

LOCAL PLANNING FOR FOOD ACCESS

A TOOLKIT FOR VERMONT'S COMMUNITIES

APPENDIX A: RESOURCES

There are many organizations, state departments, and individuals across Vermont, and the country, who can provide both encouragement and expertise. While there are many great resources online, we encourage you to reach out and contact the organizations working in your area directly.

This is not a comprehensive list. To recommend additional resources for inclusion, please email info@vsjf.org. This version was last updated in December 2019.

Resources are organized as follows:

Learning and Communicating about Food Access.....	2
Basics of Local Planning.....	2
Other Resources on Food Access Planning and Food System Planning.....	2
Examples of Food Access Plans and Food System Plans.....	3
Assessing Your Community's Needs.....	4
Making the Connection with Other Topics.....	4
Designing and Implementing Specific Strategies.....	5

Learning and Communicating about Food Access

Hunger Free Vermont works to end the injustice of hunger and malnutrition for all Vermonters: hungerfreevt.org. Their staff can provide in-person community education about hunger and its solutions. Their website has many helpful resources about hunger and food access, including:

- Statistics on Hunger in Vermont: hungerfreevt.org/hungerinvermont
- The 3SquaresVT Challenge (an activity to increase community understanding of hunger): hungerfreevt.org/3squaresvt-challenge

Vermont Foodbank is the state's largest hunger relief organization: vtfoodbank.org.

The Cost of Food Insecurity Calculator can estimate the increased societal burden from reduced health and lost productivity, or how much time and money a specific company is losing to food insecurity: costoffoodinsecurity.com.

The Grocery Gap: Who Has Access to Healthy Food and Why It Matters is a comprehensive summary of current knowledge around lack of access to healthy foods and the implications for communities: thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media_items/grocerygap.original.pdf.

Reframing Hunger in America presents research into how Americans think about hunger currently and how it can be discussed in a way that builds public support for food assistance and systemic solutions: frameworksinstitute.org/assets/files/hunger/APATTreframinghungermessagebrief2018.pdf.

Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap is a website full of useful data to explore about hunger and food insecurity in Vermont and America: map.feedingamerica.org.

The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) is a national anti-hunger organization with helpful information on different federal nutrition programs: frac.org.

Basics of Local Planning

Your local **Regional Planning Commission (RPC)** is the best place to start looking for resources or talking with a professional planner. If you don't already know your RPC, you can check out the Vermont Association of Planning Districts: vapda.org.

The **Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD)** provides a number of resources on planning and community development: accd.vermont.gov/community-development.

- Municipal Planning Grant program: accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/municipal-planning-grant.
- Municipal Planning Manual: accd.vermont.gov/community-development/town-future/municipal-planning-manual.

Other Resources on Food Access Planning and Food System Planning

The first part of this resource series, Sustaining Agriculture: Agriculture & Food System Planning is available on the **VT Farm to Plate Network** website: vtfarmtoplate.com/resources/collections/agricultural-land-use-planning-modules.

Growing Food Connections provides a wealth of information about food systems planning: growingfoodconnections.org.

- Growing Local: A Community Guide to Planning for Agriculture and Food Systems: growingfoodconnections.org/tools-resources/community-guide.
- Webinars and training courses, including “The Food Systems Planning Process,” “Planning and Policy Techniques to Support Food Systems Planning,” and “Assessment Tools and Metrics”: growingfoodconnections.org/planning-policy/webinars-training-courses.

The Healthy Food Policy Project provides information on drafting local ordinances to strengthen healthy food access, and includes a database of examples from across the country: healthyfoodpolicyproject.org.

Good Laws, Good Food: Putting Local Food Policy to Work for Our Communities provides additional information on the legal aspects of local food policies: chlpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/good-food-good-laws-toolkit-10.23.2017.pdf.

The Vermont Natural Resources Council Community Planning Toolbox includes a section on Healthy Eating and Food Security: vnrc.org/resources/community-planning-toolbox/issues/healthy-eating-and-food-security/.

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a variety of resources:

- Local Food, Local Places: A Guide to Help Communities Revitalize Using Local Food Systems: epa.gov/smartgrowth/local-foods-local-places-toolkit.
- Technical assistance for municipalities is periodically available (on a competitive basis) through the Local Foods, Local Places Program: epa.gov/smartgrowth/local-foods-local-places#apply.

