Food Systems Action Plan

2022 Alaska Food Policy and Beyond

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

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

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

PLEASE NOTE: THE “POTENTIAL PARTNERS” LIST IS NOT COMPREHENSIVE; THOSE LISTED SERVE TO PROVIDE EXAMPLES.
Alaska Food Security Action Plan

**Goal One**

*Improving Food System Literacy and Skills to Build Greater Capacity, Awareness, and Interest in Food Security*
- Youth food education
- Youth and Elder mentorship programs
- Preserving and (re)discovering traditional foods and foodways
- Harvest, production, processing, compost, and healthy consumption skills

**Goal Two**

*Build/Improve Food System Physical Infrastructure*
- Community commercial kitchens
- Food storage space
- Food processing/slaughtering facilities
- Community composting
- Food hubs
- Growing season extension options

**Goal Three**

*Promote Food Justice, Food Sovereignty, Greater Access, and Cultural Awareness of Foodways and Traditions*
- Preserving and expanding traditional knowledge and foodways
- Food justice and tribal outreach for Alaska Natives
- Food chain relationships
- Create stronger regional food systems networks
- Local food availability awareness
- Food waste recapture (seafood, gardening, animal processing, etc.)

**Goal Four**

*Provide Technical Expertise and Grant Opportunities to Increase Food System Capacity*
- Exploring Mariculture (sea lettuce, sea asparagus, kelp)
- Exploring kelp harvesting as livestock feed
- Regional website/resource library development
- Grant-writing workshops and funding resources

**Goal Five**

*Enhance, Improve, and Create New Markets and Food Production*
- Increase Viability of Local Agriculture
- Build relationships between food producers, institutions, distributors, and local restaurants and breweries
- Address Food Waste
Objective 1: INCREASE YOUTH FOOD LITERACY (FISH, FORAGE, HUNT, FARM, COOK, AND EAT)

STRATEGIES:
- Encourage food system literacy by adding relevant materials to school curriculum to prepare the next generation of farmers, fishers, harvesters, foragers, and informed eaters.
- Create a central clearing house that provides information regarding education/cooperative extension workshop opportunities.
- Fund high school agriculture programs, scale this model state-wide.
- Inform parent groups of existing resources for food systems education, cooking classes, nutrition, foraging, gardening, small-scale hydroponics. Increase awareness of funding for small-scale projects like these.
- Encourage USDA Farm to School grant applications.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:
- FFA, local school districts, Agriculture in the Classroom, 4H, Alaska Native culture camps.
- CES, AFB, Resiliency Commissions, Garden Clubs, Community Centers, Master gardeners, peer mentorship.
- High schools (ex. King Tech—Anchorage), Boards of education, FFA, 4H, Dept. of Labor, Community colleges, corporate partners for “food chain internships”.
- PTAs, sports and social club parents, Tribal culture camps, TCD, SWCD.
- Kodiak Area Native Association, Alaska Farm to School.

Objective 2: PROMOTE THE PRESERVATION AND (RE)DISCOVERING OF TRADITIONAL FOODS AND FOODWAYS

STRATEGIES:
- Support Elder-youth mentoring programs (hunting, fishing, foraging, farming).
- Support school-based programs (school gardens, cooking classes, FFA, etc.).
- Create seed saving classes, community seed libraries, and Alaska-based Seed Bank.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:
- Schools, Tribal entities, APIA.
- CES, museums, community centers, food banks and pantries, farmers markets.
- DNR Plant Materials Center, Tribal Conservation Districts, AVI, Cooperative Extension.

Objective 3: SUPPORT ADULT EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIES:
- Partner with University system for local research and education opportunities.
- Expand agricultural research center to satellite programs.
- Create or reintroduce degree programs (undergraduate and graduate) and non-degree community courses in food systems.
- Create buildable, scalable training programs (a “journeyman’s” type educational track), utilizing community specific 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.

Objective 4: CREATE AWARENESS ABOUT WHAT FOODS ARE AVAILABLE LOCALLY

STRATEGIES:
- Create buy-local campaigns.
- Fund “Chef at the Market” programs to demonstrate low cost recipes utilizing local ingredients.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:
- DNR, CES, AFB, AFMA, Buy Alaska, DHSS.
- DNR, CES, AFMA, Buy Alaska, farmers markets, food hubs, local food groups.
### 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 (siġluaqs) in villages as model
- Encourage space use to be maximized through off season partnerships
- Position disaster preparedness with food production, storage, and processing

**Potential Partners:**
- CES, SBDC, MEP, AFMA, Wallace Center
- UAF, CES, local and regional food networks, food banks, food hubs, city councils, farmer co-ops
- AFB, food hubs
- UAF Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station (AFES)
- Personal use and subsistence communities, farmers, including peony growers
- ACEFCS, food hubs

### Objective 3: CREATE ADDITIONAL FOOD PROCESSING AND SLAUGHTER FACILITIES

**Strategies:**
- Create plans and partnerships to house a USDA or state approved mobile animal slaughter in every borough
- Explore farmer cooperative models as a place where produce grown can be aggregated for wholesale or distribution at the community level
- Promote self organization among producers to negotiate contracts pre-season, ensuring a market for local products
- Provide facilitation for connecting local suppliers to local growers and fishers

