



Community Stakeholder Outreach Report

“Food Security in Vermont: Roadmap to 2035”

Prepared for the Vermont Department of Health
by Vermont Farm to Plate



Background

This report details the community outreach process that largely informed the goals and strategies included in the “Food Security in Vermont: Roadmap to 2035”. The Vermont Department of Health (VDH) was the initial funder of the Roadmap. Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund’s Farm to Plate Program issued this report to the VDH in April 2023 in order to outline the process and approach for including critical community feedback.

Building on the success of the 2010-2020 Farm to Plate Strategic Plan, the Vermont State Legislature reauthorized the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF) to create the Vermont Agriculture and Food System Strategic Plan 2021-2030. The new Plan contains a vision for Vermont’s food system in 2030, 15 strategic goals with 87 objectives, and 34 priority strategies (recommendations for action). Priority strategy 24 calls for the development of “a Vermont food security plan, centered around a thriving food system and inspired by community-based responses to food insecurity and disruptive events.”

Vermont Department of Health (VDH) is providing funding to VSJF to develop the Vermont Food Security Plan, as a component of the VDH COVID Health Disparities project. The overall goal of the COVID Health Disparities project is to prevent and control COVID-19 among populations at higher risk and that are underserved by: expanding services, increasing data collection, expanding infrastructure, and mobilizing partners to advance health equity and address the social determinates of health. For the purposes of the Vermont Food Security Plan, these populations are Vermonters who are Black, Indigenous and People of Color, individuals identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer, people with disabilities, people living in poverty, and people living in rural areas. These populations are referred to as ‘priority populations’ within this report. VDH and VSJF intended to establish and facilitate focus groups and/or conduct interviews with Vermont residents, especially those from priority populations, in order to understand the barriers Vermonters face related to food security. This report details the community stakeholder outreach focus groups and interviews questions, methods, and participant numbers, as well as demographic information provided by participants.

Summary of the Community Stakeholder Outreach Process and Results in 2022

VSJF launched the Food Security Plan process in Fall 2021 and hired a Project Manager to serve as Farm to Plate staff for the Network Food Security Plan Priority Strategy Team (FSPST), which oversees the Plan creation. Early FSPST conversations identified significant, meaningful statewide stakeholder engagement as a priority in developing a Vermont Food Security Plan, and 2022 activities focused on creating and enacting the community stakeholder outreach process.

The FSPST’s food security framework is the United Nations definition of food security:

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. The four pillars of food security are availability, access, utilization and stability.

Any issue impacting food availability, access, utilization, and stability is related to this project.

The FSPST engaged Action Circles, a consulting firm with grassroots organizing expertise, to advise on the design of inclusive community stakeholder outreach. VSJF also contracted with Dr. Pablo Bose, to provide expertise and facilitate necessary research. Bose is a migration studies scholar at UVM whose expertise is in transportation, food security, and migration. The FSPST discussed outreach methods and ways to reach priority populations. Based on expertise among Action Circles, Bose, and FSPST members, the determination was to use existing trusted relationships across Vermont to engage with people in priority populations. The intention was to avoid burdening people with new requests for time, energy, and trust. This decision generated a decentralized engagement process leveraging existing relationships and allowed people to opt in to participate in the process where they were interested and able.

Starting in late 2021, Farm to Plate Members and others developed the planning and stakeholder outreach processes. Planning took place through full group discussions and three smaller topical groups: a Process Team which met throughout 2022, a Research Team which met several times in the spring, and a Stakeholder Outreach group which met twice in the spring.

Community Stakeholder Outreach Phase 1 took place May-July 2022. FSPST members and others conducted interviews and focus groups with people working on food security, using consistent interview tools and scripts. A total of 82 individuals representing 61 organizations took part in Phase 1. Phase 1 interview data was then used to design two in-person FSPST meetings in summer 2022. Meeting attendees read and discussed Phase 1 data, followed by drafting the Vision and Principles for the Food Security Plan. A total of 35 individuals representing 28 organizations participated across two meetings.

Community Stakeholder Outreach Phase 2 spanned September 2022 to the end of the year, and consisted of interviews and focus groups with people impacted by barriers to food security. FSPST members and others acting as interviewers and facilitators used consistent tools and scripts, and an online survey was deployed. Approximately 480 individuals participated in Phase 2 outreach. Dr. Bose reviewed the Phase 2 data, coded it for themes, and presented results to Farm to Plate staff in February 2023.

Bose undertook an in-depth study of transportation barriers to food access in 2022. The research included a literature review, interviews with 40 key informants and 48 impacted individuals regarding transportation barriers to food access. This was followed by a convening with transportation experts to review the findings. Bose produced two reports based on his work.

It is important to note that the outreach was not designed for statistical significance or quantitative analysis. It is not known to what extent the numbers provided below include individuals who participated in multiple outreach conversations. Demographic information was not collected from all participants. Where demographic information was collected, the questions asked about priority population identity (whether individuals identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, people with disabilities, people living in poverty, and/or people living in rural areas). In some cases, 'rural' identity is indicated by the town of residence.

Community Stakeholder Outreach Phase 1: Details

Throughout June and early July 2022, FSPST members and others conducted interviews designed to gather existing knowledge, information, data, and research about food security in Vermont. Interviewers were provided a 'toolkit' and instructed, "For this phase, we are contacting organizations, groups, or individuals who are working on issues related to food security." Interviewers coordinated outreach using a shared list of potential interviewees, and transcribed their conversations into an online form connected to a spreadsheet. Interviews were with individuals or small groups of no more than four people. Interviewees also 'interviewed' themselves in order to capture information about their own organizational efforts.

Phase 1 tools included instructions, scripts, and response forms for one-on-one or small group conversations. A total of 82 individuals representing 61 organizations took part in Phase 1. Of these individuals, 35 initiated interviews with colleagues, or 'interviewed themselves' to collect data about their own organization. We did not collect priority population information from individuals during Phase 1.

Phase 1 Interview Questions

"Can you briefly describe the work your organization does that relates to food security?"

"What strategies or projects have been most successful in your work related to food security?"

"Do you/does your organization have any data or information related to food security that should be part of this plan?"

"What would be different if everyone had food security in Vermont?"

"What should we pay the most attention to as we create a Vermont food security action plan?"

"Do you already have feedback on food security barriers from your constituents, which we could include in the planning process? Could we potentially engage with your constituents as part of this process?"

"Is there anyone else at your organization, or an organization that you partner with, that we should speak with? Are there events between now and the end of the year that we should attend or times when people are coming together that might be a great way to have a good conversation on this topic?"

Priority Strategy Team Summer Meetings: Details

Phase 1 of community stakeholder outreach ended in early July. Two in-person meetings were held in Barre on July 27 and August 3. Meetings were attended by a total of 35 people representing 28 organizations. Facilitated conversations and activities led participants through digesting Phase 1 stakeholder input and then drafting shared principles for the food security planning process and a vision for a food secure Vermont. The Phase 1 input, draft vision and draft principles then formed the basis of Phase 2 outreach. Meeting participants were not asked about priority population identity.

Community Stakeholder Outreach Phase 2: Details

Phase 2 outreach focused on community members in priority populations, starting in September 2022 and ending in December 2022. People conducting Phase 2 outreach were instructed as follows:

The priority in this community outreach is to hear from people most impacted by the failures of the food system. This includes a lot of different ‘types’ of people. It includes people with food insecurity in their household now or in the past. It includes people at high risk for food insecurity because of their race, economic status, gender or sexual identity, immigration, disability or housing status, or other reason, even if they have never been food insecure themselves. Food producers such as farmers, food workers, and more are also a priority. In Vermont, people are more likely to experience food insecurity if they are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, living with a disability, living in poverty, living in rural areas of Vermont, elders, and/or LGBTQIA+. It is also important that “official” subject experts contribute to the Plan. However, the focus of this fall community outreach is people whose expertise is less often part of a statewide plan. The process has already included many subject experts and will continue to do so. All that said, please talk with the people you know should be part of the Plan. Your knowledge is valuable.

Three virtual trainings were offered in September to orient people to the toolkit. Phase 2 tools included instructions, scripts, and forms for facilitating a 90-minute in-person meeting (this option was not utilized), facilitating a 30-minute virtual focus group (on Zoom, Google Meets or other), one-to-one interview; an online survey. Priority population identity was collected, albeit with a variety of methods which are detailed below.

One-on-One interview questions:

“What do you think are the most important things that can be done in Vermont to make sure everyone has access to healthy, affordable food?”

“Is there anything else you want to say about food security in Vermont?”

The one-on-one interview script included the following prompt for the interviewer: “Do any of the following apply to this individual? (For privacy purposes, please do not ask the individual regarding the following. Please check the boxes that apply using your existing knowledge - if any - of the following categories and the individual.)” The interviewer could then indicate any existing knowledge or observation of priority population identity.

Virtual Focus Group Meeting questions:

“When you think about achieving our goal of making sure that everyone has the food they need and want, what is happening now that needs to happen more?”

“When you think about achieving our goal of making sure that everyone has the food they need and want, what is happening now that needs to stop?”

“When you think of achieving our goal of making sure that everyone has the food they need and want, what is not happening now, that needs to start?”

“What else do you want people to think about as they are writing this Food Security Action Plan?”

During the focus group, the facilitator told participants that they were not taking attendance, but invited them to fill out a Google Form which would capture the fact of their attendance, allow them to receive a meeting stipend, and allow them to indicate any priority population affiliation. The Form included an optional question: “Some people in Vermont are more at risk for food insecurity and we want to be sure to get their feedback. Please check all that apply to you, below. Leave blank if you

prefer not to answer.” The answer choices included: I live in a rural place, I live in poverty, I identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, Person of Color), I have a disability, I identify as LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer).

Online Survey Questions:

“What do you think are the most important things to do in Vermont to make sure everyone has access to healthy, affordable food without worry?”

“Is there anything else you want to say about food security in Vermont?”

The survey included an optional question: “In Vermont, some groups of people are more likely to experience food insecurity. We want to be sure we get their feedback. Please check all that apply to you, below. This is optional and can be skipped if you do not wish to answer.” The answer choices included: I live in a rural part of the state, I live in poverty, I am Black, Indigenous, and/or a Person of Color, I live with a disability, I am LGBTQIA+, None of these apply to me. The survey also included an optional question about town of residence.

Transportation Research: Details

Dr Pablo Bose was contracted to research solutions for transportation barriers to food security through a literature review, interviews with professional informants, and interviews with Vermont residents who are experiencing transportation barriers to food security.

Bose and his team conducted 48 one-on-one interviews with people impacted by transportation barriers and 40 interviews with key informants. Thirteen professional subject matter experts in transportation, planning, health, and food access met in December 2022 and discussed initial priority actions suggested by Bose’s research. Bose wrote two reports about transportation barriers to food access based on this qualitative research, now located on the [Vermont Farm to Plate](#) website: [Transportation Barriers to Food Access in Vermont: Impacted Populations Report](#) and [Transportation Barriers to Food Access in Vermont: Assessment and Research](#).

Bose did not collect priority population affiliation during ‘key informant’ interviews. He interviewed 48 people in impacted populations. The impacted population interviewees were asked their age, race/ethnicity, town of residence, number of people in their household, and employment status.

Community Stakeholder Compensation

VSJF offered stipends to all participants in the planning process and community stakeholder outreach. For each FSPST meeting, the following statement or similar is provided in each meeting communication:

The Farm to Plate Network Food Security project offers participation stipends to farmers, small business owners, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, and those who, but for a stipend, could not participate. The stipend is \$40 per hour and is paid by a simple invoice process. No proof of eligibility is required. Let [staff member] know if a stipend would enable your participation.

Staff also endeavored to mention the meeting stipend in verbal conversations and at the meeting itself. Once a member receives a Farm to Plate stipend, staff automatically send stipend paperwork to that individual after each subsequent meeting, without further discussion.

To compensate interviewees and focus group attendees in Phase 2, VSJF offered electronic Visa gift cards in the following amounts: \$15 per 1:1 interview; \$30 for a 30-minute virtual focus group (attendees entered their information in a form as detailed above, in order to receive the stipend); and \$70 for an in-person 90-

minute focus group (never utilized). People completing the online survey had the option to enter their email address at the end of the survey to be entered in a drawing for a \$25 gift card. Two organizations interviewing stakeholders opted to pay the stakeholders themselves using their own system, and invoiced VSJF for reimbursement. A total of \$1,950 was dispersed in gift card payments, and VSJF reimbursed partner organizations for \$920 in participant stipends.

Participating Organization List

Individuals participating in Stakeholder Community Stakeholder Outreach for the Food Security Plan and/or additional Food Security Priority Strategy Team activities are affiliated with the following entities. The list includes formal organizations, businesses, and formal as well as informal membership groups.

3 Squares Vermont Workgroup	Composting Association of Vermont	Hunger Council of Chittenden County
Abenaki Helping Abenaki	Dairy Farmers of America	Hunger Free Vermont
ACORN	Edible Brattleboro	Hunger Mountain Cooperative
Action Circles	Elnu Abenaki Tribe's Atowi project	Intervale Center
Addison Allies	Fair Haven Concerned	Lamoille Health Partners
Addison Hunger Council	Farm to Plate Network Food Cycle Coalition	Let's Grow Kids
Age Well/Meals on Wheels	Farm to Plate Network Healthcare and Community Supported Agriculture Community of Practice	Maple Mountain Consulting
Alnobaiwi	Feeding Chittenden	Meals on Wheels
Ananda Gardens	Feeding the Valley Alliance	Middlebury College
Association of Africans Living in Vermont	Food Not Cops	Migrant Justice
Bennington Hunger Council	Franklin County Hunger Council	Mount Ascutney Food Security Group
Bethel Food Shelf	Gifford Health Center	Mount Ascutney Prevention Partnership
Bistate Primary Care Association	Gifford Medical Center	Mount Ascutney Regional Planning Commission
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont	Go VT!	Mountain Health Center
Blue Ledge Farm	Greater Bennington Community Services	Neighborhood Food Coops
Brattleboro Food Coop	Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation	NOFA-Vermont
Bridges to Health	Green Mountain Farm to School	NOFA-Vermont member focus group
Capstone Community Action	Hanover Co-op Food Stores of Vermont & New Hampshire	NOFA-VT Farm Share Markets and Farms
Carshare Vermont	Hardwick Area Food Pantry	Northeast Kingdom Collaborative
Center for an Agricultural Economy	Healthy Roots	Northeast Kingdom Community Action
Center on Agriculture and Food Systems, Vermont Law and Graduate School		Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging

Northeast Kingdom Hunger Council	Sodexo- University of Vermont Dining	Vermont Department of Health
Northeast Kingdom Organizing	South Royalton Community Garden	Vermont Department of Health- Bennington
Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital	Sustainable Woodstock	Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance
Northern Counties Care Systems	The Giving Fridge	Vermont Everyone Eats
Northern Tier Center for Health	Trivalley Transit	Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program Network of Business Service Providers
Northwest Family Foods	University of Vermont Extension	Vermont Farmers Food Center
Nulhegan Band of Abenaki	University of Vermont Extension, EFNEP/Community Nutrition Education	Vermont Farmers Market Association Board Members
Out in the Open	University of Vermont Office of Student & Community Relations	Vermont Feed
Outright Vermont	Upper Kingdom Food Access	Vermont Foodbank
People's Farmstand	Upper Valley Food Co-op	Vermont Foodbank Innovation Lab
Pine Island Community Farm	Upper Valley Haven	Vermont Housing and Conservation Board Farm and Forest Viability Program
Porter Medical	Upper Valley Hunger Council	Vermont Natural Resources Council
Pride Center Vermont	Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food & Markets	Vermont Releaf Collective
Putney Foodshelf	Vermont Agency of Education	Vermont Renews
Rights and Democracy Vermont	Vermont Agency of Human Services	Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund
Rural Vermont	Vermont Climate Council	Vital Communities
RuralEdge Housing and Community Development	Vermont Community Garden Network	Willing Hands
Rutland Hunger Council	Vermont Compost Company	Windham Hunger Council
Rutland Regional Planning Commission	Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living	Windham Regional Commission
Salvation Farms		Working Bridges
School Nutrition Association of Vermont		
Shelburne Farms		