The **American Planning Association** PLAN4Health project report on Food Systems includes tips learned from examples around the country: plan4health.us/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Toolkit-Plan4Health-Food-Systems.pdf.

Harvesting Opportunity: The Power of Regional Food System Investments to Transform Communities includes chapters on “The Importance of Inclusion in Local & Regional System Efforts,” “Advancing Food Equity through Local and Regional Food Systems,” and “Local & Regional Food Systems Driving Rural Economic Development,” as well as additional related topics: stlouisfed.org/community-development/publications/harvesting-opportunity.

The 2019 paper Equitable Food-Oriented Development describes the titular “development strategy that uses food and agriculture to create economic opportunities, healthy communities, and explicitly seeks to build community assets, pride, and power by and with historically-marginalized communities”: [https://www.efod.org/uploads/1/2/6/1/126113221/efod_white_paper_updated_11_2019 .pdf](https://www.efod.org/uploads/1/2/6/1/126113221/efod_white_paper_updated_11_2019.pdf).

Food Access Planning Guide is a helpful resource out of Minnesota that includes ideas and sample language applicable in Vermont as well: mnfoodcharter.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/FAPG_PlanGuide.pdf.

Hunger Relief in Local Planning: Plan Goals and Actions is also out of Minnesota and has many implementation actions relevant to Vermont: publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/PHLC_Hunger_Relief_2018.pdf.

Examples of Food Access Plans and Food System Plans

Vermont

Northeast Kingdom Food System Plan: nvda.net/files/Final.Online.pdf.

Bennington County Food System Action Plan: <http://www.bcrcvt.org/uploads/1/1/1/8/111899771/benn.countyfoodsystemactionplan2014.pdf>.

Developing a Cohesive Urban Agriculture Policy for Burlington, VT: <https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1760&context=graddis>.

Elsewhere

Shelburne Falls, MA, Food Security Plan: issuu.com/conwaydesign/docs/foodsecurity.

Unity, ME, Local Food, Local Places Action Plan: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/UnityMaineLFLPActionPlanFinal.pdf>.

- See also a collection of every Local Foods, Local Places community action plan (through 2017): <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/local-regional/food-sector/lflp-cap>.

Growing Food Connections provides:

- Stories of Innovation: growingfoodconnections.org/publications/briefs/exploring-stories-of-innovation

- Policy Database (which includes local plans): growingfoodconnections.org/tools-resources/policy-database

Assessing Your Community's Needs

Guides

The **Community Food Security Coalition** published What's Cooking in Your Food System? A Guide to Community Food Assessment, which they describe as “a collaborative and participatory process that systematically examines a broad range of community food issues and assets, so as to inform change actions to make the community more food secure”: issuelab.org/resource/what-s-cooking-in-your-food-system-a-guide-to-community-food-assessment.

Whole Measures for Community Food Systems: Values-Based Planning and Evaluation, also from the **Community Food Security Coalition**, provides detailed descriptions and tools for evaluating six values-based food system categories: foodsecurity.org/pub/WholeMeasuresCFS-web.pdf.

The **US Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service** has published a Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit: ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=43179.

The **US Department of Agriculture (USDA)** has also developed The Economics of Local Food Systems: A Toolkit to Guide Community Discussions, Assessments, and Choices: ams.usda.gov/publications/content/economics-local-food-systems-toolkit-guide-community-discussions-assessments.

The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** has developed a toolkit called Healthier Food Retail: Beginning the Assessment Process in Your State or Community, which provides detailed information specific to assessing the food retail environment: cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/HFRassessment.pdf.

Data Sources

The **Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI)** has geospatial data and imagery for download, as well as an interactive online mapping tool: vcgi.vermont.gov.

The Vermont Planning Atlas is an online tool that allows users to view municipal level data such as downtowns, village centers, planning and zoning status, E-911 sites, natural resource constraints, and more: maps.vermont.gov/ACCD/PlanningAtlas/index.html?viewer=PlanningAtlas.

The **Vermont Department of Health** has useful tools and data available:

- Public health data: healthvermont.gov/stats/data.
- Health Impact Assessments, used to project the public health outcomes of proposed projects and policies: healthvermont.gov/about/reports/health-impact-assessments.

County Health Rankings is a national assessment system that measures a variety of health factors and outcomes at the county level: countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings.

