networks

Create networking opportunities for new and beginning farmers to interact with established farmers

UAF AFES, AFT, SWCD, TCD, AVI, AFB, local and regional food Networks

Increase awareness of local food production and methods at the community level through micro-grant support and network coordination

DNR, USDA, state and local governments

Objective 2: SUPPORT EMERGING MARICULTURE INDUSTRY

Strategies:

Promote research on kelp harvesting as livestock feed

Potential Partners:

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

Research value-added kelp product development

Objective 3: ORGANIZE GRANT-WRITING WORKSHOPS & FUNDING RESOURCES

Strategies:

Create a clearing house/ database that provides information regarding grants

Potential Partners:

AFPC, AFB, SWCD, TCD

Advocate for grant cycles that do not overlap with busy farming/ fishing seasons

AFPC, AFB, Alaska Food Coalition

Create statewide accessible grant language for organizations writing federal grants

AFPC, AFMA, AFB, FBA, Alaska Food Coalition

Objective 4: SUPPORT FOOD ENTREPRENEURS

Strategies:

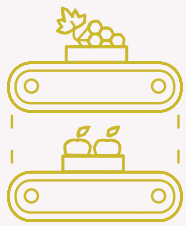
Establish grant programs for investing in start-up costs

Potential Partners:

MEP, Spruceroot

Provide beginning businesses with technical resources and business plan assistance

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

SUCCESS STORIES



Project: Skagway Community Composting

RFSP Node: Haines and neighboring communities

Project Location: Skagway

Mission & Activities: In 2013 The Municipality of Skagway published an audit of its waste management which detailed that about a third of the trash collected was compostable. Since then the city and residents have worked to reduce avoidable food waste and in 2021 a community compost facility was born. The state-of-the-art composting system was designed to handle the massive influx of food waste during a busy cruise ship season in Skagway, but is scalable to downsize during off season or when tourism is down, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Municipality of Skagway offers commercial compost pick-up and drop-off sites for residential compost. Read their 2013 Food Waste and Compostables Feasibility Study here.¹

Key Partnerships:

- Engaged residents of Skagway
- Municipality of Skagway
- Private waste management companies
- Consultant to perform zero waste feasibility analysis

¹ https://www.skagway.org/sites/default/files/fileattachments/community/page/28411/final_report_02-28-13.pdf

Image: <https://www.skagway.org/publicworks>



Grant Outcomes and Next Steps

Project objectives for this grant, *Alaska Food Policy Council and Beyond: Growing Connections and Building Networks for Greater Food Security*, were achieved with several concrete and scalable outcomes which will be built upon in the next implementation phase.

Objective 1: Improved connection, communication, and collaboration of food system organizations/local food policy councils, statewide for collective action at improving Alaska's food system.

- Established Alaska Food System Network—a digital community with opt-in members with profiles that highlight food knowledge, skill sets, and tangible resources (like storage and processing) across the state. As of August 1, 2022, there are **118** members in the network.
- Node leader anecdotal feedback that they have connected with other people in this project, outside of project-specific meetings and events, to discuss other food projects or make a closer connection.

Objective 2: Identification of community food systems assets, barriers, and capacities, to foster connection and collaboration

- Established the Alaska Food Systems Network Map—an interactive data visualization tool about intangible food assets in the state.

Objective 3: Statewide food security action plan, informed by regional Alaskan nodes representing a wide range of locations and stakeholder groups

- This report will be free to access on the Alaska Food Policy council website and distributed to policy-makers, other food-related organizations, and public media corporations.
- This report will be shared with the Alaska Food and Farm Caucus, Alaska Food Security Task Force, established by House Bill 298 as well as the Alaska Food Security and Independence Task Force, established in April 2022.

Alaska Food System Network



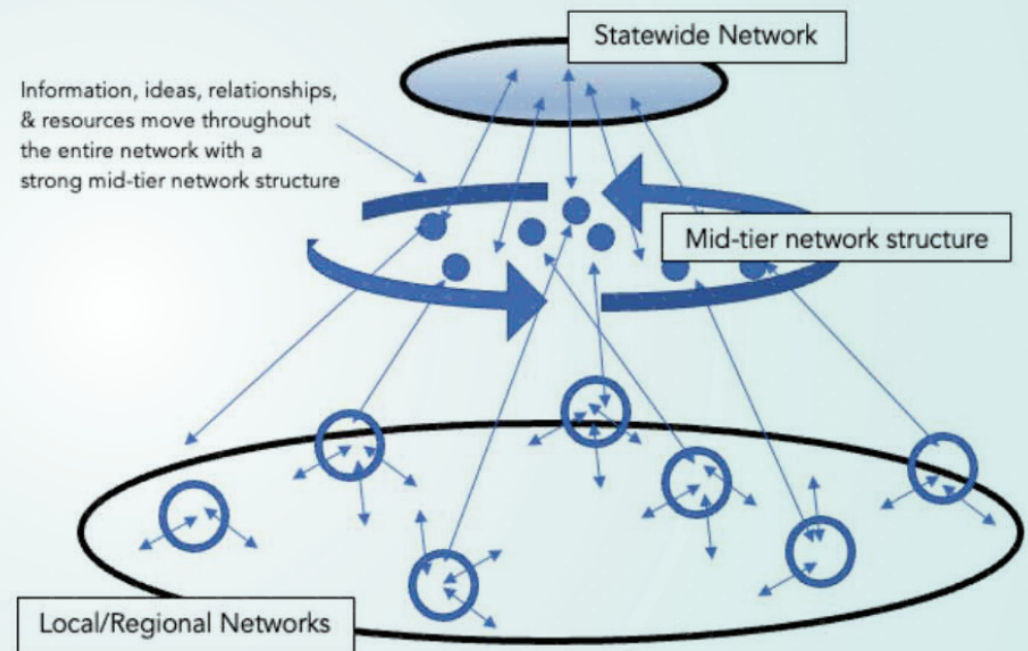
The feedback received from individuals who convened for all grant project activities as part of a regional node indicates there was a perceived value in keeping node-level associations.

Continued support of the regional nodes with the goal of developing a stronger peer-learning and sharing network, while cultivating stronger ties to AFPC. In this configuration, the network of regional nodes represents a “mid-tier” network within the larger statewide food systems network.

The advantages of this structural element are:

- Facilitates the exchange of ideas and concepts moving in both directions
- Provides a mechanism for sharing local perspectives for statewide policy considerations
- Encourages innovation and collaboration
- Improves statewide network health; increases resiliency

There will need to be significant efforts made to fund the implementation of this network. It is recommended to pursue a USDA RFSP Implementation grant.



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Alaska Food Systems Network Map

As an interactive data visualization tool, the map establishes a valuable infrastructural foundation for building an equitable, collaborative, diverse, and sustainable food system in Alaska. But tools must be understood and adopted to be useful. **If this map is to continue, the following steps should be considered:**

- Provide support and facilitation to convene network participants interested in becoming network guardians. These individuals should form a small working group to learn the map program and functions, aid others in accessing the data they are interested in, and help keep the data updated.
- Convene regular sense-making workshops open to all to promote the network and its value
- Create video/ text explainers on how to use the tool
- Consider if there is a different tool that would be more useful to the public



Example of a systems shifting network with strong connections to periphery



Current Alaska Food Systems Network Map

Additionally, The comparison between the example of a network with strong connections to its periphery and the current Alaska Food Systems Network (AFSN) suggest steps are needed to create stronger connections to the AFSN periphery. This step in network development is important because:

- Strong relationships to the periphery provide pathways for new people, allowing the network to grow and increase the impact of the network. It is critical to ensure diversity
- The periphery connects the network to other networks, which builds critical mass toward transformative change
- Connections to the periphery help the network maintain “the big picture” in terms of understanding how other systems are contributing to shared change objectives
- A vibrant network periphery helps the network access expertise, diverse ways of knowing, and resources

Specific recommendations to enhance the Alaska Food Systems Network are:

- Grow the network; Engage with network recruiting and information sharing. Make the invitation to join widely available to as many people as express an interest in participating
- Convene a working group to focus on network recruiting. Develop strategies to connect people from the periphery (the network map can be helpful in identifying existing members who are in key positions to bridge the core to the periphery)
- Support individual network members through education and opportunities, to “close triangles” as active network weavers
- Create strategies that help to guide the emergence of a strong network periphery and the creation of a system shifting network
- Improve directories and centralize information

Calls to Action

START A COMMUNITY FOOD MEETUP

The Alaska Food Policy Council is happy to assist with initial coordination, including meeting agendas and set up a Zoom call.