Table of Community Stakeholder Demographics

Community Stakeholder Outreach Demographic and Identity Data					
Note: data may contain duplicate individuals. Data is based on optional self-reporting or interviewer observation					
Outreach Method:	One on One Interviews (as noted by interviewer, not interviewee)	Survey (self-described)	Focus Groups (self-described)	Totals columns B-D	Percentage of total
Total Known Participants:	64	286	130	480	
No demographic/priority pop data known:	31	14	61	106	22.08%
None of the above apply:	0	50	0	50	10.42%
BIPOC	0	42	0	42	8.75%
Rural	8	116	54	178	37.08%
Senior/elder	Not collected	81	Not collected	81	16.88%
Poverty	26	60	6	92	19.17%
LGBTQIA+	0	45	14	59	12.29%
Disability	5	74	10	89	18.54%
Counties of Residence:			No location data collected	343 out of 480 responding	344 out of 480 responding
Addison	0	11		11	2.29%
Bennington	1	3		4	0.83%
Caledonia	0	20		20	4.17%
Chittenden	7	80		87	18.13%
Essex	0	0		0	0.00%
Franklin	0	7		7	1.46%
Grand Isle	1	4		5	1.04%
Lamoille	1	5		6	1.25%
Orange	0	16		16	3.33%
Orleans	0	11		11	2.29%
Rutland	0	20		20	4.17%
Washington	3	53		56	11.67%
Windham	44	30		74	15.42%
Windsor	4	20		24	5.00%

Table of Transportation Study Impacted Populations Demographics and Identity

Transportation Study Impacted Populations	
Individuals Interviewed by Dr Bose and Team	
Data self-reported based on interview questions	
Total Participants:	48
White:	41
BIPOC	6
Rural	48
Over 65 Years Old	21
Poverty	Not collected
LGBTQIA+	Not collected
Disability	Not collected
Counties of Residence	
Addison	0
Bennington	0
Caledonia	24
Chittenden	1
Essex	4
Franklin	17
Grand Isle	2
Lamoille	0
Orange	0
Orleans	0
Rutland	0
Washington	0
Windham	0
Windsor	0

Community Stakeholder Outreach Data Overview and Analysis

by Dr Pablo Bose

I Overview and Methods

Over the past year, as part of the process of developing a Food Security Action Plan for Vermont the Farm to Plate Network alongside a number of other stakeholders collected feedback from a range of constituents across the state. This report provides an overview and analysis of multiple feedback sources.

Feedback sources and data collection

There are several specific methods through which feedback has been collected. These include:

- ◇ Focus groups conducted in-person with food systems stakeholders
- ◇ Responses collected via a SurveyMonkey online survey from across the state
- ◇ Surveys with Farm to Plate member organizations
- ◇ Interviews conducted either in person or via telephone with individuals
- ◇ Interviews conducted either in person or via telephone with organizations

Table 1: Data Collected

Source	Time Period	Relevant Questions	Information collected by participants	#
Focus Groups	Nov-Dec 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you think about achieving our goal of making sure that everyone has the food they need and want, what is happening now that needs to stop? • What else do you want people to think about as they are writing this Food Security Action Plan? 	Organization, location, BIPOC, rural, LGBTQIA+, disability, poverty (not specified as to who in the group), # of participants	20 groups
SurveyMonkey	Oct-Dec 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think are the most important things to do in Vermont to make sure everyone has access to healthy, affordable food without worry? • Is there anything else you want to say about food security in Vermont? 	Location, BIPOC, rural, LGBTQIA+, disability, poverty	287 individuals
F2P Survey	Nov-Dec 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think are the most important things to do in Vermont to make sure everyone has access to healthy, affordable food without worry? • Is there anything else you want to say about food security in Vermont? 	Location, BIPOC, rural, LGBTQIA+, disability, poverty	14 individuals
1 on 1 interviews		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our goal is to make sure that every person in Vermont has access to the food they need and want every day. We want the plan to have 	Location, BIPOC, rural, LGBTQIA+, disability, poverty	64 individuals

		<p>recommendations that lead toward that goal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think are the most important things that can happen in Vermont to make sure everyone has access to healthy, affordable food? • Is there anything else you want to say about food security in Vermont? 		
Interviews with organization representatives		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should we pay the most attention to as we create a Vermont food security action plan? 	Location, BIPOC, rural, LGBTQIA+, disability, poverty	54 individuals
TOTAL				439

II Analysis

As is apparent from the table above, the types of data collection, sample size and even questions asked across the various areas for feedback differ significantly. Accordingly, I began by ‘cleaning’ the data as much as possible, cataloguing and sorting it so that it is possible to compare across modes and types. I have focused on common questions and am also able to compare responses by a variety of different classifications of the speakers that reflect priority populations as defined by the Department of Health. Each of the different instances of feedback was coded according to a series of themes to see what specific issues and trends is visible across all of these types of data. Five issues of particular importance arose as a result of coding the feedback:

- Food Access
- Food Systems
- Health
- Production and Distribution
- Resources and Environment

In the following section, I examine the specific ways in which each of these themes was mentioned by respondents.

III Themes from Feedback

i) Food Access

There were five general sub-themes included in this broader theme including affordability, equity, flexibility and convenience, housing and shelter, and transportation. Respondents spoke extensively about the costs associated with food, with particular attention to the increase in food prices due to inflation and often of their need to change their purchasing practices to less costly but also less healthy or fresh food. Also included in mentions of affordability are a lack of ability to own farmland and the means to produce food locally. The idea of equity was defined differently by different respondents. To some, equity meant providing more access to land and resources for historically disenfranchised populations such as BIPOC farmers. For others, equity meant better and more tailored services in emergency food services that reflected the needs of

distinct populations. To others still, equity was about providing opportunities to younger farmers who otherwise were shut out of local production processes. Flexibility and convenience is primarily discussed by respondents in terms of the hours that food shelves are accessible by clients, especially when working hours, childcare and eldercare is taken into consideration. Housing and shelter were mentioned by a number of respondents as key to the stability needed for the elimination of hunger and includes a discussion of a lack of storage space and ability to access fresh and healthy foods. Transportation is a topic of enormous concern for a wide range of respondents and includes discussions of a lack of personal vehicles and mobility, a desire for food delivery programs, an interest in services like VeggieVanGo that bring food to frequently accessed locations and the inaccessibility of sites like food banks and food shelves due to inadequate transit or other services.

ii) Food Systems

This broader theme focused on mentions of the broader structures and systems that underlie food in Vermont and includes the sub-themes of bureaucracy, collaboration, communications, stigma and culture, and support networks. Bureaucracy was one of the most mentioned issues raised by respondents across all modes of data collection – this primarily focuses on the paperwork needed to access food aid as well as the cumbersome nature of forms and applications. A smaller number of respondents mention bureaucracy in terms of onerous standards, regulations and rules of food production. Collaboration is a sub-theme focused on the value that many respondents comment upon in the connections between organizations as well as joint initiatives and partnerships that are either models or ought to be pursued. In the sub-theme of communications, respondents spoke primarily about the need to publicize the availability of programs as well as the need for efforts like the writing of the food security action plan to collect as many diverse perspectives as possible. One of the other widely mentioned subthemes is that of stigma and culture, with many respondents speaking about the stigma associated with accessing food assistance. Another large set of responses have to do with the culture of food provision, including the importance of recognizing cultural preferences and expectations as well as issues of responsibility and obligation. A final sub-theme deals with support networks, as respondents speak about the kinds of supports needed to achieve food sovereignty and eliminating hunger.

iii) Health

The theme of health covers a range of medical and personal factors involved in food including structural and intervention-based issues, and includes the sub-themes of age, education, food choice, food quality, and nutrition. In terms of age, respondents focused on children and/or seniors and the particular attention that needs to be paid to individuals and communities within both of these age groups in terms of food security. For education, many respondents focus on the importance of cooking classes and nutrition education. A number of respondents also comment on the awareness (or lack thereof) regarding food assistance and food availability. The types of food available and the importance of culturally appropriate foods is central to the sub-theme of food choice mentioned by respondents. Food quality, another sub-theme mentioned by many respondents, focuses on the quality and quantity of food available, especially at food shelves, as well as sufficient quantities of such food being available. Nutrition was mentioned by many respondents in terms of an adequate amount of nutritious and healthy food being present in their diets.

iv) Production and Distribution

The theme of production and distribution focuses on how food is produced, how it is distributed and how it reaches the public and via what venues. It includes the sub-themes of farmers, food shelves, retailers, rural and farmland, and schools. A significant proportion of respondents mention the importance of farms within the state's food system. Some mention small and family farmers, while others speak specifically of farmworkers and of farms of different sizes and scales and their integration into local food supply chains. Food shelves receive prominent mentions across the respondent groups, with some commenting on their size and scale, their geographic reach, their particular mission and the types of services they render. A number of respondents also reference retailers including ethnic grocery stores, some farmers markets and some commercial retailers as well. A significant number of responses have to do with rural areas and farmland. This includes the locations of specific producers and consumers, access to land and especially the necessity to recognize distinctions between rural and urban populations and their needs. Finally, schools were mentioned as a prominent component of the distribution of food, especially in terms of school lunch programs and as a pickup site for pandemic assistance.

iv) Resources and Environment

The theme of resources and environment focuses on existing assets and gaps within the Vermont food system as well as environmental and sustainability considerations to keep in mind when developing the food security action plan. Sub-themes include the built environment, local food, needs and gaps, opportunities and assets, and organizational capacity. In terms of the built environment, respondents mention the existing infrastructure within the state's food system and especially focus on the rural nature of Vermont and the rural-urban divide and how this impacts our understanding of food access. By far the most significant set of mentions across all of the data collection methods and indeed across all themes is the sub-theme of local food. Across the board, respondents prioritized the significance of locally grown food in terms of multiple positive aspects including health benefits, cultural assets, sustainability and economic independence. Specific strengths mentioned repeatedly include backyard gardens, farmers' markets and community gardens. In the needs and gaps themes, respondents specified services and capacities not currently available and identified needs that are currently not being met in Vermont. In opportunities and assets, respondents mentioned multiple programs that are currently working and ought to either be expanded or models to build upon. Some of these examples include models in neighboring states and countries. Others include opportunities for growth and collaboration. Finally, in organizational capacity, respondents focus specifically on the challenges for different types and sizes of food organizations with particular attention to the issues with operating volunteer-based programs and issues with staffing and the scale of operations.

IV Feedback and Key Questions

Beyond identifying specific themes, I thought it would be more useful and targeted to organize themes in response to the specific questions being asked of the section writers. I have provided all information coded with these themes as well. Below, I have included the themes as well as the types of information that typically might lead to specific feedback being coded with those themes.

Question 1: When you think about achieving our goal of making sure that everyone has the food they need and want, what is happening now that needs to stop?

- **Bureaucracy** (paperwork, forms, expectations, rules, regulations, standards)
- **Affordability** (cost of food, inflationary pressures, type of food matched to income cost of production)
- **Stigma** (associated with accessing food assistance, cultural factors in understanding food assistance, cultural norms and expectations, responsibility, obligation)

Question 2: When you think of achieving our goal of making sure that everyone has the food they need and want, what is not happening now, that needs to start?

- **Transportation** (Public transit, personal vehicle ownership, ridesharing, hitchhiking, bicycling, food deliveries)
- **Education** (cooking classes, nutrition education, awareness regarding food assistance and food availability)
- **Health** (Medical and personal factors involved in food assistance including structural and intervention-based)

Question 3: What do you think are the most important things to do in Vermont to make sure everyone has access to healthy, affordable food (without worry)?

- **Equity** (Access dependent on SES variables including race, gender, class, ability, sexual orientation, rural identity, etc., power relations)
- **Local food** (resilience, focus on production, significance of locally grown food, backyard gardens, community gardens)
- **Resources** (funding, existing assets and gaps within the Vermont food system, as well as environmental and sustainability considerations)

Question 4: What should we pay the most attention to as we create a Vermont food security action plan?

- **Communication** (Presence or absence of information and data, communication of expectations from various organizations, ability to inform others, transparency, voices of the affected, expertise)
- **Collaboration** (working across rather than against one another, Connections between organizations, joint initiatives, partnerships either existing or needed)
- **Equity** (power, not privileging one set of voices, disproportionate impacts and effects)

Community Stakeholder Outreach Data: Affordability

One on One Interviews

- He sees a disconnect between local/healthy food and affordability/accessibility
- Affordability and availability are important
- My EBT Cash card is going toward my rent and lights and other bills. I'm disabled and my rent is \$825/month and my lights are \$60-80/month. So, I don't have enough to pay for food. We also need food for dogs and cats and more help for lower-income people with pets. They are my therapy; it's important for me to have them
- Lower prices on everything
- cost of food is always a concern.
- grocery store food needs to be more affordable
- EBT is extremely helpful. State should increase eligibility to keep up with inflation
- Food prices are drastically increasing. Including price of veggies at the Market
- Started to grow own food--started as a hobby but now it is a necessity.
- We need support for farmers so that prices can stay affordable for locals.
- Money is determining my diet now, and my choices are governed by affordability
- The Brattleboro Coop uses too much packaging, and with less packaging, food could be more affordable
- State provides a lot of support for low-income residents, but less for low/middle income residents. Being middle income can exclude you from benefits even if your salary isn't high. We need a paradigm shift to support local middle class people who are making local, VT middle class wages
- They should give you an allowance on a card--food stamps don't always give enough. An extra card with extra money for after food stamps run out. I spend my EBT mainly on food, but I also have my light bill and I don't want my lights shut off--they've helped me with that, some program helped. But, my rent went up \$72 and I have to pay that next month and it really stinks. They do everything for people with kids, but not for people like me with Grandkids. I can't keep up with my bills and pay for gifts for the grandkids
- I don't need or want handouts, I want to pay for food, I just want it to be more affordable.
- Being able to afford quality produce, meats, etc.
- It's super important that food is affordable, there shouldn't be that many requirements for accessing Food Stamps.
- VT is one of the places where I feel more food secure because we produce a lot of our own local food. Cost is still an issue, but things being local helps.

- The Economy is hard right now. I live in a mobile home park and it's a lot of older folks who don't come to the farmer's market. SNAP is really important because it introduces people to other benefits.
- Growing local is important. Sometimes farmer's markets are too expensive. Need incentives to get more people to farmers markets.
- There are 2 different kinds of shoppers, those who think locally, and those who only shop the supermarkets because they think farmer's markets are too expensive.
- I was part-time then full time at new job during the pandemic, which had more income, but still a struggle to afford food and get access to it and the biggest barrier was transportation
- Inflation is making things harder
- Cost of everything has gone up.
- I lost my job, and prices are going up, so that's very hard.
- Having access to local, naturally-raised food is important, but it's expensive
- There's a lot of fear because prices are high
- Cost of food is a big issue right now
- It's a big issue. Food and heating costs are very high right now.
- The other thing is I haven't really raised my prices in many many years, and the cost of everything has gone up. I want lower income people to have access to organic, nutrient-dense food and so how do I still make a living and make my product affordable?
- I still find myself making exceptions and deciding to buy things that are less healthy or less local or produced in a way I don't know about, so there's a lot of compromise on both ends of that. I think also education, helping people to understand both what healthy food is and also how much of a difference it makes when we spend our money with our neighbors rather than with multi-national corporations where all the money leaves the state immediately and is not recirculated.
- food insecurity is ultimately a poverty problem. And also that food is commodified, is something you pay for. I've been thinking about that as a grower... food production under a capitalist system will never be, will never make sense. As a consumer you should have access to food.
- The healthy and the affordable pieces feel very distinct at the moment. Given the current structures of how food is priced and how much it costs to produce food in the state, you could write one plan that was about healthy affordable food and a different one that was about healthy food produced in Vermont.
- It can be really hard to produce affordable food in Vermont. So maybe it's about making sure there's enough financial resources so farmers can - the farmers know how to grow

the food - it's about lowering the financial barriers. I feel confident about farmers' ability to grow lots of delicious nutritious food, it's about who has the money to access it. So whether that money be about helping farmers sell the produce at a lower price or help people pay the price the farmers need - there's a gap. So that's the barrier I see to achieving the vision of this plan.

