

The New England State Food System Planners Partnership

"New England Feeding New England: Cultivating A Reliable Food Supply" Project

PHASE 1: JUNE 2020 - SEPTEMBER 2022

PROJECT GOAL: To expand and fortify the region's food supply and distribution systems to ensure the availability of adequate, affordable, socially and culturally appropriate products under a variety of rapidly changing climate, environmental, and public health conditions.

This project represents the region's best hope of averting the negative impacts of severe weather events and future pandemics on our food system and supporting large, economically viable markets for local and regional food. The Partnership will lead a collaborative regional planning process with appropriate state agencies, other state and regional public officials, industry leaders, and nonprofit stakeholders that will result in a more resilient New England food system where shorter supply chains and more local production have increased food security for all New England residents.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

Objective 1: Develop a regional 'asset map' of current planning projects, policy conversations, and best practices tangent to food systems (e.g., land use planning, emergency preparedness, economic development, public health, emergency feeding, climate change) as well as responses to COVID-19 induced supply chain disruptions. Explore how to integrate food security planning into these types of plans in a coordinated way. Create a 'process map' to guide implementation of the desired integration.

Objective 2: Develop and plan for a regional methodology and engagement process to identify and quantify food product category targets necessary to reach a collaboratively developed regional target (i.e., 35% of the food consumed by New Englanders is grown and harvested within New England by 2035). Build state-by-state targets and acceptance of proposed targets, along with a commitment to meeting conditions required to meet the targets (e.g., public and private investment in expanding production, investing in infrastructure, and increasing consumer demand).

Objective 3: Develop a list of known agricultural and food system practices that that can be deployed to improve soil health and improve water quality, reduce GHG emissions in the sector, increase the use of renewable energy and efficiency measures, rebuilds fisheries, etc., along with who are the regional 'experts' and/or are doing field research on these practices so that as the region begins to expand overall food production, it can be done in climate-friendly / climate-adaptive ways. If there are known gaps in knowledge to date, also develop this list.

Objective 4: Develop a regional decision making, coordination and communications process for working on state and regional implementation pathways, ensuring that they maximize diverse stakeholder engagement (e.g., consumers, farmers and food entrepreneurs, fishers, distributors, food service directors, grocery store owners, farmers market managers, state departments of agriculture, agriculture committees of state legislatures, urban ag advocates, BIPOC, etc.) and in state feedback loops that allow for quick adjustments to changing circumstances.

PHASE 1: ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

- Assets and challenges identified and trialed during COVID-19 are collected and used to inform future emergency management planning and to codify adaptation strategies and tools that worked for communities and businesses.
- Proposals are developed and advocacy is initiated for state and regional level policies, procedures, and plans which ensure New England can withstand global and national food supply chain disruptions through some amount of regionalized food security.
- State emergency management, traditional finance, and other key state and quasi-governmental agency personnel are introduced to the core concepts that regenerative agricultural practices and a more regionally centered food production / processing / storage / distribution system will create greater regional food security and resiliency.
- A methodology is established for setting minimum targets for production by food category that can be used by each state to determine their own targets, coordinate implementation by private, non-profit and governmental sector stakeholders and secure needed investments. At least two states have completed target setting.
- A new regional food narrative based in and connected to emergency preparedness planning and food security is established and used to leverage additional funding for The Partnership to continue its work.
- Relationships and operational systems are established between key organizations to support long-term planning and financial leveraging in order to achieve long term regional food security and resiliency.
- A multi-sectoral regional decision making, coordination and communications system is developed to coordinate a 15-year regional food system build-out.

PHASES 2 and 3: The scale and magnitude of this project – to regionally produce a significant portion of the region’s food needs – is at least a 15-year endeavor. PHASE 1 will lay the foundation for the implementation and build-out of the regional food supply to achieve 35% regional consumption of regionally produced food by 2035, while Phases 2 and 3 will involve greater levels of implementation and increased overall effort, especially by the private sector and business development support system.

Description of the Partnership

The Partnership works across the six states of New England: Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. The Partnership is composed of the leading NGOs responsible for developing their state’s food system plan and administering a statewide Network to implement and track their state plan, including:

- [Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund](#). VSJF, which serves as lead on this application, nurtures the sustainable development of Vermont’s economy thereby elevating the well-being of our people, communities, and the environment. VSJF was tasked by the Vermont Legislature in 2009, and reauthorized in 2019, to develop and administer the Vermont Farm to Plate Investment Program (known as [Vermont Farm to Plate](#)) to strengthen the state’s food system.
- [Maine Food Strategy](#). MFS is an initiative to create a broader and more strongly connected network of organizations and individuals contributing to the development of Maine’s food system. The initiative is working to advance statewide goals that support a robust and sustainable food economy in Maine.
- [New Hampshire Food Alliance](#). NHFA aims to influence and shape the future of our emerging local food economy to build a food system that works for all in New Hampshire: people, businesses, communities, and the environment.

- [Massachusetts Food Systems Collaborative](#). The goals of the MFSC are to promote, monitor, and facilitate implementation of the Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan, toward a sustainable, equitable, and resilient local food system.
- [Connecticut Food System Alliance](#). Our mission is to fight hunger and improve nutrition in our communities. The Alliance, sponsored by Hartford Food System, envisions a Connecticut where everyone has access to safe, nutritious, culturally appropriate, and affordable food; where the food supply chain supports many vibrant and varied businesses that provide sustainable livelihoods; and where stewardship of soil, water, air and energy resources is an integral part of a resilient and robust culture of food, health and community.
- [Rhode Island Food Policy Council](#). The mission of RIFPC is to promote an equitable, economically vibrant, and environmentally sustainable food system in the Ocean State. We align resources, advocate for good food policy, and implement high-impact projects. Our work is aligned with the Rhode Island food strategy, which was released by Governor Gina Raimondo in 2017.
- The Partnership works in close collaboration with the [Food Solutions New England](#).

NOTE: website for the Partnership is currently under development

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