JOIN A COMMITTEE WITH THE ALASKA FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

<https://www.akfoodpolicycouncil.org/get-involved>

JOIN THE ALASKA FOOD SYSTEMS NETWORK

<https://www.akfoodpolicycouncil.org/regional-food-system-participate>

CALL YOUR LEGISLATORS AND MAKE SURE FOOD SECURITY IS A PRIORITY

Go to Akleg.gov, then scroll to the bottom and find “Who represents me?”

Appendix A

ALASKA FOOD POLICY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN, 2012–2015



Alaska Food Policy Council Strategic Plan

January 12, 2012

Inside:

Food Policy in Alaska

Alaska's Food System (p4)
The Alaska Food Policy Council (p5)

The AFPC Strategic Plan

Vision (p6)
Core Values (p6)
Mission (p6)
Goals, Objectives + Strategies (p8-11)
Priority Strategies, 2012-2015 (p7)

Alaska Food Policy Council 2012 Strategic Plan

Prepared for the Alaska Food Policy Council by
Agnew::Beck Consulting

GOALS FROM OUR STRATEGIC PLAN 2012–2015

Goal 1: All Alaskans have access to affordable, healthy (preferably local) foods.

Goal 2: Alaska's food-related industries have a strong workforce and operate in a supportive business environment.

Goal 3: Food is safe, protected, and supplies are secure throughout Alaska.

Goal 4: Alaska's food system is more sustainable.

Goal 5: Alaskans are engaged in our food system.

Appendix B

REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM PARTNERSHIP NETWORKING WORKSHOPS TOPICS

FACILITATING ALASKA'S FOOD FUTURE TOGETHER:

Building Diverse Networks, Creating Cooperative Strategies, and Cultivating Asset-based Approaches



A series of six workshops for the Alaska Food Policy Council Regional Nodes

Goal: to enable Alaskan communities to create localized, place-based food system action plans that will funnel up into a statewide food systems action plan representative of our diverse state

SESSION 1

Food Systems and Networked Theory of Change: The Complexity Worldview

- Introductions & Pre-workshop survey
- Cohort-building activities (understanding group diversity and ways of knowing)
- Understanding Change in the 21st Century
- Complex Adaptive Systems
 - Theory of change for this project
- Understanding Food Systems
- Introducing Food Systems Action Plan—final product example

SESSION 2

Understanding Network Growth and Network Weaving

- Overview of Intentional Networks and patterns of growth
- Network growth and structure (equity and inclusion)
- Understanding tiered network structure
- 4 Different Roles of a Network Weaver
- Closing triangles

SESSION 3

Facilitating and Supporting a Network

- Network facilitation training
- Designing facilitation structures and affinity groups
 - Structure/Shared Agreements
 - Equity
 - Engagement
- Self-organizing and horizontal leadership
- Developing a Communication Ecosystem
 - Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Scooplt, etc.)
 - Email/Listerv
 - Slack
 - Phone tree

SESSION 4

Asset Mapping and Affinity Groups

- What is asset-based community development? (ABCD)
- Tools for asset mapping and analysis
- Interest or Affinity Group function and design
- Communities of Practice (CoP)

SESSION 5

Bioregional Food Systems Network Activation and Design

- How to convene or enhance existing network
- Identifying network partners (network weaving)
- Strategies for inclusion and diversity
- Communication strategies for Food Systems Action Plan:
 - Polls/scheduling
 - Emails/Listservs
 - Google docs
 - Google calendar

SESSION 6

Reflection and Shared Vision

- Post-workshop survey and discussion
- Sharing plans for bioregional network building and participation in State-wide food systems action plan
- Discuss State-wide survey and co-create questions for SumApp survey/Kumu mapping
- Peer Resource Sharing

Appendix C ACRONYMS

These organizations and their acronyms, where applicable, either were contributing nodes or were mentioned in the report. Each actively contributes to the food system in some way and is considered an asset.

ACRONYM (IF USED IN REPORT)	ORGANIZATION NAME	ORGANIZATION WEBSITE
4H.....	Alaska 4H—Statewide.....	http://www.alaska4h.org/
ACEFCS.....	Alaska Community Emergency Food Cache System.....	https://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/juneau/food-security/acefcs/
ACLT.....	Anchorage Community Land Trust.....	https://anchorage.landtrust.org/
ADFG.....	Alaska Department of Fish and Game.....	https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/
AFB.....	Alaska Farm Bureau.....	https://alaskafb.org/
AFC.....	Alaska Food Coalition.....	https://foodbankofalaska.org/alaska-food-coalition-2/
AFES.....	UAF—Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station.....	https://www.uaf.edu/afes/
AFMA.....	Alaska Farmers Market Association.....	https://alaskafarmersmarkets.org/
AFN.....	Alaska Federation of Natives.....	https://www.nativefederation.org/
AFPC.....	Alaska Food Policy Council.....	https://www.akfoodpolicycouncil.org/
AFT.....	Alaska Farmland Trust.....	https://akfarmland.com/
AMA.....	Alaska Mariculture Alliance.....	https://www.afdf.org/category/alaska-mariculture-initiative/
AMCC.....	Alaska Marine Conservation Council.....	https://www.akmarine.org/
AMS.....	Agricultural Marketing Service.....	https://www.ams.usda.gov/
ANTHC.....	Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium.....	https://www.anthc.org/
APIA.....	Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association.....	https://www.apiai.org/
APU.....	Alaska Pacific University.....	https://www.alaskapacific.edu/
ASOF.....	Alaska Seeds of Change.....	https://alaskabehavioralhealth.org/what-we-do/vocational-services/alaska-seeds-of-change/
AVI.....	Alaska Village Initiatives.....	https://akvillage.org/
CES.....	UAF Cooperative Extension Service.....	https://www.uaf.edu/ces/
CIK.....	Cook Inletkeeper.....	https://inletkeeper.org/
CSS.....	Catholic Social Services—Anchorage.....	https://www.cssalaska.org/
DEC.....	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.....	https://dec.alaska.gov/
DHSS.....	Alaska Department of Health and Social Services.....	https://dhss.alaska.gov/Pages/default.aspx
DNR.....	Alaska Department of Natural Resources.....	https://dnr.alaska.gov/
FBA.....	Food Bank of Alaska.....	https://foodbankofalaska.org/
FFA.....	Alaska Future Farmers of America.....	https://www.alaskaffaassociation.com/

ACRONYM (IF USED IN REPORT)	ORGANIZATION NAME	ORGANIZATION WEBSITE
FRESH	Food, Research, Enterprise, and Sustainability Hub	https://www.freshnorth.org/team
FSWCD	Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District	https://www.fairbankssoilwater.org/
HEDC	Haines Economic Development Corporation	https://www.hainesedc.org/
HSWCD	Homer Soil and Water Conservation District	https://www.homerswcd.org/
IAC	Intertribal Agriculture Council	https://www.indianag.org/
IAFN	Interior Alaska Food Network	https://interiorakfoodnet.wixsite.com/iafn
IAFN	Interior Alaska Food Network	https://interiorakfoodnet.wixsite.com/iafn
ICC	Inuit Circumpolar Council—Alaska	https://iccalaska.org/
KLFC	Kenai Local Food Connection	https://www.kenailocalfood.org/
MEFEC	Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center	https://uaf.edu/afes/places/palmer/index.php
MEP	Alaska Manufacturing Extension Partnership	https://alaska-mep.com/
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/alaska
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service	https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/
SAWC	Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition	https://www.alaskawatershedcoalition.org/
SLFN	Sitka Local Foods Network	https://sitklocalfoodsnetwork.org/
SWCD	Soil and Water Conservation Districts—Alaska	https://alaskaconservationdistricts.org/
TCD	Tribal Conservation Districts	https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/ak/people/nrcs142p2_035998/
UA	University of Alaska (system)	https://www.alaska.edu/
UAF	University of Alaska—Fairbanks	https://uaf.edu/uaf/
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture	https://www.usda.gov/
--	Alaska Arctic Observatory & Knowledge Hub	https://arctic-aok.org/
--	Alaska Institute for Justice—Language Interpreter Center	http://www.akijp.org/language-interpreter-center/
--	Alaska Local Environmental Observer (LEO) Network	https://www.leonetwork.org/
--	Alaska Native Language Center (UAF)	https://www.uaf.edu/anlc/
--	Alaska SeaGrant	https://alaskaseagrant.org/
--	Buy Alaska	https://buyalaska.com/
--	Grow North Farm	https://www.grownorthfarm.com/
--	Indigenous Sentinels Network	https://www.beringwatch.net/
--	Kawerak INC	https://kawerak.org/
--	Kodiak Harvest Co-op	https://www.kodiakharvest.org/
--	Spruceroot	https://www.spruceroot.org/
--	Yarducopia	https://yarducopia.org/

Appendix D ASSET MAPPING WORKSHOP: IDENTIFIED ASSETS

Participants from each regional node participated in regional-specific Asset Mapping Workshops. They collectively brainstormed assets of existing entities, individuals, and environments that are currently or could potentially be utilized to promote food security and sustainability within the state of Alaska. While this list is extensive, it is by no means exhaustive. Below are general types of assets identified across the workshops. Specific assets lists are available to each regional node.