Vermont 2-1-1 is a tool to learn about programs and services that already exist in your community: vermont211.org.

Examples

Central VT Food System Assessment: centralvtplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/CVRPC-Regional-Food-System-Assessment.pdf.

Making the Connection with Other Topics

Economic Development

The **Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development**: accd.vermont.gov; especially the **Department of Housing and Community Development**.

Growing Food Connections' Community Food Systems and Economic Development Brief: growingfoodconnections.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/11/GFCPlanningPolicyBriefEconomicDevelopment_2017Sept.pdf.

Health and Wellness

The Vermont Department of Health (VDH): healthvermont.gov. Find your local office at healthvermont.gov/local.

RiseVT, a statewide organization that works with municipalities, schools, etc to provide opportunities to “make the healthy choice the easy choice”: risevt.org.

VDH's Community Design Resource from 2013, Guide to Active Living & Healthy Eating: healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2016/11/active_living_healthy_eating_community_design_resource.pdf.

VDH's 3-4-50 Campaign: healthvermont.gov/3-4-50.

The Impact of Poverty, Food Insecurity, and Poor Nutrition on Health and Well-Being, written by **FRAC**: frac.org/wp-content/uploads/hunger-health-impact-poverty-food-insecurity-health-well-being.pdf.

Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission and **Mt. Ascutney Prevention Partnership** created a Template for a Health Chapter in a Town Plan (and collected related resources): trorc.org/health.

Lamoille County Planning Commission and the **VDH Morrisville District Office** created a Primer on Planning for Prevention: healthylamoillevalley.org/wp-content/uploads/Planning-for-prevention-Final.pdf.

Housing

Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) guide Integrating Food Access and Affordable Housing: vhcb.org/pdfs/training/

[Integrating-Food-Access-and-Affordable-Housing.pdf](#).

A 2013 special edition of the Rural Voices publication focused on Hunger and Housing in Rural America: Intersecting Challenges and Solutions: ruralhome.org/sct-information/rural-voices/691-rvsummer2013.

Transportation

The Vermont Agency of Transportation: vtrans.vermont.gov;

- especially the Public Transit Policy Plan: vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/PTPP.
- **Go! Vermont** provides information to help you find your local transportation providers: connectingcommuters.org.

The Urban and Environmental Policy Institute Center for Food and Justice in 2002 published a brief on Transportation and Food: The Importance of Access: eatbettermovemore.org/sa/pdf/transportation_and_food.pdf.

Designing and Implementing Specific Strategies

There are many potential strategies your community could choose to adopt, and many ways of implementing each of them, so this list is not comprehensive -- whatever approach you choose, a good first step is searching for organizations that can help and resources that can provide guidance. However, as a starting point, the following are some resources with more detailed information on implementing the strategies that have been used as examples throughout this toolkit.

Drafting policies

The Healthy Food Policy Project maintains:

- A list of resources on drafting specific types of policies: healthyfoodpolicyproject.org/drafting-definitions/local-resources.
- Tips and a database of examples for defining common food access terms: healthyfoodpolicyproject.org/drafting-definitions.

State and Federal Advocacy

Hunger Free Vermont's current priorities: hungerfreevt.org/state-federal-advocacy.

The **Food Resource Action Center's** report on strategies they find essential to ending hunger in America: frac.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/plan-to-end-hunger-in-america.pdf.

Food Policy Councils and Other Collaborations

Vermont's existing **Hunger Councils**: hungerfreevt.org/hunger-councils

Food Policy Councils: Food System Planning Briefing Paper: ucanr.edu/sites/MarinFoodPolicyCouncil/files/178441.pdf.

Food Policy Councils: Lessons Learned: foodsecurity.org/pub/Food_Policy_Councils_Report.pdf.

Using Food Policy Councils to Address Rural Food Issues: extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/EC/EC-795-W.pdf.

Drafting a Resolution to Create a Food Council: publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/Drafting%20a%20Resolution%20to%20Create%20a%20Food%20Council.pdf.

Food Shelves and Other Food Assistance Programs

The **Vermont Foodbank** coordinates a statewide network of 215 food shelves, meal sites, senior centers, and after-school programs, as well as running several programs of their own: vtfoodbank.org.

Resources for implementing nutrition programs, including improving school meals, starting and running summer meal programs and afterschool meal programs, and hosting **Hunger Free Vermont's** nutrition education series, the Learning Kitchen: hungerfreevt.org/resource-hubs.