- The other thing is, if you're talking about affordable, it's usually cheaper (not necessarily!) cheaper to buy lettuce from California than from a farmstand. So if we're just concerned with affording healthy food, that's maybe different from VT-grown food. If we're really wanting to lift the state as a whole, it's way better if people's dollars stay in VT. And that gets you again into these nested issues. Do we want to feed cheaply? The definition of "healthy" is pretty broad, too. You could eat pretty healthfully but just shopping in the produce aisle at Hannaford. Arguably it's more nutrient-dense if you're getting your food closer, but I'm not going to judge.
- If we can find a way to feed people healthfully and affordably and keep their dollars in VT that would be the gold standard.
Ultimately the way we're going to be most food secure is if we can figure out a way to produce our food here, because of uncertainty in CA etc.
- People think farmers markets are expensive but they're really not - grocery store prices can be ridiculous and I don't even know where this food comes from! Maybe it'd be less for individuals but it's so tricky to pull that apart, I don't know about that. But \$100/month seems like a good starting place. It'd be great to do more, but as a pilot it would be amazing. They could buy burger, or whole chickens, or cheese, and veggies... they could buy a bushel of tomatoes for canning season. They could go strawberry picking and freeze them. I've heard people say how they'd love to buy more and freeze for the winter but can't because of money.
- One of our biggest financial barriers is gas for driving around to all the different properties we lease.
- Finally eligible for food stamps, before that I used to get a lot of anxiety going to the store. The cost of food is overwhelming. Price increases are hard. I'm a single mom with several kids so the free food for kids at school is fantastic.
- With the increase in food prices, going to the farmers market (for the rich tourists) I couldn't buy food there as it was too expensive.
- At our farm we've been doing sliding-fee CSA and distribution sites, this just needs to be scaled. Instead of getting state funds, we've been getting community members to donate to support our sliding-fee model

F2P Participant Survey

- we need to create new or enhance existing policies and taxes to ensure that Vermonters are able to access local food without straining their budgets. It is appalling that products that come from overseas cost a fraction of the same locally produced product
- Address the cost of living, housing crisis, and lack of high paying jobs in the state.
- re-arrange taxes, incentives or subsidies so that all can access nutritious local food without breaking the bank.
- Help farmers produce food that is affordable to consumers while still paying them a healthy wage for their important work. Things like PES should be implemented to help fully compensate farmers for their work
- Raising minimal wage to 15x he means that I will need to raise my wages to 20x he so all our prices are going up and become less affordable

Survey

- Many people rely on their small, local general stores, which are even more economically prohibitive and tend to carry less quality foods and less produce. Or they get groceries at dollar stores because it's less expensive.
- keep prices down for the consumer but some how make sure the farmers can still make a living
- I think cost is a big factor. Vermonter's of low income likely need food stamps assistance to afford the cost of groceries. But since some Vermonter's don't have access to that service for one reason or another (children or elderly), the most effective way may be to provide food to take home at school or in a doctors office
- Food and grocery prices are getting so expensive. I feel fortunate that I can buy my family of 6 groceries each week without having to go without. If we could find a way to provide cheaper prices for better quality foods, that would be amazing.
- Wage increases and food cost increases are creating an increased gap for individuals and families (3SquaresVT is not meeting the need)
- Promote education about the real value of food: how it is worth reconsidering a family budget to spend more on food and less on other items in order to invest in a family's own long term health and well being.
- Vermont always maintained a high quality of life in my opinion as a 3rd generation Vermonter, born & raised, by consistently reinforcing and perpetuating its core values, via sustainable growth & development, environmental stewardship and ecological practices, valuing local foods, commerce, and people over other outside, larger, more short term profitable ideologies, and by understanding that keeping things small, hyper-local, affordable and healthy for land & people, is the only sustainable, ethical,

environmentally conducive and economically sound way forward. In recent years I believe we've seen that being more compromised as a direct reflection of the state's increased demand for new residents from different areas that don't share those ideals or values, as a money grab and land grab due to climate crisis migration and health crisis migration, and simultaneously connected, local residents especially older generations opting to sell their land or businesses or homes because it's becoming increasingly more unsustainably expensive to live here, therefore they decide to leave.

- Everyone has a living wage. Everyone has affordable, convenient access to transportation (public, active, and/or micro) that reaches stores with affordable, healthy, culturally appropriate foods.
- In the short term create pay what you can grocery stores. In the long term, fight to increase wages in Vermont
- it is tough, even as a single mother with a job I struggle to provide healthy food for both kids
- Lower prices and/or subsidize local farms (beyond the widely abused current-use program)
- It is so connected with income inequality. When your local co-op is selling local butter for \$7/pound, there's an issue, and people can't support local.
- Local accessibility and affordability
- Working people are having a hard time keeping families afloat
- Affordable food is more difficult to answer. The local grocery stores did not reduce pricing and understandable as they still needed to survive by staying in business.
- Food insecurity is a function of financial insecurity. Many farmers also struggle with financial insecurity.
- Rising school & property taxes, increased costs for municipal services + stagnant wages = poverty
- The cost! Most people are living on a fixed budget and can't afford healthy options.
- The cost! Most people are living on a fixed budget and can't afford healthy options. Food or medicine is what I hear from a lot of our aging population
- Too many families are just on the edge - they can make their mortgage but then food is hard
- Food prices are higher here than in other regions. (Rochester NY for example). I don't know if it's a distribution issue, scale, or competition. But ways of figuring out what is going on in the market and correcting it would be amazing.
- For example in Burlington your options are City Market and the new Jakes in the ONE. Some people in this area don't drive so that's where they have to go to shop.

Hannafords and Price Chopper aren't much better price wise anyway. In many other towns there is always a grocery store with way better deals than the leading competing grocery stores, such as Aldi and Market Basket. These stores were often crowded but worth the savings. I wonder why a high end gourmet grocery store like Jakes was opened up in the ONE when so many people cannot even afford it, rather than something with discounted prices and affordability.

- I hear people say the prices are so high here because it take a lot of gas money to ship them way up here. Yet local produce or farmer's market is often higher in price. So what exactly is really the problem?
- I just recently spent 6.99 on a doz eggs that are local to my community. How can i continue to eat by well with prices like this ?
- Raise the minimum wage to a level that business can pay but get local people a living wage
- Both of my young adult sons are able to eat well on less than \$60 per week. They're always stunned by their friends who complain about not having enough money for food but spend so much on prepared stuff.
- Ensure everyone is paid a livable wage! (
- There are several of Us workers in our 60's who are not eligible for Social Security yet who can't afford things like our medications, housing costs, etc.
- We are a very lucky state but middle class families get left out because we don't qualify for support but still struggle.
- I am someone who is employed but my wife is dealing with a disability and had to have several surgeries this past year. She lost her job and now we are trying desperately to make ends meet on my salary alone. We are constantly low on food and have been eating sandwiches and oatmeal for meals.
- I think investing in our local food system is critical. We have been learning recently due to COVID, inflation, our climate crisis, etc... that supply chains can and will be disrupted. In Vermont, we need State legislation to support Vermont Farmers - perhaps even subsidize Vermont farmers so that they can scale their operation, processing and storage capabilities - and sell food at a lower price point to make it affordable and within reach of more people. Affordability of this food is critical if more people are going to access it.
- Prices in the grocery store are sky-rocketing-- I don't know if there are easy answers to this big question.
- There are a lot of efforts in our community to make food available for free or at a very low cost to the lowest income bracket. I think there is a new challenge arising as food

prices rise in making sure the low to middle income bracket folks can access these resources as they are priced out at grocery stores.

- Vermont should raise minimum wage and institute state programs to assist with basic costs (e.g. rent). Top tax brackets should be higher.
- It is very real. Food security does not exist but food insecurity does. Many people don't eat healthy because eating junk is cheaper. People need to be educated about how and what to eat. You only need to watch what people buy with their food benefits. Soda, prepared dinners, chips, candy etc. to know this is true.
- Lower prices
- Reduce the inflation so people could afford to buy food.
- Food insecurity is not just at federal poverty levels. My family is insecure about once a month now, due to the rising cost of living and stagnant wages. There need to be more programs based purely on the number of kids in your household and not income.
- Lowering the cost of locally sold/ grown foods and goods in Vermont. Low income people have to struggle enough with other cost that the state can't control this would help a lot.
- It is tough to grow good, healthy food with rising grain prices and everyone having less money to go around. Investing in our local food economy should be the focus so that farmers can keep farming and not have to worry about where the money is coming from to pay the bills, and they should be paid a fair wage for their work.
- get more industries to come to VT so that VT'ers have great jobs
- Extending covid relief ebt benefits
- Desperately underfunded, not enough to live off of.
- Yes, it's extremely hard with costs so high for everything right now. Scary to see what eggs, milk & butte now cost. I'm thankful for the available help. I found the xtra crop cash very helpful this summer. I stocked up on fresh veggies and even frozen some. I really appreciated the xtra help.
- Food cost has doubled however progams have not.
- I'm down to eating one meal a day so I don't need to choose between paying a huge energy bill or be able to eat a meal the food given thru commodities is mostly riddled with salt or out of date meat dated December of 2018 coffee dated 2018 senior shakes dated 2010and wilted produce or mold spotted fruit
- Raise the minimum wage across VT to over \$15 an hour
- This winter people will be choosing between heat and food. Anything Vermont can do to help will be good. Pop-up food giveaways anytime it is possible would be good. In the Upper Valley, we use Vital Communities digital listserve bulletin board to get the word

out about events.

- There's a lot of food here, it just needs to be made affordable. The grant the vt Foodbank offered food shelves to pay local producers was a great idea.
- i am grateful to have access to healthy food. it does need to be more affordable
- Make the extra \$95 dollar EBT Food benefit on the 15th of the month permanent, as well as the full \$250 at the beginning of the month, even more than \$95 on the 15th would be much better. \$95 for two weeks of groceries is not enough, and if that is going to disappear as has been talked about, it's going to make life VERY hard for vulnerable people right at Thanksgiving and Christmas!
- Lower prices of produce
- If the prices were lower, supermarkets wouldn't waste as much.
- Cheaper meat
- It's really hard for low income folks to afford fresh, organic food.
- With the current cost of food, many Vermonters are having difficulty when buying food. Income restrictions should be modified to reflect this reality.
- Lower grocery prices
- Make healthy food affordable so people have access to afford healthy meals
- Provide low income communities with grocery stores that are affordable to those with limited incomes
- Access to staples and things I always buy, with the security that the price won't be double this week, than it was last week
- Worry is large with inflation, every store has widely differing costs on same products
- Make cost of groceries lower, as well as cost of going out. Encourage/give free seeds
- I think wages need to be higher. We can't make food any cheaper, nor should we, because farmers need to be properly compensated for their hard work. So we need a \$15 minimum wage so that all working Vermonters can afford basic necessities,
- food is too expensive, wages too low
- The idea for farmers market that doesn't overprice everything. Low income don't shop farmers markets. Once again low priced areas for people to get healthy food. Not fancy just convenient. Many people throw out many garden vegetables because they have no idea what to do with them.
- reduce poverty; raise minimum wage;
- Increase threshold for qualifying because of inflation
- Incentivize local consumer (reswork on access to land, housing, and childcare - remove the barriers that prevent people from having the financial stability to purchase healthy

food. Place less emphasis on affordability, which decreases the awareness of the true cost of food, and instead create an economic system that allow people to pay prices that keep farmers and local producers employed

- Address costs!
- Wages should be as high as possible so people can afford food and maybe local food can be subsidized to keep farmers successful and prices to customers low.
- expense is a problem
- Affordability and access - (esp. to land for new/beginning farmers.)
- Most individuals' housing and energy costs are fixed. We don't get to choose to pay half of our rent or have our heating oil tank filled only halfway, so if we are to keep roofs over our heads and keep our homes warm enough to survive a Vermont winter, the only remaining place that we have wiggle room for cuts is our food budgets. This means less healthy, fresh foods which often takes a toll on our health, which then brings its own challenges in the form of increased healthcare costs and increased strain on an already broken healthcare system. It's important to remember that all of these things are deeply connected.
- We are all feeling the stress of higher costs.
- provide more cash assistance
- Healthy options at affordable prices
- "Healthy" food should be more affordable
- Rent control
- I have 3 jobs and am still having issues as my rent is too high and the pay is too little.
- More state & local support for small producers, CSA's etc, conditional on keeping prices affordable.
- low wages and high cost of living
- keep prices down

Focus Groups

- Reducing food cost
- More available food to give out at a low cost or no cost.
- More Funding!
- Offering money/budget management resources
- INFLATION!!
- Increased subsidies for families to farmer's markets
- Funding is available for food security, access, and nutrition programs

- The idea that a family's food needs can be fully met by current resources
- Livable wages so that folks have time for food - from procurement to preparation and meals
- A better conversation about "Cost" versus "Value"
- Discounts at grocery stores for staples.
- Reconciling local farm profitability and food affordability
- Inflation and the true cost of living
- Prices of food have caused even people who are not income-eligible for programs to struggle to buy food
- Budgets MUST go up significantly because the cost of food has
- Food costs are rising so should benefits!
- People on special diets, like gluten-free, have to pay way more for food than others as gluten-free food is expensive!
- Food costs in VT are much higher than in other states
- Increase minimum wage at the state / national level
- Reconciling local farm profitability and food affordability
- That people are struggling across all income levels right now to put food on the table.
- Everyone should be able to buy local, nourishing foods, make it an affordable option for all!
- This is not something that needs to stop, but I am concerned about food buying power right now, with inflated prices.
- Quicker changes in benefits eligibility and benefit levels to recognize the impact of inflation.
- Universal Basic Income, Ditto universal basic income!
- Prices of food constantly increasing in response to the cost of energy. Incomes are not keeping pace.
- more effort to make local food affordable - not fancy. NOFA has been doing a great job on that in recent years.
- dispelling the stigma that local products have of being too expensive or out of reach to people who can't make procuring them a priority
- If we made it possible to have people have the income to meet their basic needs, we wouldn't have a food security problem.
- Affordable local farm stand.
- People should not have to rely on food banks because food is so expensive along with

everything else.

- Affordable cost of simple foods.
- Basic goods are subsidized--cereals, grains, dairy, fruits, and vegetables so that everyone can afford them.
- Food Stamps should increase for fruit and vegetable and whole food purchasing and have a limit on junk food
- Food needs to be affordable to all
- People cannot afford rentals today even with a two-person income.
- The cost of auto and repairs along with housing. Plus car inspection restrictions.
- We need to build up a system such as farmers markets that are year-round, and affordable.
- Many jobs do not have many benefits or retirement plans like years ago.
- Enact a livable wage so people don't have to beg for food. Take the burden off of the government to provide food, and put it back on the employers.
- It's impossible to live a simple life because of the cost of everything.
- Get all businesses to pay a living wage!
- Excluding the "lost middle" income bracket from food access programs
- Greed/inflation and price gouging
- Housing/fuel, and medical costs need to be more affordable
- Everyone earns a living wage!
- Livable wages for ALL
- Affordable Healthcare for ALL
- Lawmakers need to understand the real costs of living and make sure social services keep up for those who need these services to survive.
- Liveable wages and viable career tracks for institutional food service workers/directors
- Job training (distribution and trucking)
Livable wages
- I applied for fuel assistance and got enough for one minimum delivery. Trying to pay down credit cards, my house is falling apart, had to buy new appliances. The cost of food is high
- The rising cost of food and transportation needs to stop! The bus doesn't feel safe either--too many people on drugs swearing.
- I don't think going into the winter they should cut off people who need it. (fuel). My stipend from the town pays for my taxes. I don't have extra, so I put it on a credit card.