ASSETS:



INDIVIDUALS:

- Farmer
- Bookkeeper
- Chefs/cooks
- Meat Processor
- Tribal hunter
- Forager
- Ethnobotanist
- Local consumer
- Master Gardener
- Legislators
- Grantwriters
- Behavioral Health Professionals
- Food safety trainer
- Commercial Fisherman
- Dipnetters
- Subsistence fisherman
- Subsistence hunter

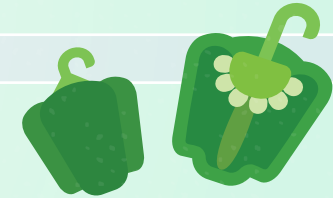


ASSOCIATIONS/GROUPS:

- Food bank/pantry
- Service clubs (ex. Lion's Club)
- Farmer's Markets
- Churches
- Grocery stores
- Food hubs
- Schools
- Universities
- Land-grant University
- Local Restaurants
- Emergency Service groups
- Community/Senior centers
- Social Service organizations
- Breweries
- Gleaning Programs
- Community Gardens
- Greenhouses
- DEC—Food safety organizations
- Delivery Meal Programs
- Cooperative Extension Service
- 4-H
- FFA
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Local Radio Stations
- Local Newspapers
- Local governments
- Seed Exchange Programs
- Co-ops
- Land Trusts
- Garden Clubs
- Local Food Networks
- ADF&G local fish and game advisory committees
- Fishing Industry
- Seafood Processors
- Alaska Farmers Market Association
- Alaska Food Policy Council
- CSA's
- Food Coalition
- Philanthropic organizations: Foundations, non-political service organizations
- Chamber of Commerce
- Land Management Agencies
- Roadkill moose-sharing programs
- Local Nurseries

CULTURAL/STORY ASSETS:

- Museum
- Libraries
- Traditional ecological knowledge
- Culture camps
- Elders knowledge
- Tribes and Village Corporations
- Smokehouses
- Immigrant populations
- Homestead Culture



PHYSICAL/BUILT ENVIRONMENT:

- Alaska Marine Highway System
- Air Shippers
- Shipping Ports
- International airport
- Alaska Railroad System
- Natural Resources—abundant water, foraging haven
- Private regional marine transportation
- Edible Landscapes
- Hydroelectric Power
- Hydroponic farms
- High tunnels
- Forest Service public use cabins
- Fish Hatcheries
- Dairy
- Vacant warehouses/buildings
- Landfills

Appendix E ASSET MAPPING WORKSHOP: GRANTS & FUNDING

Here is a compiled list of economic and funding ideas for community food systems, compiled from community feedback during the regional node asset mapping workshops:



NON-PROFITS

- Alaska Farmers Market Association (marketing grants)
- Alaska Farmland Trust (preserve farmland)
- Alaska Rural Rehabilitation Corporation (ARRC)—Farm Loans
- Chambers of Commerce
- Community Foundations
- Economic Development Corporations
- Land Trusts (funding to preserve land)
- Local fraternal orders (ex. Lions Club) (for donations & assistance with raffles or fundraisers)
- Rasmusen Foundation
- Rural Cap



FEDERAL AGENCIES

- American Rescue Act Plan funding (federal funding distributed at state/local level)
- Build Back Better Grants (federal funding distributed at state/local level)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (ex. Local Food Local Places grant)
- Farm Service Agency (FSA)—Farm Loans and Farm Programs
- National Park Service
- NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) program
- NRCS-Natural Resource Conservation Service
- United States Dept. of Agriculture (USDA)



PRIVATE SECTOR/ETC.

- Crowdsome groups like 100 Women Who Care; 100 Men who Care
- Cruise Ship Industry
- Employee donation programs
- Grocery Stores and other local businesses
- Health and Medical Centers (community grants)
- Restaurants



LOCAL/STATE AGENCIES

- Alaska Division of Agriculture (ARLF)—Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund
- Local banks/federal credit union
- Municipalities
- Northwest Farm Credit Services
- State of Alaska Commercial Fishing Loan Program
- State of Alaska Division of Agriculture—Food Security Micro Grants
- State of Alaska Division of Agriculture—Specialty Crop Block Grant
- State or Federal subsidies for food transportation
- Tribal Governments

HERE ARE SOME COMPREHENSIVE FUNDING RESOURCES:

[Building Sustainable Farms, Ranches, and Communities: A Guide to Federal Programs for Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry, Entrepreneurship, Conservation, Food Systems, and Community Development](#)

This guide is one of the most comprehensive resources we've found for funding food systems changes. It is a collaborative publication of USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute (MFAI), National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), and National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC).

Many program descriptions in this Guide were drafted by NSAC's policy staff for NSAC's Grassroots Guide to the 2018 Farm Bill. Others were written by MFAI's policy staff, including

Alejandra Hernandez, Margaret Krome, and Donale Richards, who was the principal author for this Guide.



[Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders \(SAFSF\)](#) amplifies the impact of philanthropic and investment communities in support of just and sustainable food and agriculture systems.

The cover of the guide features a dark green background with white text. At the top, the title "BUILDING SUSTAINABLE FARMS, RANCHES AND COMMUNITIES" is written in a large, bold, white sans-serif font. Below the title, the subtitle "A GUIDE TO FEDERAL PROGRAMS for Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry, Entrepreneurship, Conservation, Food Systems, and Community Development" is written in a smaller, white sans-serif font. The cover is decorated with six small images: a landscape with a body of water and tall grasses; two men in a greenhouse; a close-up of a bee on a red flower; two men in cowboy hats with a cow; a field of young green plants in rows; and a young girl in a red dress holding a blue tray with food. In the bottom right corner, the USDA logo is displayed above the text "Sept. 2020".

Appendix F

PREVIOUS ALASKA COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEM ASSESSMENTS/PLANNING

This review was compiled by AFPC 2022 Summer Intern, William Kessler.

Note: This is not a comprehensive list of Alaska community food system assessments.

For more food systems research and planning resources, visit: www.akfoodpolicycouncil.org/ak-food-system-research

ANCHORAGE/GIRDWOOD

[2019 Anchorage Climate Action Plan](#), 2019 (Food Systems - p. 68–73)
Anchorage Climate Action Plan Steering Committee
Anchorage

95% of food Alaskans purchase is imported, which is vulnerable to climate shifts that affect game animals and wild foods. Wild food in Anchorage is cost prohibitive due to expenses like fuel, nets, and firearms. Weather events can also delay shipments and with a high percentage of imported food, is dangerous to food security. Plus sides to a warming climate are that certain growing seasons are extended and new crops may be able to be grown. Recommendations for addressing food-related greenhouse gases and food security include preserving agricultural land for production, raising awareness of the Alaska Grown program, developing facilities to process local food products, educating on traditional foods, and decreasing food waste.

[Community Action Plan for Anchorage: Local Food Local Places Technical Assistance](#), 2018
Multistakeholder Steering Committee/EPA
Anchorage

The action plan was designed to create a downtown urban farm at the 3rd Avenue site in downtown Anchorage. The goal of this plan is to advance urban agriculture following the circumpolar north model for social, economic, and human development needs. The plan aims to increase local food production and accessibility to the community, provide economic and educational opportunities to empower the workforce needed, revitalize the urban area around, and show the value of healthy food that the site would generate.

NORTHERN ALASKA (UTQIAGVIK)

[Summary Report—Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Initiative](#), 2019
Utqiagvik Steering Committee
Utqiagvik, Alaska

The Utqiagvik Steering Committee seeks to maintain traditional Inuit practices and enhance biodiversity conservation plans while also achieving food sovereignty. Recommended actions towards this goal include building public awareness and involvement through promotions at events like town hall meetings. Emphasizes education for youth around culture and hunting by those with experience. Address regulatory issues that are noted as too restrictive and too many, but ensure they cannot be abused by opportunistic hunters. Notes a lack of authority and respect given to Native groups by the state, leading to concerns going unaddressed.