Resources for health professionals: hungerfreevt.org/education-for-health-professionals.

The **Farm to Plate Network Health Cross-Cutting Team's** Vermont Food and Health Program Inventory: vtfarmtoplate.com/resources/vermont-food-and-health-program-inventory.

Combating Food Insecurity: Tools for Helping Older Adults Access SNAP: frac.org/wp-content/uploads/senior_snap_toolkit_aarp_frac.pdf.

Best Practices of Improving Access to SNAP for People with Disabilities: frac.org/wp-content/uploads/best-practice-improving-snap-access-people-with-disabilities.pdf.

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont's Community Food Access programs, including subsidized CSA farm shares, doubling of 3SquaresVT benefits at farmers markets, and additional information on spending 3SquaresVT benefits with local producers: nofavt.org/programs/community-food-access.

Food and Nutrition Workshops

The **Vermont Farm to School Network**: vermontfarmtoschool.org.

Resources for implementing nutrition programs, including hosting **Hunger Free Vermont's** nutrition education series, the Learning Kitchen: hungerfreevt.org/resource-hubs.

UVM Extension Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program: uvm.edu/extension/efnep.

The **Vermont Community Garden Network (VCGN)**: vcgn.org.

Good Food, Good Medicine program in Barre: facebook.com/FoodJusticeforAll.

School Meals

The **Vermont Farm to School Network**: vermontfarmtoschool.org.

VT Agency of Education nutrition resources: education.vermont.gov/student-support/nutrition.

Resources for implementing nutrition programs, including improving school meals, starting and running summer meal programs and afterschool meal programs, and hosting **Hunger Free Vermont**'s nutrition education series, the Learning Kitchen: hungerfreevt.org/resource-hubs.

Universal School Meals model: hungerfreevt.org/universal-free-school-meals-resources.

Policy brief on Local, Healthy Food Procurement Policies: bap-home.net/gfc/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/11/FINAL_GFCFoodProcurementPoliciesBrief-1.pdf.

Best Practices for Preventing or Reducing School Meal Debt: frac.org/wp-content/uploads/best-practices-preventing-reducing-school-meal-debt.pdf.

Best Practices for Conducting Outreach to Expand the Afterschool Meal Program: frac.org/wp-content/uploads/best-practice-conducting-outreach-afterschool-meal-program.pdf.

Best Practices for Using Umbrella Sponsors to Expand the Afterschool Meal Program: frac.org/wp-content/uploads/best-practice-umbrella-sponsors-afterschool-meal-program.pdf.

Fresh from the Farm: Using Local Foods in the Afterschool and Summer Nutrition Programs: frac.org/wp-content/uploads/produceguide.pdf.

Community Gardens

The **Vermont Community Garden Network (VCGN)**: vcgn.org.

VCGN's Edible Landscaping and Community Gardening Toolkit: vcgn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/VCGN-VEL-HousingToolkit-Web-1.pdf.

CDC's Healthy Places, Community Gardens, containing case studies and resources: cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/healthyfood/community.htm.

Local Government Commission's resource on Cultivating Community Gardens: lgc.org/community-gardens.

Dig, Eat, & Be Healthy: A Guide to Growing Food on Public Property: changelabsolutions.org/product/dig-eat-be-healthy.

Community Gardening Policy Reference Guide: publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/Community-Gardening-Guide-2017.pdf.

Establishing Land Use Protections for Community Gardens: vnrc.org/wp-content/uploads/typo3/Publications/Establishing_Land_Use_Protections_for_Community_Gardens.pdf.

Edible Landscaping in Public Spaces

The **Vermont Community Garden Network (VCGN)**: vcgn.org.

VCGN's Edible Landscaping and Community Gardening Toolkit: vcgn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/VCGN-VEL-HousingToolkit-Web-1.pdf.

Dig, Eat, & Be Healthy: A Guide to Growing Food on Public Property: changelabsolutions.org/product/dig-eat-be-healthy.

Farmers Markets

Vermont Farmers Market Association: vtfma.org.

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets: agriculture.vermont.gov.

The **Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)** and their Farmers Market Resources collection: nofavt.org/programs/farm-consumer-0/farmers-markets/farmers-market-resources.

The Farmers Market Legal Toolkit from **Vermont Law School**: farmersmarketlegaltoolkit.org.