- There should be an increase in the amount of Fuel Assistance going into the winter. I have to make the choice between food and fuel--so I use food shelf-for 10 years.
- Lowering the prices of food! The prices on stuff that you need, real healthy, is out of our price range. I can't afford a Kiwi!
- The cost of food is UP--milk, eggs, every time we get a raise at work, the food prices go up, so we are still spending.
- all of us are trying! But the economy is working against us. I'm single and retired, the only way I can pay my taxes and stay at my house is to work for the town as an auditor
- Make healthier foods more affordable-Take away high prices
- We speak about eating our veggies but no one can afford them
- Benefits go down, cost of living goes up

Community Stakeholder Outreach Data: Bureaucracy

One on One Interviews

- Raising eligibility level
- Anger and frustration come up. I worked full time in the community, in community services programs. I've helped a lot of people, and last year I got sick and went on disability. But since I didn't qualify for food stamps, I didn't qualify for other benefits, and it was very hard.
- Increase SNAP eligibility to 200%, eliminate the asset test like other states have done (RI, CA)
- EBT is extremely helpful. State should increase eligibility to keep up with inflation
- Less limits on what can be purchased with EBT.
- Look at existing programs, fine-tune and expand. Get more people into existing programs.
- It's super important that food is affordable, there shouldn't be that many requirements for accessing Food Stamps.
- When I knew that I needed help for food, I looked into 3 squares, but it was pretty complicated even for me as a reader and speaker of English and have no disabilities, so I gave up on it. Getting all the documents together. *sign* Same with health insurance.
- even though they worked to avoid it, there was still some food waste. What are the laws around what can and can't be saved in terms of fresh food, and can they be revisited or made more lenient?
- More people should be able to sign up for EBT. What are the obstacles? Being on EBT has vastly improved my life, but I had to get past the shame of being on it. I have health issues, and good food is key
- Make EBT ok to use for other things
- We need farm workers. Maybe we could make visas more accessible for workers from other countries to come here and work on farms.
- I'd love to see an expansion of the types of markets that raw milk producers can access. ME and NH both have minimal processing laws that are great. Again that has to come with technical information to support doing it well, but we do have a lot of good information about raw cheesemaking, but if we could sell soft cheese, butter, yogurt, cream, that would be a huge change for sure. And I think the market is here. The number of people who come through and ask if they can buy yogurt from us and I have to say "no, that's illegal," and it would give people options to buy product locally that might be a little more affordable than the price someone has to pay for a full processing facility and organic certification and all the other things... to have another local option for dairy would be great.

- SNAP at Farmers Markets is awesome. Taking SNAP at farmstands is a pain in the ass.
- So we're a diversified livestock farm. So having to work around a lot of those regulations adds a serious cost to the final product which doesn't feel great but has to be what it has to be. Making sure people can farm affordably in order to make food affordably. [I asked about regulations making food less affordable] A lot of it comes down to supply chain issues. Being so small, we can't take advantage of wholesale pricing. In general, especially with meat, having to pay for USDA processing and having to plan out our dates years in advance, rather than... we just did a cow for ourselves and it was \$500 total. We just hired the guy to come, he was our neighbor, he was there the next week, and the guy he works with cut it up two weeks later. It was so convenient and cheap. Compared to \$Ks of to go to the USDA plant.
- With raw milk, between testing and constraints on where and how we can sell it, because of the regulations we'll never be able to make a living just off of selling raw milk alone. Maybe I'm just blaming all my problems on these things, maybe it's actually bigger..
- Finally eligible for food stamps, before that I used to get a lot of anxiety going to the store. The cost of food is overwhelming. Price increases are hard. I'm a single mom with several kids so the free food for kids at school is fantastic.
- Stream line Food Stamps, make it easier to apply, too much red tape. Also have a state website where people could find out resources for a One stop shop kind of program. Make it easy. The system is too difficult with Apps,QR codes... Too many hoops to go thru to apply.
- Get food prices down
- Too much Bureaucracy
- Make it simpler for people with Everybody Eats.
- NOFA's program is probably the best example of what I'm trying to describe, but SNAP and FoodStamps do a good job in terms of physical access but not quality. And the restrictions of SNAP are problematic.
- Money matches like the 4x EBT match at the Market. Buyer's clubs, CSA's. Veggie Van Go. Opportunities where you don't have to sign up or make a commitment are helpful.
- Should avoid bureaucracy whenever possible.

Survey

- Increased SNAP benefits and increase the income limit to access to the program.
- Make sure people who may not qualify for food stamps but still need support due to bills for etc. have access to lower cost high quality food through buying clubs or other special incentives.
- Broader 3squaresVT benefits

- Push back against excessive regulation, especially of meat and dairy producers.
- Free school lunches for all - many times the families struggling the most are the ones who don't qualify by just a few dollars.
- double the value of EBT cards spent on produce to incentivize people to buy it
- Less government. Let farmers sell their products without restrictions (except humane) directly from the farm; i.e., on-farm slaughter, dairy value-added products.
- make free locally grown surplus (especially gleaned food) reliably available; maximize utilization of Four Squares and make application as easy as possible
- Either raise the income limit for programs like 3 Squares or create more supports for people who don't qualify but still struggle with food insecurity.
- how is food insecure determined?
- Expand the income eligibility. Remove the stigma of getting food help. Make community wide food days when everyone is welcome to come shop or get food.
- Universal School Lunches and not taking away benefits when someone earns just a bit over their allowable income.
- A robust network of local food producers, food banks, and the means to get food to people. Additionally, ample funds to do so, so that anyone can procure healthy food, regardless of their income.
- Funding community gardens and local farmers supports food security. continuing to decrease restrictions on at home producers could also help.
- Our local food shelves only let you come once a month with a cap of six times a year and a limit of items. There's just not enough help here. I'd like to open a soup kitchen in town, but I don't know how to do so.
- Make 3SVT more accessible and less bureaucratic.
- Less bureaucracy and paperwork
- Food insecurity is not just at federal poverty levels. My family is insecure about once a month now, due to the rising cost of living and stagnant wages. There need to be more programs based purely on the number of kids in your household and not income.
- Keep encouraging folks to apply. I found the process quite daunting at having to submit so much information, but as a disabled senior who often has high medical bills it was worth the efforts. If I didn't have 3squares help I would not be eating very well. It has reduced my stress and allowed me to focus on eating healthy food more often.
- Remove barriers that prohibit people from applying to programs like 3Squares (work requirements, etc...), more low/no barrier options for food access (Everyone Eats pickups were a godsend!), easier access to farm-adjacent programs like Farm to Family, etc...
- Sadly, there is still a stigma surrounding benefit programs such as 3Squares that serve as

a barrier to entry for many who need help. The amount of red tape and hassle that can surround the application process can be daunting. As a seasonal horticulture worker, it becomes difficult to apply for benefits when I need them most, as I am not working the required 20 hours a week to qualify. And, the irony of having to ask my boss to certify my hours so I can receive 3Squares, in spite of having a job, is not lost on me.

- Revamp the guidelines for three squares. Currently there is no consideration for someone that has significant expenses unless they pre-meet the income guidelines first. Also there is allowance for phone (even though one can live without a phone) and no allowance for water (needed to survive... IF you miss the guidelines for food you also miss the guidelines for fuel assistance....
- Maybe have a temporary status for Farmers Market assist, etc. while those of us over 65 differently-abled are working to become qualified. ?
- Establish the legitimacy of the need for assistance...define healthy food the applicant
- the everyone eats program is very important. It helps so many families especially families with kids. In some situations people have no access to food but do not qualify for other programs. This gives them an opportunity to get the food they need and helps local businesses at the same time. It would be amazing if the program became permanent in Vermont.
- Make the extra \$95 dollar EBT Food benefit on the 15th of the month permanent, as well as the full \$250 at the beginning of the month, even more than \$95 on the 15th would be much better. \$95 for two weeks of groceries is not enough, and if that is going to disappear as has been talked about, it's going to make life VERY hard for vulnerable people right at Thanksgiving and Christmas!
- With the current cost of food, many Vermonters are having difficulty when buying food. Income restrictions should be modified to reflect this reality.
- Local food banks should not require proof of income
- Minimize the paperwork involved in School Meal Programs
- Expand access to 3SVT/SNAP! This is an already existing program that is proven to work! State's have significant leeway in how this program is administered and if we cannot expand it due to federal limitations then we can develop our own supplementary program! Like continuing P-EBT for families who are free/reduce school meal eligible or developing an in-store crop cash program for 3SVT participants.
- People who are in the lower middle class, income-wise, can be very good insecure but not qualify for assistance.
- policy work at state/local level to remove obstacles to local production and provide incentives,
- we need more streamlined programs for food assistance so that EBT cards can be used at farm stands and just overall are easier to use.

- Lower the threshold of income for snap
- Increase threshold for qualifying because of inflation
- Revising and revamping food assistance programs. Most of them are cumbersome, take extra efforts and create unwanted attention when checking out
- Help people access food who are in the middle...make to much to qualify for help but not enough to afford food.
- Do NOT require means or income testing
- Food services should NEVER require any form of income or means testing
- up SNAP benefits for fresh foods. Offer grant funds for farms to help subsidize low-cost CSA's, etc
- Improve access and participation in 3square Vt
- Access to money for vitamins/food/healthcare.
- It is great to have other options without tons of paperwork or personal information needed such as the restaurant community meals and everyone eats.
- Monthly Basic Income Assurance stipend that doesn't count against any benefits and allows people and families to choose to garden and/or stay home with children and others who need daily care;
- Keep EBT amount at Pandemic amount
- expand the crop cash program to make more people eligible
- amended laws to allow food donations from local grocery stores,
- every place selling food should accept EBT.
- Get rid of red tape in the programs to receive help.
- The obstacles are stigma which was hard for me to overcome to ask for help and laziness - people are too lazy to apply and I have to say the form and then the interview for SNAP is like a tax return and and audit. It's not easy.
- Also secure more money and re-assess and update the rules around SNAP benefit incomes to make it more flexible ie someone who makes just over 1096/month and cant afford the inflated rents, foods, barely can get by.. and needs that food support badly. If SNAP/EBT cant do it, then build around it with a different program!
- give resources (food, money, staffing) to food pantries, restructure the 3squares/SNAP so that benefits are more accessible to more folks. I have tries to get food stamps 4 times without succesa despite being food insecure and unemployed at times because of how much of a hassle it is to get through the entire process.
- The programs (i.e., meal distribution and restaurant ordering) that have been going through covid should continue. Switch farm to family coupons to last all year (not just summer season). Allow the EBT farm market coupons to be given to people who only have EBT cash (i.e., elderly and people with disabilities who are on SSI so a very limited

income; I'm not sure why they're excluded from getting those since they're most in need of that extra produce)

- Lower the income eligibility for 3Squares

Focus Groups

- Low barriers or "no questions asked" access to programs - ie. Everyone Eats
- I second the low barrier, no questions-asked programs like Everyone Eats and Veggie VanGo
- Duplication of services
- Data collection is an issue or a barrier
- Need fewer barriers for people seeking assistance and food. Example: Qualifications for receiving meals and access to food pantries.
- SNAP for All with increased GMI limits that reflect actual costs of living currently and a simpler lower barrier application process.
- Increased eligibility and benefits for 3SqVT
- Increased benefits and eligibility for 3 SqVT
- WIC increase fruit and veggie CVB
- Updates to 3SVT and WIC
- Simplified WIC and 3SVT requirements for participation.
- More progress on universal applications for programs.
- More low-barrier/no-barrier programs so that those just over the "benefits cliff" still have access
- Continue universal school meals and detach other funding from the free and reduced meal application
- Stigma and the barriers of all the paperwork!
- Certain eligibility barriers
- All the different ways that programs determine eligibility and the cliff that is created. Sliding scales instead?
- Having to contact and utilize a million services to make ends meet - more streamlining needed
- Cumbersome paperwork
- Unified application for multiple programs
- Universal forms for agreeing to share information for applying for programs
- New technology system to enable state agencies to better coordinate services.
- Don't penalize people for getting a job when they're still struggling to make ends meet.
- Broader eligibility requirements for social programs
- Keep 3Squares at max allotments

- Max allotment of SNAP benefits to all.
- People need to be aware they may qualify- many are surprised or confused by income limits
- Maximum allotment, waivers making 3SVT more accessible for college students, more accessibility for folks who are disabled/over 65 (like 3SVT in a SNAP app)
- 3SVT: expand accessibility and eligibility
- SNAP processing for local food in spaces like Farmers Markets...need to expand to honors system processing at farm stands, and processing for food hubs (online hubs too)
- Max allotment of 3Squares available to those who apply
- Keep the max allotments!
- Yes, to all suggestions regarding keeping (or increasing!) 3SVT benefits. Help people access the resources to provide adequate nutrition without the need for food shelves!
- Increase in income eligibility with the price of food and COL continuing to increase.
- WIC: expand allotments!
- 3SVT application assistance providers
- Help NOFA to get more farm stands involved in Crop CASH
- Limits and programs ending
- Long hold times at ESD, the lengthy application process for 3SVT
- The threat of the possibility of the max allotment ending causes anxiety in those that need benefits.
- Verification requirements
- Confusion about qualifications.
- Application/administrative processes that actually serve as access barriers
- Funding limited time
- Income limits for programs
- Easier to understand the requirements of people
- Eliminating the hours clients have to spend waiting for an interview for 3Sq or to have their questions answered
- Prohibitive SNAP application process. Mindset shifts away from the fear of fraud and towards trust that folks who seek assistance need it. SNAP for all?
- Some 3SVT verification requirements are a barrier, particularly anything related to current and previous employers signing documents/providing info
- Resource limits on the amount of cash on hand that someone has if they need to use medical to meet income requirements
- Process to apply for benefits is too lengthy and/or confusing which causes people to just give up on applying

- The way the benefit amount is figured and how it increases.
- A simplified online app for all benefits, that asks only questions the customer needs to answer
- Higher max allowable income for seniors and folks on disability.
- Higher income-limits on programs
- Changing income requirements for seniors. Those who have worked but were unable to save for retirement seem to be lost in the cracks
- The "benefits cliff" is a HUGE hardship for working families and folks on a fixed income -- more resources for folks who do not qualify for 3SVT
- That a Social Security "raise" may have the unintended results of falling off a benefits cliff
- Increase 3SVT enrollment support avenues
- Such low income eligibility requirements for SNAP
- Prohibitive SNAP application process. Mindset shift away from fear of fraud and towards trust that folks who seek assistance need it.
- Intensive application requirements for SNAP
- Revisiting income guidelines that restrict most programs that do not take into account affordability to families and people in present economy
- Perception that effort to enroll in SNAP is not worth the value of the benefits received
- Paternalistic ideas/policies around what people are able to buy with 3svt benefits
- Allow snap available to Food Pantries
- Limited access to certain programs based on location (i.e., using Crop Cash - limited locations to use this benefit in our regions)
- More trust for the people accessing resources (i.e. less invasive application and eligibility requirements)
- Higher income limits on programs
- Radical change in how people access public assistance programs
- Simplify paperwork and the wait for acceptance
- Prohibitive SNAP application process.
- Obstacles to accessing benefits
- Costs related to EBT machine start-up
- Seconded on the EBT processing costs!
- Paper-based system. Could all be online!
- Policies that make it difficult for self-serve farmstands to take EBT. Need work around systems that are easy for farmers and consumers! SO IMPORTANT!
- Quicker changes in benefits eligibility and benefit levels to recognize the impact of inflation.