ALEUTIAN REGION

[Wellness Strategies for Health Community Health Assessment](#), 2015
Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association
Aleutian and Pribilof Islands, Alaska

Weather events like wind and fog isolate communities on the islands from services like food delivery. This threatens food security through an inability to ship food onto the island. Contemporary Native (Unangan) diets rely heavily on purchased imported food. It is expensive to ship healthy foods like fruits and vegetables, so instead foods high in carbohydrates and with poor quality fats are imported. This contributes to the death rate of Alaskan Natives at 1.5 times compared to white populations. Community members desired to see a lowering of costs of healthy foods like vegetables, as well as learn traditional subsistence methods.

NORTHWEST ALASKA (NOME)

[2022 Bering Strait Community Needs Assessment, 2022](#)

Mckinley Research Group

Bering Strait Region/Kawerak Service Area (Nome Census Area), Alaska

Goals for the region are self-sufficient villages, the protection of traditional ways of life and culture, subsistence resources protected, and cooperation and respect between tribal and government entities. Subsistence opportunities are seen by 80% of the surveyed population as a strength. 79% of those surveyed see a high cost of living as a community challenge, which can at least partially be attributed to the cost of imports. 39% of households outside of Nome report at least someone in their household being unable to afford food. The calculated price differential for food is 1.7 times greater in the region than in Anchorage. Climate change threatens food security by affecting current food subsistence practices like fish camp access, types of fish available, and berry harvests.

PALMER/WASILLA

[Local Foods, Local Places A Community-Driven](#)

[Action Plan for Palmer, Alaska, 2016](#)

Local Steering Team/ EPA

Palmer, Alaska

The action plan involved supporting a local food by replicating the Alaska food hub model, strengthening the Monday Farmers Market, educating on what is seasonally available, and establishing space for small local producers for local/ regional processing. Additionally, the plan recommends gathering data and creating groups that seek to promote farmland and wild resources stewardship and preservation, as well as increasing the availability of local food to local residents by surveying and documenting local food availability and then identifying any barriers to that.

CENTRAL KENAI PENINSULA—SOLDOTNA/KENAI

[Food Security on the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska A Report on Local Seafood Use, Consumer Preferences, and Community Need, 2012](#)

Philip Loring, S. Craig, Hannah Harrison—Senior Thesis

Kenai Peninsula, Alaska

The assessment finds that a great majority of locally caught seafood plays a role in household food security, especially for lower-income households. Access to seafood is then seen as a primary contribution to household food security outcomes. The data found shows evidence of a need to keep more Alaskan seafood in Alaska.

LOWER KENAI PENINSULA (HOMER/ANCHOR POINT/ COMMUNITIES AROUND KACHEMAK BAY)

[Buying Local Food: A survey of southern Kenai Peninsula Restaurants and Institutions, 2018](#)

Homer Soil and Water Conservation District

Kenai Peninsula, Alaska

The many dynamics of the kitchen and the grocery store aisle keep these buyers on their toes. The farmer, swayed by weather, timing, and labor issues, may not always see the consumer's perspective. This study shows how these large-scale consumers are instead swayed by strong relationships, dedication and reliability, and any tactics that reduce uncertainty for their businesses. Understanding these dynamics will benefit the farmers who wish to enter into this large-scale market or wish to improve on sales they presently have. To lessen our dependence on food imported into the state and strengthen our local economy, building relationships between our local producers and our largest consumers is key. This survey shows what aspects of those relationships are the pivot points between success and failure.

FAIRBANKS

[Assessing Food Security in Fairbanks, Alaska: A Survey Approach to Community Food Production, 2011](#)

Charles David Caster—Senior Thesis

Fairbanks, Alaska

In order to combat food insecurity, a robust local food system is needed to ease the dependence in Fairbanks, and throughout Alaska, on imported food. Imported food brings both high costs and susceptibility to natural disasters and other weather events. Increased local production should be encouraged through season-extending techniques. Additionally, participation in agriculture should be encouraged, especially for younger people to replace an aging farmer population. To ease the cost of growers entering the profession and to encourage younger generations, a central marketing outlet, like a food hub, could decrease the transaction costs between producers and consumers is encouraged.

[Fairbanks North Star Borough Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update, 2022-2026 \(pg 12-15; 65-67\), 2022](#)

Agnew:Beck Consulting with support from Northern Economics

Fairbanks North Star Borough

Emphasizes the high reliance that the area has on imported foods that present extra costs and provide logistical challenges. Locally grown food currently on the market in Fairbanks has lower costs and better quality than imported food. One goal of the strategy is to achieve food security by increasing the production,

distribution, and processing of locally grown food to limit outside dependence. Increased food storage capacity for emergencies could be achieved by creating a community processing and storage facility. To grow the agricultural industry, efforts should be made to recruit new farmers through new training programs and reducing barriers to entry.

Tanana Chiefs Conference
[Tanana Chiefs Conference Regional Food Assessment and Recommendations, 2021](#)
Alaska Interior

Key concerns of the Tanana Chief's Conference include food quality, the ability to gather food through subsistence methods, and food storage. Recommendations that are given to address these problems include educating kids by editing school curriculum to include information on subsistence methods which aims to create a connection between youth and subsistence. Also, they recommend acquiring funding for infrastructure and storage like refrigerators, creating a marketing campaign to educate on the connection of food from subsistence methods to health outside of schools, partnering and supporting already existing groups to use resources more effectively such as the Interior Alaska Food Network which seeks to create a food distribution model, and promoting the use of farmers markets.

SOUTHEAST

[Southeast Alaska 2025 Economic Plan, 2022](#)
Rain Coast Data
Southeast Alaska

Emphasizes the importance of a strong and reliable ferry system for maintaining food security, especially with the burdens that the pandemic brought on. Local food harvesting practices for households are encouraged for both Native and non-Native peoples, as well as education in schools and the community about respectful wild harvest skills. Recommendations include investment in local production and processing, and utilizing municipal lands that can be turned into urban farms, high tunnels, and greenhouses while providing incentives for local farmers and composters.

[Southeast Alaska Food System Assessment: A pilot project to identify actions to promote self-sustaining communities and a resilient food system, 2014](#)
People and Place Program, Southeast Conference, Sheinberg Associates, and University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service
Southeast Alaska

This report presents an analysis of data collected for a pilot study of Southeast Alaskan community and regional food systems from September through December of 2013. The purpose of this research is to identify existing food system challenges in order to target areas of change and actions that can be

taken to promote self-sufficient communities and a more resilient food system. As new data is collected, this report can be updated. Ultimately, this research will help guide future efforts to increase the production of cultivated and harvest of wild food that is locally processed, distributed, and consumed in Southeast Alaska.

An initial baseline of food cultivation operations in communities around the region was established. This included a survey of the goals, challenges, and limitations of these growing operations to determine opportunities to improve procedures and identify factors that lead to success. A sample of cultivators were surveyed in the communities of Haines, Gustavus, Juneau, Elfin Cove, Game Creek, Pelican, Sitka and Farragut Bay. This assessment does not provide comprehensive data on all facets of cultivated foods within Southeast Alaska.

[2020 Hoonah Food System Assessment, 2020](#)
Jenifer Nu, Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition
Hoonah, Alaska

The Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition (SAWC) and the Sustainable Southeast Partnership (SSP) collaborated with the Hoonah Stewardship Council (HSC) and the Hoonah Indian Association (HIA) to initiate a targeted community food system assessment for Hoonah in the winter of 2019 and spring 2020. The assessment aimed to gather specific information about prioritized sectors of Hoonah's food system as identified by the Hoonah Stewardship Council. The assessment gathered information using a local producer survey, a retailer survey, and a community survey. This report summarizes findings from these surveys alongside other relevant information about Hoonah's food system to provide an overview of the community's food system. This report also includes recommendations for priority projects, programming, and next steps.

[Sitka Community Food Assessment Indicators Report, 2014](#)
Community of Sitka
Sitka, Alaska

The Sitka Food Assessment work group launched the Sitka Food Security Survey (SFSS) in March 2013. The workgroup used an online venue as well as printed hard copies that were distributed at the Kettleston library, Office of Public Assistance, and at the Sitka Native Education Program end-of-year celebration. 484 Sitkans completed the survey, but the selected results shared in the food assessment only used data from the 422 surveys that verified their zipcode.