Growing Food Connections' policy brief on Incentivizing the Sale of Healthy and Local Food, including incentive programs for farmers markets and regulatory incentives for direct retail of local food: bap-home.net/gfc/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/11/GFCHealthyFoodIncentivesPlanningPolicyBrief_2016Feb-1.pdf.

Real Food, Real Choice: Connecting SNAP Recipients with Farmers Markets: foodsecurity.org/pubs/RealFoodRealChoice_SNAPFarmersMarkets.

New Food Retailers

Growing Food Connections' policy brief on Incentivizing the Sale of Healthy and Local Food: bap-home.net/gfc/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/11/GFCHealthyFoodIncentivesPlanningPolicyBrief_2016Feb-1.pdf.

Health on the Shelf: A Guide to Healthy Small Food Retailer Certification Programs: changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Health_on_the_Shelf_FINAL_20130322-web.pdf.

Licensing for Lettuce: A Guide to the Model Licensing Ordinance for Healthy Food Retailers: changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Licensing_for_Lettuce_FINAL_20130212_0.pdf. Includes examples of incentives for retailers to stock more/better healthy food.

NOFA-VT case studies on rural enterprises: nofavt.org/resources/rural-enterprises-information.

Urban Agriculture and Backyard Livestock

Growing Food Connections' policy brief on Incentivizing the Sale of Healthy and Local Food, including land-use regulations and using public lands: bap-home.net/gfc/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/11/GFCHealthyFoodIncentivesPlanningPolicyBrief_2016Feb-1.pdf.

Dig, Eat, & Be Healthy: A Guide to Growing Food on Public Property: changelabsolutions.org/product/dig-eat-be-healthy.

Seeding the City: Land Use Policies to Promote Urban Agriculture: [changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Urban_Ag_SeedingTheCity_FINAL_\(CLS_20120530\)_20111021_0.pdf](http://changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Urban_Ag_SeedingTheCity_FINAL_(CLS_20120530)_20111021_0.pdf).

Working Farms and Direct-To-Consumer Sales

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)'s Community Food Access programs, including subsidized CSA farm shares, doubling of 3SquaresVT benefits at farmers markets, and additional information on spending 3SquaresVT benefits with local producers: nofavt.org/programs/community-food-access.

The **Farm to Plate (F2P) Network**'s Sustaining Agriculture series discusses land use planning to support local food production: vtfarmtoplate.com/features/sustaining-agriculture-land-use-planning-modules. The F2P website also provides information on other priorities for strengthening Vermont's food system: vtfarmtoplate.com.

Growing Food Connections' policy brief on Incentivizing the Sale of Healthy and Local Food, including incentive programs for community supported agriculture and regulatory incentives for direct retail of local food: bap-home.net/gfc/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/11/GFCHealthyFoodIncentivesPlanningPolicyBrief_2016Feb-1.pdf.

Growing Food Connections' policy brief on Community Food Production, including incentives for increasing community food production, supporting new farmer training and development, and other practices to create a "farm friendly environment": bap-home.net/gfc/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/11/GFCFoodProductionPlanningPolicyBrief_2017August29.pdf.

Food and Agriculture Related Policies and Practices to Benefit Limited Resource Farmers: foodsecurity.org/LRPreport.pdf.

Food Hubs

“Put Your Own Mask On Before Helping Someone Else”: The Capacity of Food Hubs to Build Equitable Food Access concludes that “food hubs attempting to reduce food access inequities may need to be subsidized as a public good,” but provides a thorough exploration of different food access activities undertaken by food hubs, and strategies to scale up food hubs’ efforts to address low-income food access: foodsystmsjournal.org/index.php/fsj/article/view/650.

Food Hubs from the **Rural Health Information Hub** focuses on the role of food hubs to help smaller (rural) retailers access local produce: ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/food-access/2/production-processing-distribution-models/food-hubs.

The **National Good Food Network** maintains many resources, and a discussion group, in its Food Hub Center: ngfn.org/resources/food-hubs.

Food Recovery and Gleaning

The **Vermont Gleaning Collective**: vermontgleaningcollective.org.

The **Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Department of Environmental Conservation** has resources on incorporating food recovery into your waste management efforts: dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/materials-mgmt/food-donation, including an interactive map that indicates food shelves that can accept donations: anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/Organics/default.html.