- Higher eligibility guidelines for SNAP.
- Consideration of making rules more simple for stores. Small rural stores have a hard time stocking in a way that meets WIC requirements.
- Making incentives/programs easier to understand. Some people rec. multiple & it can be confusing.
- Make it easier for farmstands to take SNAP.
- If our food system became 75-100% localized, would food-insecure people on SNAP be able to get enough food? Would their benefits still get them food markets, stand, hubs?
- Programs where you can access food without being in a certain income bracket
- Restrictive barriers to accessing food security programs
- The need for detailed data reports, etc. that make government grants hard to administer for nonprofits.
- I wish it was easier to take EBT - not needing a phone line would make it more flexible.
- Better EBT processing - the Totilpay Go mobile solution is still complicated
- More education about how to use P-EBT (many folks have received these cards for the first time through schools and don't know how & why to use them at the Farmers' Market)
- I believe that people who don't have children should still get enough money on their 3 squares benefit so that they can afford food for the whole month
- Increase in food stamps. Raise income limits.
- The benefits cliff should be calculated so that when someone makes more money, they don't lose even more than they make in a benefit. Some people forgo raises
- Benefits cliff needs to stop.
- Food Stamps should increase for fruit and vegetable and whole food purchasing and have a limit on junk food
- Revise the benefits cliff
- Food stamps need cost of living raises going back forty years
- Food stamps income limits need to increase so more people can afford to eat.
- WIC-like program for adults
- Breakdown of stigma - using SNAP/EBT/Farm to Family, making sure pediatricians and social workers understand the availability of the programs.
- there are people who are food insecure, but have just enough income that they don't qualify for food assistance but should.
- More 1:1 help to enroll people in food assistance programs
- Cut back on paperwork/in-person verifications for benefits to remove barriers for people.
- Unnecessary bureaucracy

- Complicated paperwork/forms to access assistance
- Services that require people to prove they need food assistance- food pantries that require proof of income
- Excluding the "lost middle" income bracket from food access programs
- Unrealistic eligibility requirements for assistance (e.g. someone makes too much to qualify, but it's not enough to afford food on their own)
- Not understanding eligibility
- Ignoring studies that show lowered barriers = benefits across income brackets
- Excluding the "lost middle" income bracket from food access programs
- Strong policy advocacy for federal, state, and local level policy change to reduce barriers to federal nutrition programs.
- Increase 3SquaresVT Benefits!
- Increased 3SVT benefits provide the resources for people to put the food on the table that best serves their individual nutritional needs, and benefits the overall economy.
- Maximum benefits for 3SVT
- Creating flexible structures so people can take the food they need on their terms, with very low barriers to entry
- Restrictions on SNAP-eligible foods
- EBT should be able to be processed with online vendors
- Overly punitive 3SquaresVT regulations
- Impending benefits cliff
- Strict requirements for eligibility
- Restrictions on farms/farmstands processing EBT
- Extensive applications for any of these programs
- Restriction on the quantity of pantry food
- Restrictions on Crop Cash (produce-only)
- How staggering the percentage of people over 60 who qualify for 3 squares but do not have it.
- That the social security "raise" may make people fall off a benefits cliff and put them in worse shape than they were before
- Remove grant/funding conditions that require unnecessary reporting/detract from actual work
- How will you address federal rules/barriers with on the ground, real needs?
- Waiver of congregate meals for summer meals. And the ability to offer multiple meals at one time saves time, reduces transportation barriers
- Technical assistance for SNAP/EBT and other assistance programs
- State of VT assistance in getting farm stands and small groceries outfitted to accept

SNAP benefits

- Lines of credit for food pantries to order from local food hubs - ability to customize orders based on the needs of their communities. Funding dependent, relationships, and systems built as a response to the pandemic has increased access to local food and changed attitudes around the price point
- SNAP coupons at farmers directly, not just markets
- Government (state and federal) practice of giving people cash and trusting people to make their own decisions about what they should be spending money on, including when/how they spend it on food. Cash, plus incentives that support people buying local food can make a big difference
- Nutrition program waivers sustained or programs changed to achieve the same level of accessibility post-public emergency
- They used to make us jump through hoops to use the shelf--now it's easier
- As far as the food shelf, it is what it is--I've applied for 3 squares, I know they are busy, but it's been over a week since I had my interview, still waiting to hear back-getting that moving faster
- I was on hold for an hour and a half for my food stamp interview, and I just waited. More staff.
- The income level--I am on the edge of being kicked out of certain programs that allow me to spend coupons for farmers market. Because I live alone, I get SS, I'm 72
- I work for the town and get a little stipend, and that puts me over income with my social security. So, the food shelf supplements me.
- From past experience, the cutoff money for food stamps--if you make so much money you don't qualify--it should be higher.
- The biggest thing is to raise the cutoff for people's income so they can get more money for food.
- There are a lot of people out there working, but they can't get into the food programs because they make too much. With the Capstone food shelf and food stamps, I do ok.
- I don't know when they review the limits for programs--once a year? who knows what is going to happen with the prices! I don't know how I will make it through the winter.
- I'm on the "edge" (benefits cliff) so I can't afford a computer. I think my new social security payment will kick me off again!
- No means testing for free produce (at some locations)
- Complicated applications for food assistance.
- Income limitations or support
- A common application for all assistance programs
- We need to stop changing the rules for those receiving food; once we set up a plan, it

needs to be maintained so that it is predictable.

- IDs for getting access to food
- There are time limits on things--different programs that were doing great outreach for families and food--those time limits need to stop. We need to continue to do the programs.
- No income requirements.
- Time limits on how many times you can access food shelves
- Lessening the requirements for when you show up to a food shelf--eliminating barriers to getting food--(i.e. you can only come 2 times/mo)
- Explaining all the paperwork including the hidden paperwork

Stakeholder Outreach

- Keep it easy to use and incredibly easy to update
- Ways to move financial resources, land, etc. with as few barriers to possible.
- How people's families are organized, in something as nitty gritty as an application process, making sure there's room for people to accurately express identity or not need to reveal unnecessary personal details
- Local, custom state meat processing are more simple than federal ones.
- Raising or eliminating income barriers to government nutrition programs makes those programs much more effective and impactful.
- Challenge with HFA – SNAP eligible but not WIC (WIC has requirements that are too specific). Making WIC more accessible would open up access to many.
- Easy Access- most people who need help with food security also need help with many other basic necessities and having to fill out yet another 25 page form is often an insurmountable barrier.
- I think it's important to keep in mind that there are lots of policies in place at the state level that create food insecurity. We need to dismantle those policies and put food security policies in place. For example, all the bureaucratic hurdles to people getting food and cash and housing assistance. People should just get a universal basic income with no restrictions and no questions asked. Also universal health care would help people afford food and be food secure.

Community Stakeholder Outreach: Stigma and Culture

One on One Interviews

- We need to address the stigma around accessing social services programs.
- There is a shame factor regarding using food banks. It's embarrassing to go to food banks, and embarrassing to get expired food from them.
- Pride prevents people from looking for or asking for resources.
- I don't need or want handouts, I want to pay for food, I just want it to be more affordable.
- When I did have the income to be eligible for Fair Share, that was amazing too to have all those fresh veggies. And the staff was great. Very open. Didn't feel stigmatized in any way
- There is a social element about the farmer's market I enjoy. Sometimes at food shelves there are long lines, you need to time it right. As far as I know, this is the only farmer's market in the state with the 4x EBT match, it's wonderful!
- More people should be able to sign up for EBT. What are the obstacles? Being on EBT has vastly improved my life, but I had to get past the shame of being on it. I have health issues, and good food is key
- That anybody can come to a farmers market and get fresh vegetables. And anybody can get a CSA share if they want one. Destigmatizing food access programs.
- Or if they want to spend it and give the food to their neighbors. But if *everybody* got this card. Ever since we started the Grand Isle farmers market years ago we've struggled with this. Self check-out at Hannaford's really helps with anonymity. And the tokens at the farmers market helps destigmatize also because it's not just for EBT but also regular credit/debit customers. If we all had these "fresh" cards limited to local farms, imagine how much that would bolster the local economy! Besides helping solve hunger and food sovereignty. And it should be for veggies and meat. Because crop cash you can only use on veggies. This farm-fresh card should be for all consumables from the farm. It could even be for raw milk! Burger from my neighbor! And it'd be supporting teh farmers and making their food accessible to everyone. [I asked if she wants to brainstorm where the money could come from].
- If there are physical/logistical barriers, create drop-off sites or other mechanisms that don't necessarily put the burden on the farmer to create that distribution - especially for rural folks.

F2P Participant Survey

- Decreasing stigma. Ensuring food through charitable system is of high quality (both nutrient content and appearance). I have heard that many marginalized community members are frustrated at the bad quality (nutrition and dented cans, etc) at food

shelves through the statewide system.

Survey

- Things like the veggie Van go which I have participated in the last couple of months are very helpful, and decreases stigma compared to having to stand in line at the community food shelf.
- I do have concern that there are folks that claim they are "in need" of food shelves and low priced food when in fact they have the means to buy normally. Without being discriminatory I feel to keep the low income folks supplied with food, there should be a sign up that includes your income levels. I see folks in my local Food Shelf who have wonderful jobs and a much more than low income financial state. They just see a means of getting something for nothing as income is not checked. In some way, this should be looked into so the poverty stricken and low income folks are truly getting what they need for themselves and families. By doing this, food security would be there for the ones that truly need it. Food has become scarce in many areas, this could be a manner in how to preserve food from farmers and food suppliers. As weather plays a major factor in loss of food, at some point checking income levels to keep food programs in place should be considered.
- Provide in a location/situation that is least stigmatizing
- Food needs can be embarrassing for people needing help. Reduce the stigma by offering everybody certain staples, like milk, eggs, bread, etc. let them decide whether to spend their money on other pleasurable items like chips, soda, lobster.
- In other states I would often shop at foreign markets where the prices and variety of produce was better. I always felt welcome and the items were clearly marked. But when I tried to shop at a couple of asian markets in Burlington, I felt I did not receive good customer service, the stores were a mess, and hardly anything was priced. I was at time charged differently for items I had purchased in the past. Overall, I did not feel as if I belonged. In a town that touts inclusivity, I wonder why this sort of business is tolerated
- Communicate. Keep the lines of communication open for vulnerable people. Many are too proud to admit they could use help.
- Normalize distribution to all regardless of income to decrease stigma.
- I wish there was a way to lessen the stigma of asking for help. I work in a school and many families are embarrassed to admit they need help providing food for their children.
- That is a hard question. my own mother Wouldn't get food stamps for years finally a worker convinced her. My sister and her husband don't take any full stamps oh help I think trying to reach is the independent souls that don't wanna help. I remember in the 90s and I was on work-study at Castleton NFL student said tome You are eligible for food

stamps so I started then.

- Expand the income eligibility. Remove the stigma of getting food help. Make community wide food days when everyone is welcome to come shop or get food.
- People are not open about admitting they need help.
- Sadly, there is still a stigma surrounding benefit programs such as 3Squares that serve as a barrier to entry for many who need help. The amount of red tape and hassle that can surround the application process can be daunting. As a seasonal horticulture worker, it becomes difficult to apply for benefits when I need them most, as I am not working the required 20 hours a week to qualify. And, the irony of having to ask my boss to certify my hours so I can receive 3Squares, in spite of having a job, is not lost on me.
- Continue to assist with essentials and Farmers Markets access, maybe help in the group get together s in future. Fear and isolation, as well as having to ask for assistance— all the things we have in common . Going for a low key meal with others in same situations might help all the way around?!
- I say this with a droplet of jest, but start off by defining what healthy is... and affordable. This is a loaded question for this measly little box. The programs currently in effect are really great. But how do we get people to want to help themselves? Those that are most in need of food/housing/etc. are usually those that are less likely to be able to help themselves. Get people excited, make them feel welcomed, encouraged, to g
- Make the farmer's market Crop Cash benefit more anonymous. It's really humiliating to go to a table full of people in front of the whole town to get a SNAP benefit. I think many people opt out for this reason.
- We need affordable housing that is safe and has a healthy living environment as well as make the application process more accessible. The resource limits are not inline with reality and don't allow a person/family to have even one month of cushion if something happens. Providing proof of medical costs/mileage, etc is cumbersome and stressful and I know for me, that has stopped me from applying because going around to all the medical providers to get proof I was there and finding receipts for every otc product and then getting my doctor to say I need it, drives me over the edge so I don't apply even if It helps me qualify.
- Encourage contributions to local food banks and to destigmatize asking for help.
- Allow for community food pickups (outside of the food bank- releases stigma !
- Often people who did not grow up food insecure do not know how to access free food without shame. This can be a huge barrier to feeding families. Community networking would be an excellent way to alleviate this
- Build a new food shelf in Burlington Vermont. The cure one is humiliated and dangerous. Food shelf clients are forced to dig through banana boxes that have been placed outside. Bullying, intimidation and threats are coming. There's zero social

distancing zero regard for commutable diseases.

- I want to reiterate, that food security is about more than providing boxes of food items, it's about more than simply ensuring there is something available to ingest. Food is love, food is family, culture, memories. It is about so much more than nutrition. Having worked in the emergency food system and been food insecure myself, I speak from experience when I say that the work of food shelves is important and appreciated AND there is a better way! 3SVT is our most dignified option for addressing food insecurity in our state! It is a program that already exists, we know it works, and we know we can expand it exponentially without having to significantly uproot existing systems or implement new ones, COVID taught us this. We can expand 3SVT or put a P-EBT program in place PERMANENTLY. We can make permanent, the many expansions that were implemented during COVID - expanded benefits for our most vulnerable neighbors, expanded college student eligibility, etc.
- Listen with openness to people who disagree, thinking that if someone gets "something for nothing" it takes away from them; highlight benefits for the wider society when all are food secure.
- Help reduce the stigma around food insecurity.
- Food with dignity needs to be added to the dialogue especially when looking at distribution of gleaned/seconds produce
- I feel Vermont does a stellar job in addressing food insecurity, without judgement and wish mine as well as other communities would take note.
- I think that food insecure and food secure looks different for different people and changes in relation to a myriad of factors. In that light we need to look at food insecurity from many angles and approaches food stamps and foodshelves are great and also feel stigmatized.
- can you somehow make well to do people understand the necessity for charity for those who have less because of environmental, economic, etc. conditions, not because they're 'lazy'.
- The obstacles are stigma which was hard for me to overcome to ask for help and laziness - people are too lazy to apply and I have to say the form and then the interview for SNAP is like a tax return and and audit. It's not easy.

Focus Groups

- Judging shoppers choices
- Prepared meals in stigma-free environments
- Stigma around food insecurity.
- Stigma around the contributing factors to food insecurity including but not limited to disability

- Always be respectful of those seeking services.
- Stigma and the barriers of all the paperwork!
- The idea that people who need help have caused their own problems
- Assumptions around the root of food insecurity
- Assumptions that just because someone is needing meal assistance that they can just eat whatever is given to them
- School meals type of access- No stigma
- Understanding that it is okay to be food insecure because our society is unfortunately built and set up for people to face hardships and we are here to help!! ADVOCACY!
- More willingness/open minds for producers to accept public programs and coupons
- That hunger is largely hidden. And just because you don't see it with your eyes doesn't mean it doesn't exist.
- People feel comfortable asking for information about where to access food
- Warm handoffs, trusted embedded community members identifying needs
- Stigmas around asking for help
- The stigma associated with receiving benefits
- Paternalistic ideas/policies around what people are able to buy with 3svt benefits
- Letting people know that asking for help won't take away from others getting help
- Prohibitive SNAP application process. Mindset shifts away from the fear of fraud and towards trust that folks who seek assistance need it. SNAP for all?
- Food shelves should be set up like stores versus a box handed out through a window
- More people should feel comfortable applying
- Free grocery stores with wraparound services to eliminate stigma, increase client choice, and help alleviate root causes of food insecurity
- Food insecurity happens in many forms to all sorts of people, and people who are food insecure could be anyone they have contact with.
- Reduce stigma
- People feel comfortable asking for help to access programs and resources to support their basic needs.
- Broad education to center the root cause of hunger = poverty
- Stigma from others in the community
- Poor climate and culture at service locations
- STIGMA and SHAME
- Destigmatizing program utilization. Making programming as accessible to everyone as possible.
- Programs that bring with them stigmas of needing help
- Everyone Eats style prepared foods that are accessible to all with no questions asked

regarding income level

- The use of the terms charitable food and commercial food (it's all just food)
- The stigma surrounding the use of food assistance programs
- Agree with the stigma.
- dispelling the stigma that local products have of being too expensive or out of reach to people who can't make procuring them a priority
- The perception that farmers markets and local & organic food are niches and too expensive for regular families to access
- Coupons/things that are a public display of food assistance
- We need to dispel the stigma surrounding food benefit programs
- Barriers to getting food: time limitations, transportation, stigma,
- That we are your neighbors, we worked hard, we had illness or accidents, we are poor or poorer than we used to be, and we can't afford the food we need.
- Breakdown of stigma - using SNAP/EBT/Farm to Family, making sure pediatricians and social workers understand the availability of the programs.
- Services that require people to prove they need food assistance- food pantries that require proof of income
- Framing of food access/assistance as charity
- Shame and blame
- Food pantries that look and feel like stores/markets to increase individual agency
- Decrease stigma
- Judgment about who needs food
- Judging people about free food
- More communication and letting people know that it's okay to go and get free food.
- Getting older people to sign up for 3 squares! Make it easier and reduce the stigma
- I worry that systems will go back to the way they were pre-COVID. We need to start planning for a future that provides food without judgment.
- Please think about dignity!!!
- People sometimes don't feel comfortable coming in. The staff sometimes aren't friendly because they are having a bad day. That needs to stop. We already feel bad coming in!
- It shouldn't be that we are uncomfortable coming in--our taxes pay for this!
- I don't know--what you have, you're trying to address multiple populations--what might need to stop for me, might need to continue for someone else.
- People should be more welcoming at the food shelf. People should know that if they have food stamps, they can still use the shelf. Make it welcome to everyone.
- Families/kids feeling stigmatized
- Community education-reduce the stigmas

- Empathy and compassion for food access
- By giving out meals to families and hotels, it takes away the stigma of asking for charitable food
- Stigma and shame that happens when accessing charitable food needs to stop.
- We need to offer lots of healthy food, not only to those on limited budgets, but to everyone to reduce stigma.