The workgroup set an ambitious goal of completing seven focus groups in Sitka over late spring and early summer. The focus groups targeted key informants (elected leaders, clergy, public assistance and public health staff, concerned citizens), food producers, food shoppers, and those potentially at risk for household food insecurity. A total of 49 Sitkans participated in the focus groups and interviews. Summaries of the focus groups are provided in this report

KODIAK

[Kodiak Rural Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2022](#)

(pgs. 56–60, 71–75)

Kodiak Area Native Association
Kodiak, Alaska

Agricultural activities in the region among village communities are increasing due to a Kodiak Archipelago Leadership Institute farming project with funding partially from the US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Native Americans. Methods of achieving this increase come from Alaskan Native Corporation financial support, local city financial support, and technical assistance training. This report provides an overview of activities and SWOT analysis of both agriculture and mariculture.

WESTERN ALASKA

[Development of a quantitative food frequency questionnaire for use among the Yup'ik people of Western Alaska, 2014](#)

Fariba Kolahdooz, Desiree Simeon, Gary Ferguson, Sangita Sharma
Western Alaska (focus on Yup'ik population), Alaska

Store-bought foods are deemed less quality than traditional foods. There is a decline in traditional food consumption among the Native population which is linked to a decrease in health. The study aimed to develop a nutritional education program tailored to Alaska Native populations to address obesity and related chronic diseases.

[Alaska Inuit Food Security Conceptual Framework: How to access the Arctic from an Inuit Perspective, 2015](#)

Inuit Circumpolar Council - Alaska

North Slope, Northwest Arctic, Bering Strait, and Yukon-Kuskokwim (focus on Alaska Inuit population)

“Alaskan Inuit food security is the natural right of all Inuit to be part of the ecosystem, to access food and to care-take, protect and respect all of life, land, water and air. It allows for all Inuit to obtain, process, store and consume sufficient amounts of healthy and nutritious preferred food – foods physically and spiritually craved and needed from the land, air and water, which provide for families and future generations through the practice of Inuit customs and spirituality, languages, knowledge, policies, management practices and self-governance. It includes the responsibility and ability to pass on knowledge to younger generations, the taste of traditional foods rooted in place and season, knowledge of how to safely obtain and prepare traditional foods for medicinal use, clothing, housing, nutrients and, overall, how to be within one’s environment. It means understanding that food is a lifeline and a connection between the past and today’s self and cultural identity. Inuit food security is characterized by environmental health and is made up of six interconnecting dimensions: 1) Availability, 2) Inuit Culture, 3) Decision-Making Power and Management, 4) Health and Wellness, 5) Stability and 6) Accessibility. This definition holds the understanding that without food sovereignty, food security will not exist.”

Appendix G FOOD SYSTEM INDICATORS

Context and Recommendations for the State of Alaska

Prepared by Rachael Miller, on behalf of the Alaska Food Policy Council | September 2022

AFPC Board Member | Food Systems Consultant | Associate Professor at Alaska Pacific University.

This resource was produced for the Alaska Food Policy Council (AFPC) and is intended to build upon and complement the many existing and future food security reports pertaining to the State and Circumpolar North. This resource should serve as a living document, and be updated and edited as necessary.

Alaska is in interesting times. Food security is now front of mind for many and recent events reinforced the need to produce a larger portion of the more than \$2 billions dollars spent on out-of-state consumables every year.¹ The 2018 earthquake that rocked southcentral Alaska, followed by the supply chain and isolation complications of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic exposed many of our infrastructure weaknesses but also magnified Alaskans' desire to increase local supply and security.

At the time of this report, several food security initiatives are taking place around the state. From 2020–2022:

- AFPC launched the Alaska Food Systems Network, a digital community to share food knowledge.
- The Alaska Food and Farm Caucus was formed; a bipartisan, joint caucus in the state legislature.
- House Bill 22 passed which empowered herd share managers to create value-add products for shareholders.
- Administrative Orders 331 & 334 were signed, establishing the short-term Alaska Food Security & Independence Task Force.
- House Bill 298 was passed, which established the Alaska Food Security Task Force, slated to pick up the previous Task Force's work.
- Farmers markets continue to increase around the state, from 41 in 2017 to 56 in 2021.
- Communities are leading their own initiatives to decide how they can become more food secure and knowledgeable.²

While it is now indisputable that food security is a top discussion topic for decision-makers, the "how" of execution in improving this security has and may stall the systematic and holistic approach needed to truly prepare for the next crisis, next missed supply barge, or, more aspirationally—the next generation of resilient and hunger-free Alaskans. This will take everyone—Public and private institutions, rural and urban communities, Alaska Native Corporations and Tribes, universities, houses of worship, the wealthy and those in need—everyone

eats and in a state with such potential abundance it is unacceptable that 1 in 8 Alaskans is food insecure.³

"If you can't measure it, you can't improve it."

—PETER DRUCKER, GLOBAL MANAGEMENT EXPERT

Deciding to affect change in the food system begs the question "Where to start?" It is time for a new narrative in the state, informed by up-to-date sources so the State and its residents may act accordingly. The oft-cited statistic that Alaska imports 95% of its food is a good place to start—unfortunately it has not been substantiated nor updated since a journal mention in 1987 and when invoked, wild foods are not often mentioned.⁴ Quantifying the percentage of consumed foods that are imported should be Alaska's first step towards establishing an accurate baseline.

Food system change can be overwhelming because food is a resource connected to everything—from supply chain to language to weather patterns. Knowing where to start and who is responsible for managing food security tracking and action planning takes collaboration, clean and robust data, long-term, multi-administration vision, and sustained funding.

An increasing trend to establish a baseline landscape and track changes over time is the use of publicly available data dashboards. These dashboards gained popularity, including in Alaska, during the COVID-19 pandemic, as residents sought up-to-date information about case counts, hospitalizations, and deaths.⁵ So too are these dashboards increasingly used to filter and communicate food systems information for a variety of uses, such as determining areas in need or at risk, shopping local, disaster planning, community projects and grant writing, student and faculty publications, and more.

¹ [Building Food Security in Alaska. Ken Meter and Megan Phillips Goldenberg. Crossroads Resource Center, Minneapolis, MN. July 28, 2014.](#)

² Examples abound in the 2022 AFPC Report: *Food Security Action Plan: Part 1: Statewide Planning*

³ [Food Bank of Alaska. Facts About Hunger. Accessed August 2022.](#)

⁴ Lewis, C. E., Pearson, R. W., & Thomas, W. C.(1987). Agricultural development in Alaska. *Polar Record*, 23(147), 673-682.

⁵ [Alaska Department of Health, Alaska COVID19 Cases Dashboard. Accessed August 2022.](#)

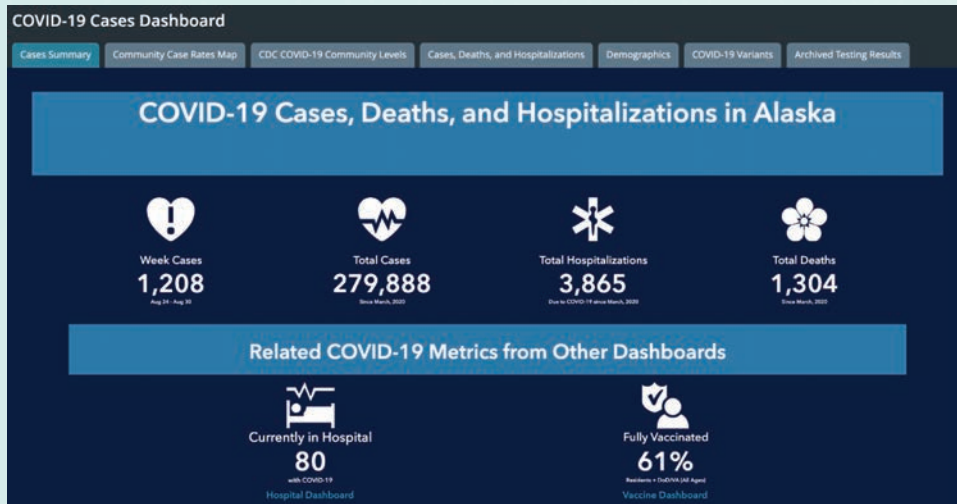


Image: Alaska COVID-19 Cases Dashboard. Sourced September 3, 2022

Food research, policy making, and related program development is often guided by “indicators”—or points of reference to determine the adequacy or performance of a food system sector. For this report and its suggestions, indicators “indicate” or point to a section of the food system for review. They are a way to categorize and label data that are then ready for analysis. The data is then compared over time and/or to local, state, federal, or global standards to evaluate status-quo and highlight areas for improvement.⁶ Indicators are widely used and categories and sub-categories vary greatly. They may be quantitative, qualitative, or both, depending on the research or project focus.