**Potential Partners:**
- Local meat processors/ producers, AFB, SWCD, TCD
- AFB, food hubs, retail grocery stores
- Grower co-ops
- UAF

### Objective 4: ADDRESS FOOD WASTE

**Strategies:**
- Design/replicate community composting programs
- Coordinated and incentivized composting at the municipal- or borough-level composting programs

**Potential Partners:**
- Local and regional food networks, gardening clubs
- Cities/towns (ex. Municipal of Anchorage has a muni composting program) and borough assemblies

### Objective 5: DIVERSIFY PRODUCTION METHODS AND CROPS

**Strategies:**
- Invest and develop in vertically integrated farms, that do not rely on imported nutrients
- Diversify production approaches through hydroponics
- Continue support for mariculture industry capacity with further research for animal feed, including pets, and processing/storage, soil amendments for farming

**Potential Partners:**
- Alaska Seeds of Change
- Fairbanks SWCD, AVI, Alaska Seeds of Change
- AMA, DNR, ADFG, private industry

### Objective 6: CREATE BETTER-CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

**Strategies:**
- Increase broadband access

**Potential Partners:**
- AFN, Tribal Broadband, other telecom providers, Federak Tradé 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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies:</th>
<th>Potential Partners:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate Traditional Ecological Knowledge into all parts of the food system, from planning to implementation</td>
<td>IAC, APIA, ICC, AVI, AFN, ANTHC, Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program (UAF), TCD, AFN, Ketchikan Indian Community, Sustainable Southeast Partnership</td>
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<td>Tribal consultation on all projects that may affect Traditional hunting/gathering/fishing areas</td>
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<td>Co-management/Tribal management of lands and waters</td>
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<td>Employ culturally relevant methods and strategies for research, outreach, and collaboration</td>
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### Objective 2: SUPPORT FOOD JUSTICE FOR ALASKA NATIVES AND IMPROVE TRIBAL COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies:</th>
<th>Potential Partners:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protect subsistence rights</td>
<td>IAC, ICC, AVI, AFN, ANTHC, APIA, AFPC, TCD, SWCD, Ketchikan Indian Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support tribal food system development</td>
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<td>Support development of additional Tribal Conservation Districts</td>
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### Objective 3: SUPPORT IMMIGRANT FARMERS AND FOOD PROCESSORS

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<th>Strategies:</th>
<th>Potential Partners:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Create programs and outreach efforts to meet specific needs of these communities</td>
<td>ACLT (Grow North Farm), CSS Catholic Social Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide translation services and create materials in multiple languages</td>
<td>Alaska Institute for Justice—Language Interpreter Center, Alaska Native Language Center (UAF)</td>
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### Objective 4: SUPPORT STATEWIDE CONNECTION AND RELATIONSHIPS

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<th>Strategies:</th>
<th>Potential Partners:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Create programs and outreach efforts to meet specific needs of these communities</td>
<td>Anchorage Community Land Trust, Catholic Social Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create forums/ opportunities for statewide growers/ foragers/ fisheries to meet with each other</td>
<td>DNR, TCD, SWCD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support Farm to School + Farm to Institution through local food procurement purchasing preference</td>
<td>DNR, school districts, hospitals</td>
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<td>Create stronger regional food systems networks by expanding the Regional Food System Partnership project into the Alaska Food Network, developing goals and objectives collaboratively</td>
<td>AFPC, local and regional food network groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Better leverage existing community resources through creation of regional website/ resource library development, with dedicated funding to keep up to date</td>
<td>AFPC, CES, AVI</td>
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### Objective 5: INCREASE ACCESS TO LOCAL FOOD FOR ALL ALASKANS

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<th>Strategies:</th>
<th>Potential Partners:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Create SNAP, WIC, SFMNP double up programs at farmers markets, farmstands, food hubs, and CSAs</td>
<td>DHSS, FBA, AFMA, AFB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revise policy/permitting to allow for greater direct to consumer sales</td>
<td>DEC, AFPC, AFB, AFMA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create policies and resources that would aide commercial fishers to sell straight to consumers rather than shipping seafood to outside</td>
<td>ADFG, DEC, AFPC, regional economic development corps</td>
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## ACTION PLAN GOAL FOUR

**Provide Technical Expertise and Grant Opportunities to Increase Food System Capacity**

### Objective 1: PROVIDE FARMERS WITH ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES AND CONNECTIONS

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

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

### Objective 2: SUPPORT EMERGING MARICULTURE INDUSTRY

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

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:**
- UA system, DNR, MEP, AMA, AMCC, Economic Development Corporations

### Objective 3: ORGANIZE GRANT-WRITING WORKSHOPS & FUNDING RESOURCES

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

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:**
- AFPC, AFB, SWCD, TCD
- AFPC, AFB, Alaska Food Coalition
- AFPC, AFMA, AFB, FBA, Alaska Food Coalition

### Objective 4: SUPPORT FOOD ENTREPRENEURS

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

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS:**
- MEP, Spruceroot

## 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