Stakeholder Outreach

- Also, the need to create an environment of inclusiveness and non-judgement in accessing food to remove stigma.
- Important to remove the stigma of need.
- We should pay attention to decreasing stigma by focusing on low-barriers to entry with support programs, designing programs that people feel welcomed in, like they can feel good about participating in, and design with joy.
- Early childcare is an important setting to help create and foster lasting habits and accessibility to/around nutritional eating while helping to decrease the stigma around accessing these much needed programs.
- The food that is already there and how to get it where it needs to go. Whether from farms, grocery stores, gardens, etc.; Stigma, prejudice, and assumptions about food insecure populations.
- Stigma around food insecurity is deeply engrained into our culture. Ensuring that Vermonter's have access to food in a dignified manner (low barrier, able to access in a variety of ways, as anonymous as possible) is essential.
- Stigma reduction - give people choice, give people power in accessing food.
- Pay attention to the continuity of programs and work on break down stigma.
- One possible solution is a collective effort that provides support in the form of: regional buying networks to reduce food costs, delivery networks of both inventory to local hubs and food orders directly to homes to reduce volunteer fatigue and fuel consumption, assistance in securing safe, accessible, and clean spaces to serve as sites for food distribution (food shelves, pantries, etc.), reducing stigma to help normalize the process of receiving assistance

Community Stakeholder Outreach: Education

One on One Interviews

- Education is needed on health, nutrition, canning, healthy lifestyles on a budget.
- Improving overall health is the most important thing that can be done to help marginalized communities. Without health, can't do anything. Whole food and food as medicine should be taught.
- Education. Community gardens
- Cooking demonstrations.
- Foodbanks, etc. can be hectic, we need a senior-only or special needs hour. Cooking classes at different times of day. Hard to consistently get fresh vegetables in the winter months.
- a continuing education program to help people understand what services are available
- We need to focus on supporting local people, especially young people. Look at incomes. We need local education on growing food, sustainability, self-reliance.
- I think of all of the people whose access to food is limited. Also think about access to healthy food, the need for education, access, transportation. Lots of different layers.
- Education, for example about the 4x EBT match at Market.
- Education, especially about fresh veggies.
- Food awareness and cooking classes are needed. We need to get everyone to eat veggies! The coop used to do great cooking classes.
- Kid's cooking classes.
- Education is huge, need incentives to get people in the door and get educated on things
- Tools/education so folks can help themselves. Education about gardening, etc.
- Education about benefits so that they are more utilized
- Those are the big overarching things I see: make sure the food can be produced, and people have the ability to access that food, and at the same time educate people about the importance of local buying and nutritious food and what that looks like in our bioregion
- Food literacy so they're empowered to grow their own.
- Science curriculum in elementary and middle school havng components thats about how to grow food and opportunities for them to brng that into their fmilies, even if people just have window boxes with two tomato plants. Including herbal education.
- Education
- Education around how to cook food, healthy choices, and outreach of places where they can get the help they need. Many don't have computers to find out these hours
- We need to teach people to preserve the soil and raise plants and animals in conjunction. Fast food is the wrong direction. Convenience doesn't work. Teach culinary

skills and how to prepare food so it is nutritionally available

- We should be interviewing people who have grown crops here the longest. We should learn from their knowledge and experience, and learn/collaborate with people in other parts of the world and other climates.

F2P Participant Survey

- make bus boxes of food tied in with cooking curriculum featuring nutritious foods , how to make a stir fry, , a hearty root vegetable soup, traditional venison mincemeat

Survey

- Accurate, understandable information about nutrition and health in schools, through the SNAP program, through DCF, through the Department of Health, and child and family centers. This means increasing funding and training for state and outside agency workers (maybe having nutritionists and/or dieticians more available).
- keep teaching more about growing own, use community gardens, healthy recipes.
- Learn to cook, eat in season, grow your own, remove best used by dates
- Bring back home ec and shop classes in public schools so folks can learn to do for themselves rather tax funded handouts folks do
- Educate the public! I have a son who is an MD. Everyone wants a pill for their weight, diabetes, etc., which are diet-driven
- Getting people familiar and accustom to local, seasonal diets and preserved foods
- In my personal opinion we need to invest in education regarding healthy foods and cooking class. Many communities have access but have no idea how to cook, or why it is important to choose the healthier options.
- Also I think a lot of lower income people who have had a lot of food insecurity generationally, do not know how to prepare fresh food and I think cooking classes and recipes would be helpful.
- Supporting orgs that provide nutrition and education for families (e.g. Janet Munt Family Room). pr
- Public schools and community health centers are great resources for distributing food and info about nutrition and cooking.
- Teach more people how to cook, especially simple, wholesome foods.
- Educate people about foods given in food distribution such as cooking suggestions, shelf life, if things can be frozen, etc. in order to prevent food waste.
- Education: teach in schools: how to grow food, nutrition, K-12! Create more community partnerships with schools and farms!
- eat what is in season, learn to cook
- We rely too heavily upon exotics, and if we built our menus around local foods and

foods that are easily stored from other places, our costs would be reduced. Teaching people ways to prepare low cost delicious foods and celebrating them in opposition to junk food, puts more buying power into the hands of consumers.

- State-promoted on-site school composting and gardening; community gardens; more community involvement from VT Master Gardeners/Composters; more publicity/recruitment from gleaning organizations
- Educate, educate, educate!!
- Educate kids so they know what real, healthy foods are.
- Provide education to the public for where you can get discounted or free food if you're struggling and provide the food of course. Provide education for where people can donate food and when. Provide education for low effort healthy affordable meals and info about how to use various kitchen appliances for multipurpose.
- get family participation in gardens. cooking classes
- Education
- Educate people how to get the most out of the dollar when shopping
- Teach them how to grow their own.
- It is important to make sure everyone knows how to access the foods that are out there that are free and how to cook and store them

Focus Groups

- Education about community sources
- Integration of nutrition education/access to a variety of food types
- Inexpensive recipes
Food/cooking demonstrations
- Fresh produce programs are wonderful and very needed, however, there are many people who are unable to use them to prepare meals for themselves, so if there could be more collaboration between programs that offer prepared meals to funnel the subsidized ingredients to prepared meal makers they could all be more effective (+1)
- Education about the real cost of food production
- More specialized education to the general public about how food can both negatively and positively impact health
- Teach kids to cook
- How to maximize benefits. Coupons, farmers markets
- Helping people who use commodity boxes with what to make with those boxes. Recipes for 1 or 2, easy to make.
- Traveling food trucks to demonstrate how to cook for one or two people with the food from Food Shelves or Commodities boxes
- Canning and gardening classes

- Cooking classes - how to cook items from scratch
- Video and in-person classes for meal prep from fresh ingredients.
- cooking classes
- Nutrition education is very important
- Keep in mind year-round food sources and include education in the funding plan.
- Education to community about available resources
- Cooking classes/demonstrations
- I think there is a greater need for cooking classes/ instruction to help people use food that is available
- Food, Farm, and Nutrition Ed mandated part of federal/state science classroom curriculum. AND, mandated as part of teacher education programs as well.
- education on nutrition and long-term health outcomes. Food is often the last consideration with tight budgets! More on food, less for medical/illness
- the barriers: education, time, and money for supplies, seem substantial. I know that VCGN does some outreach about this
- FREE Education = lower levels of poverty = lower levels of food insecurity. A big portion of the food security convo needs to be about other systemic problems- root causes.
- High school science or ag classes growing food for students to take home
- Consumer education -- to prioritize their health through their food dollars.
- Incorporate an understanding of "time poverty" into meal access/nutrition programs (i.e. make fresh meals fast)
- Garden tool and cooking equipment rentals available through the library - a program that got funded in 2021 and will come to fruition in 2022 in Bratt.
- Providing additional training, workshops, and other supports to enable more people to hunt, fish, forage, garden/grow, can and freeze more of their own, food + barter with neighbors.
- Dietary education, food preparation education. People are dependent on microwaves--cooking as a skill needs to happen more.
- Education, as far as preparing meals, cooking classes--home ec--that needs to start, to help people use fresh vegetables and learn to cook.
- Teaching folks how to cook with food being handed out
- More cooking/nutrition classes: UVM Extension used to run these and they were great

Stakeholder Outreach

- Helping people/educating people on gardening, canning, and food preservation techniques.

Community Stakeholder Outreach: Health One on One Interviews

- Improving overall health is the most important thing that can be done to help marginalized communities. Without health, can't do anything. Whole food and food as medicine should be taught.
- SNAP should cover vitamins!
- More flexibility for people who have medical issues with food. Should allow more flexibility (exceptions or doctor's notes) with what can be purchased with crop cash
- Articles in the radio/newspaper targeting access to healthy food.
- have vehicle, but it had issues and I am immunocompromised so was concerned about in person interactions. I get that logistics of delivery are complicated, but delivery would have helped a lot.
- A tangent but related to access/equity to resources and good food is so connected to health.
- Right now, it seems to me like it's impossible to go hungry in Brattleboro. There are lots of programs, free food everywhere. But, that doesn't mean that people are eating healthy food.
- When I go to Veggie Van Go I see people there in fancy cars. They don't really need the free food. We should grow our own food. Free soil and free seeds would be helpful. Healthy food is very important.
- More people should be able to sign up for EBT. What are the obstacles? Being on EBT has vastly improved my life, but I had to get past the shame of being on it. I have health issues, and good food is key
- The healthy and the affordable pieces feel very distinct at the moment. Given the current structures of how food is priced and how much it costs to produce food in the state, you could write one plan that was about healthy affordable food and a different one that was about healthy food produced in Vermont.
- if we can make VT a place where young people want to come and grow food, that will help grow the population. My town has had problem with schools closing and school mergings. People don't want to raise a family in a town that doesn't have an elementary school! Especially when we're talking to legislators, and it would be prudent in this plan, to tie in some of these strategies of eating healthy and affordably to the strategies we're using to rural development on a broader level.
- If we can find a way to feed people healthfully and affordably and keep their dollars in VT that would be the gold standard.
Ultimately the way we're going to be most food secure is if we can figure out a way to produce our food here, because of uncertainty in CA etc.
- Organic, healthy, fresh food for everyone

F2P Participant Survey

- I think COVID and its lingering effects have shown that food security is not just about access but also supply chain resilience. I think work on food security should take both into account.

Survey

- Vermont food bank and others need to provide healthier foods for diabetics and also foods that don't contribute to obesity, heart, and other health problems.
- Promote education about the real value of food: how it is worth reconsidering a family budget to spend more on food and less on other items in order to invest in a family's own long term health and well being.
- Encouraging folks to take more responsibility (as much as they are able) for their food and health. Encouraging gardening and related activities goes a long way.
- Grow and encourage the small-scale inputs and help people transition away from conventional "American" diets towards healthful and locally-produced diets
- it is tough, even as a single mother with a job I struggle to provide healthy food for both kids
- Getting healthy, local foods to all Vermonters, especially those in food deserts, is critical.
- Food or medicine is what I hear from a lot of our again population
- Food or medicine is what I hear from a lot of our again population
- It's scary, many people need good, healthy food.
- I am someone who is employed but my wife is dealing with a disability and had to have several surgeries this past year. She lost her job and now we are trying desperately to make ends meet on my salary alone. We are constantly low on food and have been eating sandwiches and oatmeal for meals.
- No one should go hungry or not have access to healthy food options
- Farmacy program is great but the choices at BROCC or the Community Cupboard are not always healthy and even what fresh food is there is often spoiled or old.
- Make sure that people have access to fresh food free of forever chemicals like the farmacy program, but maybe expanding it to more participants or giving money coupons for fruits and vegetables to use at farms, farmers market or the store. I think people not understanding how to use the vegetable and fruits is a problem and barrier. Additionally, I think people being unable to cook properly due to lack of equipment or kitchen is an issue
- eating healthy and local
- Keep encouraging folks to apply. I found the process quite daunting at having to submit so much information, but as a disabled senior who often has high medical bills it was worth the efforts. If I didn't have 3squares help I would not be eating very well. It has reduced my stress and allowed me to focus on eating healthy food more often.

- I say this with a droplet of jest, but start off by defining what healthy is... and affordable. This is a loaded question for this measly little box. The programs currently in effect are really great. But how do we get people to want to help themselves? Those that are most in need of food/housing/etc. are usually those that are less likely to be able to help themselves. Get people excited, make them feel welcomed, encouraged, to g
- Make sure everyone knows how to source local, healthy foods.
- Provide safe, clean, health food to all
- i am grateful to have access to healthy food. it does need to be more affordable
- Continue providing the great food supplemental programs like 3Squares and Farm to Plate, and Everyone Eats. I especially love the option of getting a healthy meal from Everyone Eats since I'm low income and not eligible for 3Squares. Food delivery to elderly low income people would be fantastic!
- It's really hard for low income folks to afford fresh, organic food.
- Make healthy food affordable so people have access to afford healthy meals
- The idea for farmers market that doesn't overprice everything. Low income don't shop farmers markets. Once again low priced areas for people to get healthy food. Not fancy just convenient. Many people throw out many garden vegetables because they have no idea what to do with them.
- What about for the people with disability or elder the veggie van at nvrh if they could deliver..with my health issues I always can't get their early. Then when I get there everything is gone.
- healthcare providers should address hunger and malnutrition as health issues and help them connect to food resources
- Most individuals' housing and energy costs are fixed. We don't get to choose to pay half of our rent or have our heating oil tank filled only halfway, so if we are to keep roofs over our heads and keep our homes warm enough to survive a Vermont winter, the only remaining place that we have wiggle room for cuts is our food budgets. This means less healthy, fresh foods which often takes a toll on our health, which then brings its own challenges in the form of increased healthcare costs and increased strain on an already broken healthcare system. It's important to remember that all of these things are deeply connected.
- We need more hygiene at the food shelf. Rubbing alcohol is best for destroying pathogens.
- Provide education to the public for where you can get discounted or free food if you're struggling and provide the food of course. Provide education for where people can donate food and when. Provide education for low effort healthy affordable meals and info about how to use various kitchen appliances for multipurpose.
- Healthy options at affordable prices