Dashboards often aggregate these indicators, from a variety of federal, state, and county agencies as well as other trusted sources. This information is then analyzed and presented in a manner that is easy to understand and use.

Food system dashboards can help users to do the following for a food system⁷:

- Describe
- Assess
- Prioritize
- Make Informed Decisions

As an example, a 2021 article in the journal *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems* detailed 7 food sovereignty indicators, with sub-measurements.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY INDICATORS

Indicator 1: Access to Resources

Sub-indicator question/statements used for discussion and to operationalize the indicator:

- The costs allow for small farms to develop and sustain food production in our community.
- Culturally significant wildlife is present in our community and protected from overuse.
- In our community water sources are kept pollution free and used for long-term agricultural production.
- In our community there is access to seeds for culturally significant crops that are easily accessible by local farmers.
- Individuals in our community have the knowledge and skills to grow crops and tend to wildlife.

Indicator 1 of 7 from Table 1, *Food Sovereignty Indicators for Indigenous Community Capacity Building and Health*.⁸

⁶ [Global Food Security Cluster. FSC Handbook. Accessed August 2022.](#)

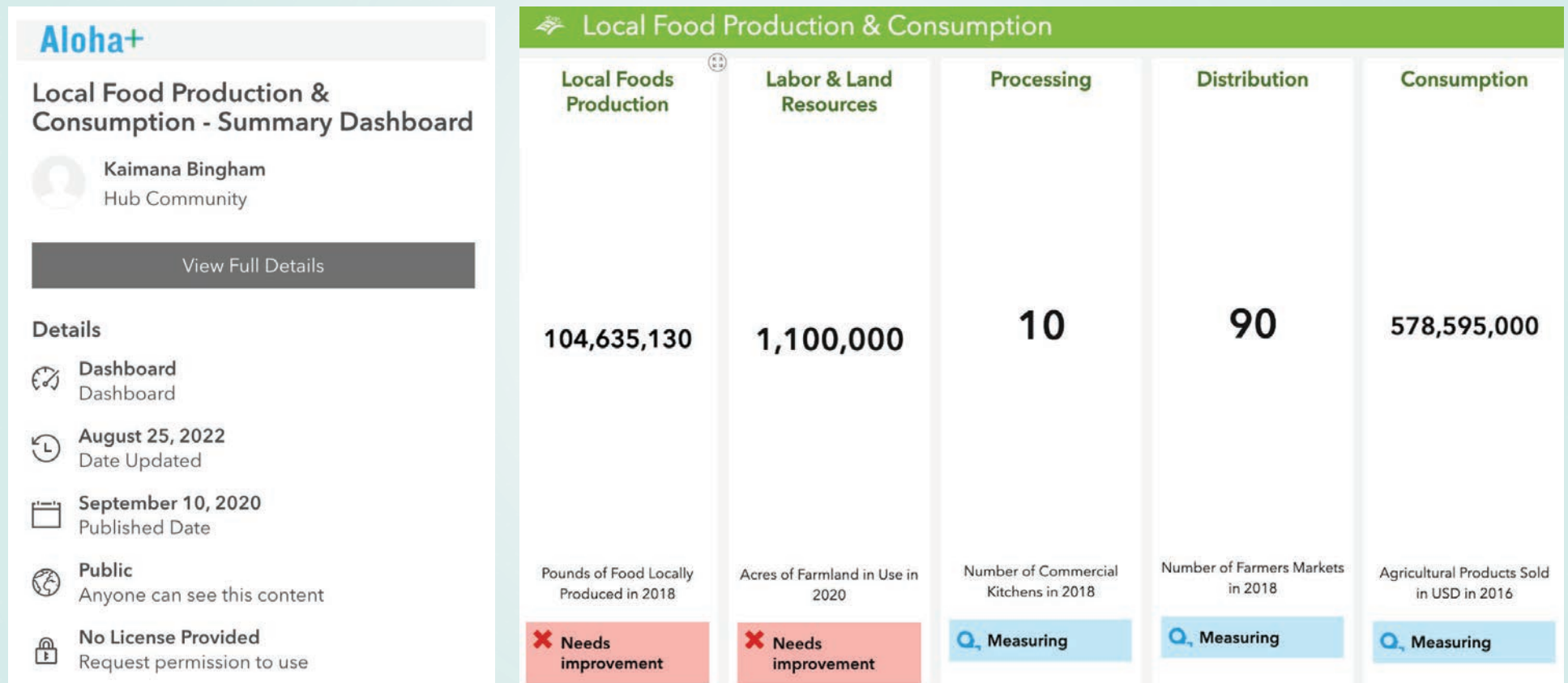
⁷ [Fanzo, J., Haddad, L., McLaren, R. et al. The Food Systems Dashboard is a new tool to inform better food policy. *Nat Food* 1, 243–246 \(2020\). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43016-020-0077-y>](#)

⁸ [Blue Bird Jernigan V, Maudrie TL, Nikolaus CJ, Benally T, Johnson S, Teague T, Mayes M, Jacob T and Taniguchi T \(2021\) Food Sovereignty Indicators for Indigenous Community Capacity Building and Health. *Front. Sustain. Food Syst.* 5:704750. doi: 10.3389/fsufs.2021.704750](#)

Another indicator dashboard example is from the Aloha + Challenge. Launched in 2014, the Aloha + Challenge is a statewide public-private commitment to achieve Hawai'i's social, economic, and environmental goals by 2030. This example shows progress on local food purchasing and consumption, with updates. Readers can easily see that local food production is under the goal amount and quickly see other updates on the additional indicators such as number of commercial kitchens present.

⁹ [Aloha+ Challenge Dashboard](#)

¹⁰ [Aloha+ Challenge Local Food Production & Consumption Summary](#)



Images: Aloha+ Challenge Local Food Production & Consumption Snapshot,^{9,10} Sourced August 31, 2022.

WHO SHOULD MANAGE INDICATORS AND WHERE SHOULD THEY LIVE?

Determining how to improve the food system requires a multi-sector approach, inclusive of voices from all corners of Alaska. However, while many hands make light work, the more entities engaged, the more coordination required. In Alaska agriculture alone at least 8 different state agencies oversee production. This makes it difficult to maintain consistency in information disseminated, messaging, and equitable access to available resources. Tracking food security should not be an “other duty as assigned” task for a state employee—rather an intentional and funded position, group, or division within a department to better insulate it from administrative transitions and potentially evolving interpretations of its necessity. Similarly, this is not a role for a nonprofit or for profit group—much like its responsibility for infrastructure and public health (both affect food security), the State should assume this responsibility as well.

To combat the silo-ing of efforts that is counter to a systematic approach and full prioritization of statewide food security, some states and counties have established their own versions of “offices of food security.” New Jersey’s Senate introduced Senate Bill 3945 in 2021 and eventually passed into law the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate.¹¹

“The (New Jersey) Office of the Food Security Advocate will coordinate the administration of the State’s food insecurity programs, advocate for the food insecure, and develop new policy initiatives to combat hunger and facilitate greater access to food relief programs.”¹²

State commitments such as this not only aid in reassuring residents that food security is an issue to be taken seriously, but also a signal of safety to potential transplant residents. This is especially critical to states diversifying their economies, like Alaska.

Regardless of the lead agency tasked with tracking food security, the information should be collected through a variety of channels. Ideally, and especially in the first few years if intentional measurement, much of the necessary data and collection methods already exist and do not require new infrastructure. This will not only reduce cost but allow for a clearer vision on what data collection exists, is consistently updated, and what needs to be developed.

¹¹ [New Jersey Legislature. Bill S3945 ScaAa \(2R\). Session 2020-21. Accessed September 2022.](#)

¹² [New Jersey Office of the Governor. Governor Murphy Announces Mark Dinglasan as Director of the Office of the Food Security Advocate. August 4, 2022.](#)

The following entities are a suggested starting point for data collection and food security management collaboration.

1. Alaska Agencies
 - a. Department of Fish and Game
 - b. Department of Natural Resources
 - i. Division of Agriculture
 - c. Department of Health
 - d. Department of Family and Community Services
 - e. Department of Labor and Workforce Development
 - f. Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development
 - g. Department of Environmental Conservation
 - i. Food Safety & Sanitation Program
 - Alaska Department of Military and Veteran Affairs
 - i. Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
2. Healthcare Organizations
 - a. Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
 - b. SouthCentral Foundation
 - c. Providence Health Network
 - d. Distributed health centers and hospitals
3. Nonprofits
 - a. Alaska Food Policy Council
 - b. Alaska Farmers Market Association
 - c. Alaska Farmland Trust
 - d. Alaska Farm Bureau
 - e. Food Bank of Alaska
 - f. Alaska Village Initiatives
 - g. Inuit Circumpolar Council Alaska
4. Community monitoring and citizen science groups
 - a. Alaska Local Environmental Observer (LEO) Network
 - b. Alaska Arctic Observatory & Knowledge Hub
 - c. Indigenous Sentinels Network

WHAT'S BEEN DONE?

Of the numerous food security briefs, reports, dashboards, and toolkits that have been published, the following examples stand out as potential models and guidance for Alaska for their relevance, origin stories, or comprehensiveness.

In 2012 University of Alaska Anchorage's Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER)¹⁶ published a food system assessment. This report summarized the food value chain, from production to waste, and highlighted the many opportunities for monitoring and evaluation of a variety of food system indicators. Included categories for indicators:

1. Production
2. Distribution
3. Food preparation and preservation or processing
4. Food use and consumption
5. Recycling and disposal of food wastes

Indicator criteria:

- The indicator data must be available for the state of Alaska as a whole, preferably for the past 10 years.
- The indicator data should be quantitative.
- The data must be from a reliable and credible source.
- The methodology for collection of the indicator data must be available and adhere to scientific standards.
- The data must be collected in a consistent manner over time.

In 2014 the Alaska Food Policy Council commissioned a comprehensive report on the State's food security status.¹⁷ This report includes a locally developed and thorough definition of food security, as well as suggestions for monitoring and evaluation indicators or "metrics of success." The following list is shared from the report to show the potential for different ways to present, categorize, and analyze food systems data, relative to the lists of indicators at the end of this report.

"IN THE CONTEXT THAT WE USE IT HERE, FOOD security describes more than merely whether sufficient food is being produced, or a one-size- fits-all food-nutrition relationship, and incorporates all of the various ways in which a food system supports health in its various biophysical, social, and ecological dimensions (*Loring & Gerlach, 2009*). These include matters such as the importance of certain foods, food choice, local perceptions of hunger, uncertainty and worry about food safety or shortages, and any other psychosocial, sociocultural, or environmental stresses that result from the process of putting food on the table (*S. Maxwell, 2001*). In rural, predominately Alaska Native communities, for example, wild fish and game are important for food security, not just because they are readily available, but also because they are important to the preservation and transmission of traditions and cultural practices, for the maintenance of social networks and interpersonal relationships, and for supporting individuals' sense of self-worth and identity (*Fienup-Riordan, 2000; Loring & Gerlach, 2009; Loring, Gerlach, & Harrison, 2013*)"

¹⁶ [2012 Food System Assessment. Khristy Parker, Irina Ikatova, Rosyland Frazier, Virgene Hanna. ISER Publication. 2012-09-01](#)

¹⁷ [Building Food Security in Alaska. Ken Meter and Megan Phillips Goldenberg. Crossroads Resource Center, Minneapolis, MN. July 28, 2014.](#)

Foster Subsistence Harvesting and Related Skills

- Number of wildlife co-management processes that expand the roles of Native leaders.
- Satisfaction of tribal and village officials with co-management processes.
- Number of participants in programs, events, and workshops that teach subsistence skills.

Build Personal Capacities in Agriculture

- Percent of high school graduates who hold documented skills in gardening, foraging, composting, safe handling, food preparation, and storage.
- Number, locations, and participant counts for local food-oriented celebrations.
- Number of new farmers who graduate from food production training programs with business plan and start-up capital in hand.
- Number of new farmer programs created or communities served by such programs.

Expand Agricultural Production and Gardening

- Percent of organic waste in Alaska cities that is recycled into compost or similar source of fertility.
- Percent of rural villages that have season-extension capacity suitable to produce food for local residents.

Build Infrastructure that Supports Local Food Production

- Number of food caches developed, diversity and quantity of food stored.
- Funds allocated by the State of Alaska to invest in local-foods infrastructure at the community level.

Adopt State Policy that Supports Local Food Production

- Number of new campaigns established to promote food, health, and locally grown foods.
- Dollars of private and public money raised to carry out these campaigns.
- Impacts of these campaigns.

Expand Food Processing and Manufacturing for In-state Markets

- In an annual survey of food-business startups, the percentage of respondents who believe that food-safety requirements are cost-effective, appropriate to the scale of their business, and transparent.
- Number of commercial kitchens open to resident use in urban Alaska; percentage of operating expenses that are covered through operational revenue.
- Value of foods that are processed in existing and new food businesses that are sold to Alaska household consumers.

- Percent of State food production/infrastructure loans that are repaid.

Strengthen Internal Food Distribution Networks

- Value of farm products that are delivered to in-state public institutions from Alaska farms (for each farm) by each market channel (direct, through wholesaler, or other intermediaries, processors, etc.).

In addition to these seminal reports, the Alaska Food Policy's list of community food assessments hosts no less than 18 community food reports, each with their own version and mention of indicators as well as metrics of evaluation.¹⁸ This is surely not an exhaustive list and it is likely that similar resources exist throughout the state, demonstrating communities' desires to both better understand their respective food systems and track change over time.

Examples abound for food-specific digital platforms that aggregate data sets, and present that data in a digestible and easy to consume format. The following 2 key examples are trusted resources that could guide the creation of Alaska's own food security dashboard.

FOOD ENVIRONMENT ATLAS

United State Division of Agriculture, Economic Research Service¹⁹

Supported and hosted by the USDA, Atlas users can create maps showing distribution or variation of a single indicator in multiple locations, such as prevalence of retail food outlets or participation in food assistance programs like SNAP. Data may be analyzed at the county or borough level. Maps are also exportable. Perhaps most relevant to Alaska, The Food Environment Atlas contains more than 280 variables, all downloadable.

The Atlas assembles statistics on three broad categories of food environment factors²⁰:

- **Food Choices**—Indicators of the community's access to and acquisition of healthy, affordable food, such as: access and proximity to a grocery store; number of food stores and restaurants; expenditures on fast foods; food and nutrition assistance program participation; food prices; food taxes; and availability of local foods.
- **Health and Well-Being**—Indicators of the community's success in maintaining healthy diets, such as: food insecurity; diabetes and obesity rates; and physical activity levels.
- **Community Characteristics**—Indicators of community characteristics that might influence the food environment, such as: demographic composition; income and poverty; population loss; metro-nonmetro status; natural amenities; and recreation and fitness centers.

¹⁸ Alaska Food Policy Council. Food Systems Research. Accessed June 2022.

¹⁹ USDA, ERS. Food Environment Atlas. Accessed August 2022. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-environment-atlas/>

²⁰ USDA, About the Food Atlas. Accessed September 2022.

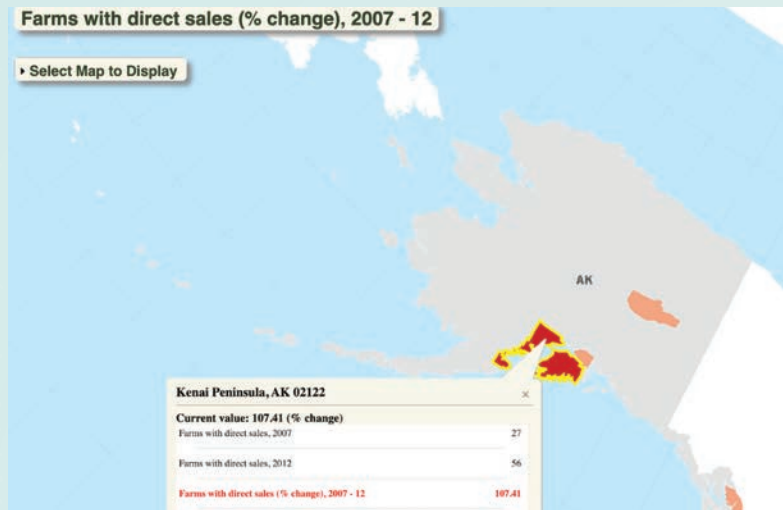


Image: Food Environment Atlas, filtered to show change in farm direct sales, 2007–2012.

THE FOOD SYSTEMS DASHBOARD

Johns Hopkins University and Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition.²¹

This dashboard was created to serve as a global tool, with over 150 indicators. In addition to indicator analysis, this site provides general food system education, such as a framework, different types of food systems, and many references for continued learning. Important for understanding how to change a food system, this dashboard also includes a primer on the components, external drivers and measurable outcomes of food systems.

After selecting a country, the user receives a scorecard, with red, yellow, green stoplight icons, indicating performance or challenging areas. Also included are a variety of charts detailing change over time, like supply of various commodities and agricultural employment.