- “Healthy” food should be more affordable

Focus Groups

- Access to more healthy food such as eggs, cheese, butter, and milk from the foodbank
- Consistent access to "staples" such as dairy products
- Consistent access to healthy food through the foodbank
- Do it in the context of all determinants of health.
- Address Food Security as a health issue - this is a priority
- Special diet considerations
- Sugar subsidies!
- Resource limits on the amount of cash on hand that someone has if they need to use medical to meet income requirements
- Root causes of hunger, addressing as preventative rather than reactive and approaching as whole health of individuals
- Interconnected issues--housing, healthcare, and many more
- Disease related meals and meal plans
- Access to healthy and culturally diverse foods.
- Look at where else people are receiving regular services (health care, for example) and strengthen collaboration
- education on nutrition and long-term health outcomes. Food is often the last consideration with tight budgets! More on food, less for medical/illness
- Continue to address food security at doctor visits. Get more doctors on board.
- Farmacy/ food is medicine/ healthcare CSA programs
- Health insurance that covers the cost of food as healthcare-related programs
- Integration of healthcare and food access programming - like our CSA & Healthcare prescription model
- Cross-organizational partnerships (like the Healthcare CSA COP)
- Allocating more funding to food as medicine programs
- Healthcare providers have a knowledge of the power of food in health and have this throughout their entire curriculum in the healthcare education
- More dieticians and others on the medical side of enrollment in Healthcare and CSA programs.
- Free fresh vegs farm at Doctors’ offices.
- Poor quality food causes disease and creates more burdens on the state.
- Vermont Public Schools used to have sustainability standards 20 years ago. We need to be working more closely with children and families to understand the value of healthy diets

- Continue to expand Social Determinants of Health Screening by healthcare and public health.
- Reimbursement for food services as part of health care. E.g. produce prescriptions, medically tailored meals, etc. Lots of great work going on to create these programs!
- Free prescriptions for healthy food as part of healthcare
- Understanding for healthy eating
- Affordable Healthcare for ALL
- How to make the healthy choice the default choice, Making eating healthy easy - the burden of a healthy diet should not fall on caretakers
- health care systems need to treat food security & nutrition equity as paramount to preventative care
- Food as preventative care
- People need wrap-around support- connecting health care and affordable housing in the conversation
- More discussion about how "healthy" food is defined, calorie v. nutrient density, etc. Who decides for whom?
- Not sure how much this is happening - but a more trauma-informed approach within charitable food systems.
- Direct communication/referrals between healthcare staff who work with food insecure patients and food organizations to connect people to local resources easily.
- Supply chain and labor issues within the healthcare system
- Safe transportation and food specific to certain diets. I have diabetes and stage 4 kidney disease, congestive heart failure. More foods to help with diet.
- TRANSPORTATION! Keep critical medical diets (specific diets for diseases like heart, kidney, and diabetes) and have a special component for that.
- Making the healthy choice the easy choice
- Premade healthy meals for those that have difficulty cooking for a variety of reasons
- Food as medicine, provide less empty calorie products and ways to increase healthy food access to rural folks without transportation.
- Have Dr.'s offices more involved, for example, as they run across families and patients they could realize the need and make referrals or reach out to agencies to help with food insecurities
- Develop more relationships between food security programs and our health partners: doctors, primary care, etc. to stress the importance of good nutrition.
- The hospitals, urgent care, etc. see people that may not come across any of our services and don't know about possible resources

Community Stakeholder Outreach: Transportation

One on One Interviews

- Accessing the market can be a challenge since they don't have consistent access to a car.
- Transportation and mobility/health can be an issue in terms of accessing pick-up food sites. I had been hungry for years before Everyone Eats started
- We are a rural state so communication and transportation can be an issue especially for our older population.
- Good/reliable transportation is also a barrier.
- Transportation or ability can still prevent people from accessing food or food assistance.
- Food delivery would be helpful for seniors or people with disabilities
- I think of all of the people whose access to food is limited. Also think about access to healthy food, the need for education, access, transportation. Lots of different layers.
- Portable cooking van.
- I was part-time then full time at new job during the pandemic, which had more income, but still a struggle to afford food and get access to it and the biggest barrier was transportation.
- I have vehicle, but it had issues and I am immunocompromised so was concerned about in person interactions. I get that logistics of delivery are complicated, but delivery would have helped a lot. Navigating bus system are challenging, and maybe the location is not on a route. Brainstorming transportation ideas most important to Food Security Plan. Use model similar to Meals on Wheels/home delivery systems.
- Transportation to farm stands is still a challenge, maybe there could be a state-funded fee subsidy for food delivery from farmers and farm stands.
- I live in Putney, but I come to the Brattleboro Farmers Market because of the 4x EBT match. But, I need a car to do that, so sometimes that's hard.
- Better transportation.
- public transportation,
- Transportation to farms
- There needs to be more food shelves with better hours for those working. there is also many issues with transportation to and from the food shelves.
- Who do you call if you are a rural elderly living without internet access, transportation or childcare?
- Transportation. I have to walk everywhere and that is hard. There aren't any services in West Brattleboro so I need to walk into town for all services.

Survey

- Public transportation to help people get to stores, especially including rural areas.

- Make it available on a reliable and easily accessible public transit line - transportation is such an important consideration for folks to connect with the resource.
- Everyone has a living wage. Everyone has affordable, convenient access to transportation (public, active, and/or micro) that reaches stores with affordable, healthy, culturally appropriate foods.
- One idea to increase access would be transportation vouchers. For example: You needed to take the public transportation to go to the grocery store, you might qualify to a voucher in case you choose at least an "x" amount of healthy options at the grocery store.
- Rural public transportation solutions
- Increasing public transportation throughout the state to make it easier for people to get to stores and other places to purchase food
- A mobile food bank for those who don't have transportation
- Mobile sites for food pick ups.
- make food bank and food shelf and gleaned food more accessible to non drivers
- Provide access to transportation to markets/farms that have healthy whole foods. Corner markets in food deserts don't provide access to healthier food options.
- Make food easy to access, as not everyone has transportation.
- Offer more pick up spots for fresh fruits and veggies; Automatic monthly vouchers for fruits and veggies and proteins, based on the number of kids you have - each kid gets a voucher each month
- Accessibility, through use of mobile food pantries and free alternative transportation services in areas where public transport isn't as accessible.
- If transportation is an issue coming up with a solution to provide the less fortunate convenient, healthy, affordable food.
- you first need to identify any and all food desert areas of the state and target providing food to everyone there, for starters. Work your way out from there.
- More food distribution locations, especially on weekends . considering those without transportation. Also consider a plan for those without cell phones or computer access. The every one eats program is great , without a phone you cannot get a meal.
- I believe we have the resources and the willingness among farmers and residents to make food always accessible to every Vermonter. I think the pandemic has shown us that there has always been a need and the state helped to make it happen, I hope the state continues to provide the same relief and looks for ways to grow accessibility to healthy foods. Being able to spend less than 70 or 75% of your income on housing and transportation would be a great place to start. Limiting what can be charged for rent, rent increases would help.

- I am a subsidized member of the Littleton food coop because it is the best selection of organic and locally grown food in my area and the state of New Hampshire offers a program called Market Match that gives me 50% off fresh fruits and vegetables. It is a big trip for me, but worth it. Now my car won't pass inspection and I can't get there.
- Meals on Wheels is another great and necessary program, I hope it will be ongoing!
- Work to accommodate Vermonters with disabilities and those who cannot afford transportation. There is one food program our household cannot access because it is too far.
- Transportation, for both product and the people that need the food
- Meal on Wheels and such should not be neglected either.
- Have a dedicated Meals on Wheels vehicle. More people might volunteer to deliver, especially in rural areas.
- So many of these programs were either first come first serve or during the day times, disproportionately serving folks that already have the time and transportation access to get to them during narrow time windows, and made it impossible for anyone without reliable transportation and day time time.
- delivery to homes and popups in neighborhoods
- grocery delivery service - there is no way for people without cars to easily access groceries
- A way to receive the food, especially for the elderly, people that don't have transportation.
- I think each town has at least 1 resource for free food; local church, community pantry, meal pickup, etc. Age Well offers meals on wheels and discounts to local eateries.
- Many people living in rural areas also lack access to reliable transportation, which is a barrier to accessing healthy food. We need more support for local food shelves and transportation services so that people can access affordable and/or free food near them.
- It's probably very hard for people without cars to get food
- Ease of access as some have mobility issues and/or transportation barriers.
- It's a real problem and transportation and income challenges add to the problem
- Transportation to be able to access food sources.
- Finding ways to cut down on the amount of driving that has to be done to get food.
- There is an incredible amount of driving that has to be done in order to get food. My family has to think really carefully about how much we drive and when given gas prices. It's not necessarily a bad thing to have to be thoughtful about it, but some folks who may be an hour away from a grocery store or market or may not have a reliable vehicle or money for gas, may be doing without. How can communities work together to cut

down on the need to drive far away for food.

- Establish a network of food banks throughout the state. These should be stocked with low-cost (generic) food staples. Delivery services should be available (partnering with meals on wheel).
- Transportation/access
- Educate people how to get the most out of the dollar when shopping, where to go, and perhaps there needs to be better transportation.
- I know the saying beggars cannot be choosers but ---- I was picking up 25 mile round trip - the extra food box from the VT Food Bank for a few months but then I stopped as there was little in the box for a clean, sugar-free, picky eater. So a better food box would be a great improvement.
- Also healthy meal/grocery delivery options for people who are sick, homebound, and/or disabled but who can't get meals-on-wheels would be helpful

Focus Groups

- There is an assumption outside of this room that everyone has transportation to access food. That needs to stop.
- Mobile Food Pantries
- Helping with transportation
- Lack of transportation, Ditto lack of transportation
- Lack of ways to deliver food
- A group that will be able to deliver food where needed
- More home delivery of foods in rural areas.
- How transportation issues that exist in the NEK can impact the ability of people to access food
- Food delivery for those who have transportation needs or who are home-bound
- Meals on Wheels
- Food delivery for those who are homebound or have transportation issues, for all ages
- Improved public transportation
- VeggieVanGo in more areas
- Be able to deliver to people where they can access it. More delivery to homes.
- Schedules and opportunities are more available. IE expands the Veggie Van Go program, longer hours, more locations
- Home delivery, or engaging volunteers, to solve transportation or access issues
- More Veggie VanGo locations and dates
- Options are needed that meet people where they are: prepared meals, raw ingredients, delivered, picked up, etc.

- Programs that provide delivery options, customer choice, allowances for special dietary restrictions
- More accessible transportation particularly in the Upper Valley
- Traveling food shelves for more isolated areas
- free grocery store food delivery services
- More transportation to get food
- Traveling food trucks to demonstrate how to cook for one or two people with the food from Food Shelves or Commodities boxes
- Transportation to/from sites. How to get food into the homes of people that need it and can't "pick it up". Working with civic groups to help with transportation or delivery: Lions club et
- Home delivery options in all areas of the state
- Develop transportation systems to connect food desserts to food sources
- Delivery to people without transportation, especially those who do not live in congregate settings or on a bus route
- Home deliveries
- Food delivery without the use of computers
- Keep funding! Meals on Wheels funding has been cut. We are not turning anyone away but the funding isn't there. Funding food for all Vermonters!
- Consider transportation issues for rural areas in the state.
- Transportation, special dietary needs, inability to work, and food insecurity (lack of kitchen food storage) are common barriers
- It is very important to remember our home-bound residents
- Think about the packaging and size of food items to allow people to lift/move their food when no transportation is available
- More funding for Meals on Wheels and a focus on providing access to fresh ingredients in the preparation of these meals.
- How can rural-living home-bound seniors get the food that they need more easily?
- Some consistency in providing flavorful and healthful meals in the Meals on Wheels community
- How rural many of the seniors are and they do not always have easy access to grocery stores without travel and/or someone to provide transportation to and from.
- Transportation and delivery options
- Support transportation access in rural communities (ride shares, grocery/meal deliveries, CSAs, etc.)
- Food needs to be delivered and not picked up.
- Free, public transport to local food shelves

- Stronger public transportation infrastructure
- Transportation and delivery services when needed for access to food
- Accessibility in terms of both transport and availability in rural communities.
- Transportation needs to be central to this plan
- Transport to markets is a barrier for many food insecure VTers- how can we get these SNAP match programs/a supplemental healthy/local food program to these peo
- Transport to markets is a barrier for many food insecure VTers- how can we get these SNAP match programs/a supplemental healthy/local food program to these peo
- Even in VT, we have "food deserts" - small communities with no grocery stores. Families may not have transport to get to another town to shop.
- Better delivery service to homebound and older adults or rural populations that lack transportation to healthy food - some happening, but not nearly enough in VT
- Better public transportation
- Barriers to getting food: time limitations, transportation, stigma,
- Lots of seniors do not have transportation to buy groceries.
- The cost of auto and repairs along with housing. Plus car inspection restrictions.
- The high cost of transportation: auto, repairs, and tires make it hard to own a car. Inspections are challenging too.
- It's hard to keep a job in VT without reliable transportation.
- More VeggieVanGo
- Mobile vans with food
- Lack of transportation
- Better transportation options for those who don't live "in town"
- Delivery of food to people's residences
- Home delivery services to bring locally produced food to people with limited mobility or time
- Getting food to where people already are
- Getting food directly to people who are homebound
- Food outlets closer to where people live, work, and play.
- Getting people rides to farmers markets where they can use Crop Cash
- Transportation systems developed that work for people every day
- Public transit is good for some and inaccessible for many
- Public transportation and built infrastructure
- Some folks can pick up food while others are hampered with out transportation.
- Think about how we could deliver meals and food to our orderly.
- Waiver of congregate meals for summer meals. And the ability to offer multiple meals at one time saves time, reduces transportation barriers

- What is the long-term vision around food transportation and distribution? This needs to be part of a decentralized food security plan for the state.
- Transportation to smaller more rural towns.
- Grocery delivery for homebound people
- Overview of where people can access food across the state. Broad map, what's accessible by transportation, charitable food system. Lots of things don't provide everything that a house needs in one day, so people have to go to multiple places. Also, need signage, charitable food sites are often hidden in places that aren't obvious or easy to access.
- Transportation and siting of grocery stores
- Safe transportation and food specific to certain diets. I have diabetes and stage 4 kidney disease, congestive heart failure. More foods to help with diet.
- Veggie Van Go – if you don't have transportation, you can't get it. they have the best veggies. They cut down on how much we could take for others to pick up. limited to 5
- I don't feel safe in a cab, so I won't take a ride from people I don't know or trust
- The rising cost of food and transportation needs to stop! The bus doesn't feel safe either--too many people on drugs swearing.
- A way to get the food--I hate bringing up transportation over and over! Veggie Van Gogh is great.
- TRANSPORTATION! Keep critical medical diets (specific diets for diseases like heart, kidney, and diabetes) and have a special component for that.
- What if there were a van that could go around with healthy food and stop at their door, and people could choose what they want.
- Safe transportation is key--
- Food as medicine, provide less empty calorie products and ways to increase healthy food access to rural folks without transportation.
- Meals getting delivered to hotels is great and should continue. Kids should also be able to take home meals to their homes--so many families face food insecurity
- Transportation to farmers markets, supermarkets, etc..
- We need to move the model to food coming to the people, rather than people traveling to find food.
- transportation is needed. Absolutely crucial!
- We don't have supermarkets in places where people can get to them
- Transportation is an issue for food access
- We have free meals for kids during the summer but a lot of families can't get to them because of transportation issues

Stakeholder Outreach

- Very important to pay attention to rural, small community voices as there are different challenges facing those communities (food can be hard to access/transportation is a huge issue).
- For example, I need to get food to the NEK (I live in Chittenden county). With prices of gas or limited access to transportation we need to pay for CSA programs that could be delivered to individuals at their homes. Meet them where they're at.
- Transportation access to the resources that are available for people but aren't accessible. There's no one community, in terms of these conversations, that represents all the 'diversity' here. Each community has different kinds of challenges in accessing and maintaining food security.
- Getting food to people - it's better for more people to get food (even perhaps a small number of people who are in less need than others) than it is to make sure that no one who absolutely doesn't need the food gets some.
- Transportation is one of the biggest barriers- getting food to people or getting people to food

Community Stakeholder Outreach: Equity

One on One Interviews

- Improving overall health is the most important thing that can be done to help marginalized communities. Without health, can't do anything. Whole food and food as medicine should be taught.
- My EBT Cash card is going toward my rent and lights and other bills. I'm disabled and my rent is \$825/month and my lights are \$60-80/month. So, I don't have enough to pay for food. We also need food for dogs and cats and more help for lower-income people with pets. They are my therapy; it's important for me to have them
- Anger and frustration come up. I worked full time in the community, in community services programs. I've helped a lot of people, and last year I got sick and went on disability. But since I didn't qualify for food stamps, I didn't qualify for other benefits, and it was very hard.
- Equity, children need access to food that they need to thrive. This is a basic need and shouldn't be a struggle
- State provides a lot of support for low-income residents, but less for low/middle income residents. Being middle income can exclude you from benefits even if your salary isn't high. We need a paradigm shift to support local middle class people who are making local, VT middle class wages
- Food delivery would be helpful for seniors or people with disabilities
- They should give you an allowance on a card--food stamps don't always give enough. An extra card with extra money for after food stamps run out. I spend my EBT mainly on food, but I also have my light bill and I don't want my lights shut off-they've helped me with that, some program helped. But, my rent went up \$72 and I have to pay that next month and it really stinks. They do everything for people with kids, but not for people like me with Grandkids. I can't keep up with my bills and pay for gifts for the grandkids
- translation services, getting, making sure things are translated into different languages. Making sure places like AALV and Refugee Resettlement Program are aware of these resources and get people what they need. Beyond language, what about visually impaired and hearing impaired?
- We have free food, gleaning, fair share, prepared meals - great. We have all of these things but creating actual scenarios, fictional scenarios, with people that have X disability and live alone and are immunocompromised etc. is what needs fleshing out.
- When I go to Veggie Van Go I see people there in fancy cars. They don't really need the free food. We should grow our own food. Free soil and free seeds would be helpful. Healthy food is very important.
- We grow tons of food in Vermont, and there should be a fair and equal distribution of it. The economy is hard and there is a big disparity now. SNAP access can be tricky.