The Dashboard guide recommends its use for the following groups:

- Policymakers at the country, regional, and global levels
- National statistical agency workers
- Policy analysts in government ministries
- United Nations and non-governmental organization development practitioners
- Civil society workers
- Business leaders and entrepreneurs
- Researchers, academics, and students

²¹ The Food Systems Dashboard. Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and Johns Hopkins University. 2020. Geneva, Switzerland. <https://www.foodsystemsdashboard.org>. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36072/db>.



Images: Scorecard and landing page for Food systems Dashboard. Sourced September 3, 2022.

FEEDING AMERICA'S HUNGER IN AMERICA DASHBOARD²²

This dashboard uses a tool called “Map the Meal Gap” and generates two types of community-level data:

1. Local food insecurity estimates among all individuals and children by income category.
2. Local food expenditure estimates among people who are food insecure and food secure.

Feeding America is transparent about data sourcing, provides a separate annual technical report about the tool, and offers readers the opportunity to request data sets.

Their methodology is explained on the tool site as well, and includes the following categories:

1. Food insecurity rates and numbers
2. Food budget shortfall (household)
3. Cost-of-food index
4. National average meal cost

²² [Feeding America. Hunger in America, Map the Meal Gap. Accessed August 31, 2022.](https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america-map-the-meal-gap)

What Hunger Looks Like in Alaska



Image: Feeding America: Alaska hunger snapshot. Sourced September 3, 2022

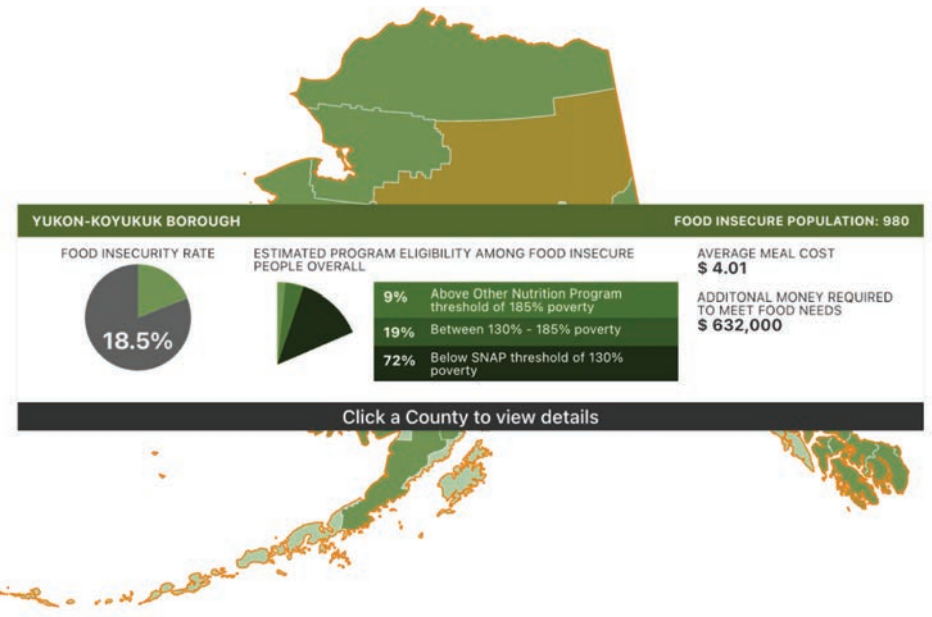


Image: Regional food insecurity snapshot from Feeding America Dashboard. Sourced September 3, 2022

SUGGESTED ALASKA FOOD SYSTEM INDICATORS

Please note that this list is strictly quantitative. Regular collection and analysis of qualitative data should also be prioritized and paired with the list below, to further uncover consumer behavior trends and community needs. Quantitative data is only a single lens on the state of a food system, i.e. *quantity* of calories does not equal the *quality* of calories. Furthermore, the list of indicators be regularly reviewed and communities should be solicited for feedback. More qualitative indicators such as reported “quality of life from access to culturally appropriate foods,” should be included and those indicators and manner of questioning or data collection should be co-created and co-managed with communities to further build trust, ensure accurate language is used, and promote long-term engagement.

The following Indicator categories and sub-categories were compiled using 3 key reports and may be measured at any level, from community to entire state. It is not exhaustive and should be updated as necessary. Given that funding is usually finite, should the State develop and manage a holistic food security metric and evaluation process, it will be critical to determine what is preferred, possible, useful, and reasonable for both data collection and dashboard presentation.

1. [Food System Assessment, Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Alaska Anchorage. September 1, 2012.](#)
2. [Building Food Security in Alaska. Ken Meter and Megan Phillips Goldenberg. Crossroads Resource Center, Minneapolis, MN. July 28, 2014.](#)
3. [Alaskan Inuit Food Security Conceptual Framework: How to Assess the Arctic from an Inuit Perspective. Inuit Circumpolar Council Alaska. May 2016.](#)
4. [Sitka Community Food Assessment Indicators Report. Sitka Local Foods Network. 2014.](#)

CULTURE & COMMUNITY

- Number of culture and fish camps
- Number of Traditional Foods learning opportunities
- Publications released about food and culture, including academic
- Number of community-based food projects launched, in process, completed

PRODUCTION

- Total acreage under cultivation relative to available acreage
- Types and quantities of crops/livestock being produced
- Livestock feed production and demand
- Number of new, return, and retired farmers
- Number of registered organic operations
- Live animal protein, processed, and in storage (lbs)
- Presence of garden, farm, and seasonal extension equipment, by community
- Acres designated as agricultural land
- Number of crop development studies, specific to northern climates

WILD HARVEST

- Number of State-Tribe and/or Federal-State-Tribe co-management agreements
- Presence of community monitoring entities
- Quantity and general locations of resource harvested (whale, caribou, berries, etc)

PROCESSING

- Number of commercially licensed kitchen space
- Number of meat processing facilities
- Average distance between farm and processing facility/storage
- Value of foods that are processed in facilities
- Number of value-add producers
- Number of value-added products

DISTRIBUTION

- Number of emergency food caches
- Number of farmers markets, farmstands, and food hubs
- Number of grocery stores, and scale of stores
- Number of Community Supported Agriculture and Fishery (CSA, CSF) programs
- Square footage of cold storage space, occupied and vacant
- Number of stockouts at retailers and wholesalers due to interrupted supply

CONSUMPTION

- State dollars spent on local purchase preference programs
- State dollars spent on Alaska Grown marketing
- Dollars spent at retail grocery
- Dollars spent on prepared meals consumed in or out of home
- Fair market nutrition replacement value of subsistence harvests
- Instances of foodborne illness and vectors
- Number of homes with 7-days food supply ready, for each human and animal

FOOD WASTE

- Number of communities with compost or waste to energy programs
- Energy output, if applicable
- Pounds of food waste recapture or opportunity for recapture

FOOD ACCESS

- Distribution analysis of average weekly cost of household food
- Number of food insecure Alaskans
- Number of Alaskans who qualify for SNAP/WIC/FDPIR/TEFAP/Other
- Number of Alaskans who receive SNAP/WIC/FDPIR/TEFAP/Other
- Food assistance benefits used at farmers markets (dollars)
- Number of free and reduced school meal participants, including summer
- Adult care meal program participants, including adult day care, senior centers, Meals on Wheels, etc.
- Pounds of food distributed through Food Bank of Alaska
- Number of clients served by the Food Bank of Alaska, community kitchens, and pantries

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION

- Number of food-related training programs
 - Track demographic information,
 - Track 1,3, 5-year post-graduation placement
- Food jobs, hiring rates, and vacancy rates
- Number of youth in Future Farmers of America and 4H
- Number of teachers using Agriculture in the Classroom curriculum
- K-12 food literacy programs
- Post-secondary food literacy programs
 - Include field work such as internships

POLICY

- Proposed and passed policies related to food
- Number of Legislative and Administrative meetings related to food

Appendix H

INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR COUNCIL (ICC) ALASKA

Alaska Inuit Food Security Conceptual Framework: How to access the Arctic from an Inuit Perspective

We encourage you to read it in its entirety here:

<https://iccalaska.org/wp-icc/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Food-Security-Summary-and-Recommendations-Report.pdf>



INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR COUNCIL-ALASKA
ALASKAN INUIT FOOD SECURITY CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:
HOW TO ASSESS THE ARCTIC FROM AN INUIT PERSPECTIVE
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT



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This report and associated materials can be downloaded for free at iccalaska.org.

Graphic design/layout by Northwest Strategies.

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