- Land access too, for especially for marginalized groups. Doing more around that.
- raise the minimum wage, provide affordable childcare.
- WIC people can not buy my eggs at the grocery store because my eggs cost too much. They limit food choices that shouldn't be. With the new pandemic EBT, we're getting rich lakefront people using it, and we're trying to capture those dollars into the farmers' pockets. Getting that money spent and spent locally.
- The food is here and available, it's about access monetarily and physically. Subsidize access for those who need it, rather than subsidizing the farm.
- As amazing as programs like NOFA and sliding scale are, we could keep expanding them forever and nothing would really change until poverty and economic inequality are shifted. I have trouble envisioning what policy or gov't support could fundamentally change that. People aren't hungry only because of inadequate food access programs. The more we create programs, the more we build systems that rely on the current inequity we have. But at the same time, I think these programs are amazing. Everything just has to be happening at the same time - emergency services, and longer-term sustainable change.

F2P Participant Survey

- I do not advocate for protectionism but for just access to nutritious local food.
- One important part is telling the full story of Vermont's food system. I think it is really important that we have a full and accurate understanding of our current reality; one that recognizes the extent of food insecurity, the role of migrant labor, and the environmental impacts of some of our larger agricultural operations. We can't hide behind a false façade of the "Vermont" brand.
- At the same time building distribution and food access systems based on food justice will help ensure a just food system, which will be all the more important in times of stress to our supply.

Survey

- The biggest issues I see, working with poor rural Vermonters and sometimes being a poor rural Vermonter, are lack of affordability of healthy foods, lack of knowledge of how to use them and the impacts of poor nutrition, and lack of adequate transportation.
- Many people rely on their small, local general stores, which are even more economically prohibitive and tend to carry less quality foods and less produce. Or they get groceries at dollar stores because it's less expensive.
- More funding & grant money for BIPOC & LGBTQ+ farmers to purchase land and equipment;

- Vermont always maintained a high quality of life in my opinion as a 3rd generation Vermonter, born & raised, by consistently reinforcing and perpetuating its core values, via sustainable growth & development, environmental stewardship and ecological practices, valuing local foods, commerce, and people over other outside, larger, more short term profitable ideologies, and by understanding that keeping things small, hyper-local, affordable and healthy for land & people, is the only sustainable, ethical, environmentally conducive and economically sound way forward. In recent years I believe we've seen that being more compromised as a direct reflection of the state's increased demand for new residents from different areas that don't share those ideals or values, as a money grab and land grab due to climate crisis migration and health crisis migration, and simultaneously connected, local residents especially older generations opting to sell their land or businesses or homes because it's becoming increasingly more unsustainably expensive to live here, therefore they decide to leave.
- Everyone has a living wage. Everyone has affordable, convenient access to transportation (public, active, and/or micro) that reaches stores with affordable, healthy, culturally appropriate foods.
- I do have concern that there are folks that claim they are "in need" of food shelves and low priced food when in fact they have the means to buy normally. Without being discriminatory I feel to keep the low income folks supplied with food, there should be a sign up that includes your income levels. I see folks in my local Food Shelf who have wonderful jobs and a much more than low income financial state. They just see a means of getting something for nothing as income is not checked. In some way, this should be looked into so the poverty stricken and low income folks are truly getting what they need for themselves and families. By doing this, food security would be there for the ones that truly need it. Food has become scarce in many areas, this could be a manner in how to preserve food from farmers and food suppliers. As weather plays a major factor in loss of food, at some point checking income levels to keep food programs in place should be considered.
- As a society we need to create greater social justice and greater environmental justice.
- Universal basic income. Universal quality healthcare. Restorative justice. Robust care for mental health and addiction. Affordable childcare. Rural public transportation solutions. Community based mutual aid. Community meals for everyone.
- Disrupting the have/have nots dynamic - people coming together to listen, build relationships and and cultivate the connectivity, respect and care that are foundational to community-based resilience and change-making.
- Acceptance and. Accessibility Services
- Land equity, access, and reparations
- Make it more assessable for lower income people to find local food shelves and

- Make it more assessable for lower income people to find local food shelves and it would be a great idea to have universal meals available to ALL children in this state
- This is an issue far beyond food production. It is about the unbelievable income disparities that are due to both Vermont policies as well as broader US economic policy...failure of "trickle down." People will remain hungry and food insecure so long as we have such an imbalance in incomes and standards of living.
- How are we making sure no Vermonter is overlooked/falls under the radar?
- The programs that provide food through local farms and restaurants are the best model I can think of. Other ideas: Support the continuation & increase of delivery services and curbside pickup. Consider subsidizing the extra fee sometimes associated with these services. Also, increase physical accessibility in stores
- Center the nutritional needs of the most food insecure
- I am someone who is employed but my wife is dealing with a disability and had to have several surgeries this past year. She lost her job and now we are trying desperately to make ends meet on my salary alone. We are constantly low on food and have been eating sandwiches and oatmeal for meals.
- Vermont should raise minimum wage and institute state programs to assist with basic costs (e.g. rent). Top tax brackets should be higher.
- Food security is complicated -- wages, food deserts, nutritional awareness, cultural appropriateness, preferences are but a few of the aspects that form the outlines of food security.
- No one should go hungry or not have access to healthy food options
- If it wasn't for programs like you, stepping up to help us all of us low income no incomes would be suffering severely. Some of us even are still after receiving some help from you.
- Dismantling the systemic inequalities that are the root cause of hunger (change laws).
- Ensure basic human rights (access to food/housing/legal identity) to migrant farm workers.
- We need to diversify what is available so that immigrants have access to foods they want and others are exposed to new foods of their neighbors
- There should be some countywide coordination so that the same family is not allowed to take resources from all local food shelves thereby depleting resources for other families.
- People that are homeless and low income need to get good nourishment
- Produce, Provide and Develop a strong LOCAL economy that supports all Vermonters. Farmers & citizen Vermonters simply need more money. Grants aren't enough. Subsidies for citizens isn't enough! There needs to be some real hard conversation

about what a local economy looks like.

- The idea for farmers market that doesn't overprice everything. Low income don't shop farmers markets. Once again low priced areas for people to get healthy food. Not fancy just convenient. Many people throw out many garden vegetables because they have no idea what to do with them.
- UBI, or food stamps for everyone
- I work with a lot of people who are often experiencing food insecurity. I feel Chittenden Co. does a good job at addressing but wonder about the equity of available resources across the State, in particular rural areas.
- Incentivize local consumer (reswork on access to land, housing, and childcare - remove the barriers that prevent people from having the financial stability to purchase healthy food. Place less emphasis on affordability, which decreases the awareness of the true cost of food, and instead create an economic system that allow people to pay prices that keep farmers and local producers employed
- it is tied to everything else, and cannot be improved without addressing the root causes of inequity
- It is a major problem throughout the entire world. We need to work on equality for all especially in financial areas.
- There are a lot of people experiencing food insecurity. I believe there should be more programs like CAE to help with supporting not only people in need of food, but also local food producers and restaurants. A program that requires the restaurant to use a certain percent of locally produced food would be excellent.
- Food sovereignty (as compared to just food security) is important!
- We need to support these organizations, AND we also need systemic changes aimed at lifting community members out of poverty. Things like a just transition to renewable energy to alleviate energy poverty on a mass scale, major investments in affordable housing, availability of childcare, and investments in public transportation. These are the kinds of programs that don't simply materialize without our legislators and community leaders taking serious action and they all have a very direct impact on access to healthy, affordable foods.
- I dream of a shift from a focus on food security to a focus on true community food sovereignty. This term refers to the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agricultural systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies, rather than the demands of markets and corporations.
- Just that poor people want healthy foods too
- all families should have basics

- Provide all workers with a living wage
- make farmworker visas available year round but also increase supervision of their living/working conditions.
- As the national and global food systems collapse it will be more important than ever to support organic and small farms, particularly those using African and Indigenous wisdom to ensure the fertility and health of the ecosystems.

Focus Groups

- Focus on equitable access to varied populations
- Cultural competency!
- Ways to best assist the refugee community as it expands in our state
- We need to stop denying basic human rights (like access to food and health care) to migrant farm workers!
- Think about those with disabilities who are often impacted more so than other groups
- Consider the changing demographics and increase in diversity
Equity, equality, and diversity!
- Understanding at the government level that while Hunger has been an ongoing issue in VT. It has become a Chronic issue for some families. A way of life sadly
- Ditch the mindset that adding more emergency food programs will solve the problem.
- Stop subsidies to mega-farms and bring the money local. It's a political issue.
- More diverse community engagement and involvement
- Food is a basic human right
- Access to food for Vermonters who do not have a way to cook is so important, but most programs are geared toward people who have kitchens.
- Food security is a symptom of other social challenges in Vermont
- The externalized costs of an increasingly centralized, industrialized food system places the largest burden on the most marginalized members of our community.
- Part of food access is ensuring that culturally appropriate foods are accessible financially.
- Make language understandable to all ages and easy to understand
- People expressing that they do not want to take benefits from others.
- addressing root causes of poverty
- Make migrant farm workers eligible for legal identity and to access food and medical programs
- Not only the people who are impoverished need support
- Center the most impact on how you identify pathways to access nourishing local food -- everyone should be able to afford and eat fresh VT foods.

- Transportation, special dietary needs, inability to work, and food insecurity (lack of kitchen food storage) are common barriers
- More culturally sensitive foods
- Access to healthy and culturally diverse foods.
- More support for ethnic food stores
- Support and safety measures for migrant workers
- Poverty isn't a choice, and we need to center the most impacted in this plan! when you address the greatest needs, everyone's needs are met.
- Equity!
- Think about that the demographic shift in the state of Vermont. How do we better support small businesses providing ethnic food products to the community?
- Universal basic SNAP for all...easier to make a national case for than UBI? Maybe?
- Feeding all who need it is a value we should all embrace
- How to measure success and extend the plan until true food security for all is achieved
- A program that would provide the equivalent of 3 squares food assistance to undocumented individuals.
- integrating justice with sustainability in the food system
- Centering equity in the drafting of the plan.
- We should be striving towards food sovereignty, even above food security
- I could go on a big long rant about how big corporations feed off of the EBT program and make \$\$ by making it more complicated to use but....:)
- Basic goods are subsidized--cereals, grains, dairy, fruits, and vegetables so that everyone can afford them.
- Bring greater equity to farm laborers - fair livable wages, paid as non-exempt workers
- Expanded options for culturally appropriate foods
- Not enough prepared meals (providing people with ingredients without considering what they need to prepare them)
- Ignoring studies that show lowered barriers = benefits across income brackets
- Culturally relevant food for all in all communities
- Setting up purchasing groups for independent grocers or small corner markets to purchase cultural foods at a more affordable price
- Centering the plan on equity with an emphasis on operationalizing equity in every action.
- Focus on equitable distribution of food (examine why we waste so much food in some places while so many people do not have enough food)
- Creating flexible structures so people can take the food they need on their terms, with very low barriers to entry

- Continued education, knowledge, and programs that support the importance of culturally responsive food access
- Food for different cultures, use of translated services for languages
- Expectations of cheap food, coupled with underpaying farm labor (and folks in general)
- Vast amounts of money going to the military rather than basic needs like food
- Focus on non-food-related benefits/subsidies so family income can be used for food.
- Greater supports for small, diversified farms. And ESPECIALLY BIPOC and queer farmers
- A more comprehensive system to fill gaps so that every age, income, and location can access fresh food.
- Please remember all ages and all cultures
- Not sure how much this is happening - but a more trauma-informed approach within charitable food systems.
- Food Sovereignty framework
- How can Vermont's food plan be informed by what Maine and Mass have done? How can food sovereignty from the Abenaki perspective be included?
- Increased care in centering the voices of people who participate in the charitable food system to get food and allowing them to shape organizations & programs
- Commitment to providing fresh food, culturally appropriate foods, prepared meals, and delivery
- Culturally appropriate and well-labeled food - Farms to Families & Everyone Eats, low barrier while still providing opportunities for feedback
- Address systemic racism and discrimination
- Land access (gardens and farms) for food sovereignty
- Support for labor and labor unions, the inclusion of employee ownership models, and cooperative businesses in funding opportunities
- Universal Basic Income
- Wealth building for food system workers (local farm workers, migrant farm workers, food service industry)
- What structural issues do we need to address?
- Address systemic racism and discrimination
- How do we involve food insecure people in the plan?
Food sovereignty needs to be at the foundation of a food security plan.
- Centering community voices by using surveys to share resources and data between food security and food justice organizations
- Create trauma-informed trainings for people working in food access and food security so that they do not unwittingly inflict further trauma during stakeholder meetings.
- Create group settings where everyone comes together and food is an equalizing force,

not just a place for food insecure people to come. Create a space for people to come together under times of stress and create community through a lens of challenges that affect us all.

- Reframing food as a basic right
- Making sure the food insecure have a voice in the plan
- Access to healthy food is a right, not a privilege.
- Keep in mind cultural foods access
- Saying they need nutrition classes is great but also can't always be done with 3square budget teaching to cook on a 3square meal
- Folks that only have a microwave or fridge are the most vulnerable and we have the least capacity to help them out. Shelf stable good nutritious food needs to be available.
- looking at the elderly or people that have disabilities having access. For example, expanding on meals on wheels.

Stakeholder Outreach

- Also, the need to create an environment of inclusiveness and non-judgement in accessing food to remove stigma.
- The food security 'complex' of charities is just a place where people who experience food insecurity don't get to be themselves.
- Equity - All communities should have access to nutritional food.
- Changing the language not to discriminate; Highlighting FOOD Sovereignty; the misinformation about people living in poverty
- Unseen populations, those who may not consider themselves as food insecure, or who may not be food insecure year round.
- Focus on most vulnerable people in the state, continue to identify BIPOC, migrant workers, indigenous people, poverty in rural communities and provide support.
- We should pay attention to the disparities in who is more likely to experience hunger, and design a plan that centers those most impacted.
- We should pay attention to dignity and equity and also pay attention to where white supremacy culture creeps in to structures and ideas proposed.
- Listen to the people currently impacted by food security and figure out how to meet their other basic needs
- I think culturally sensitivity where it relates to food.
- People should be able to choose what we want. Everyone Eats did not work for farmworkers because of this issue. Poor and marginalized people are not asked enough what they want
- Being intentional about the folks included in these conversations around health/wellness and food insecurity. Folks w/ rich and textural experiences allow for

better insight into the needs of under-served communities and allows the community to feel that they are apart of the conversation

- For latin migrant workers there is a monopoly of how they access the ingredients of their traditional foods. There are well known people in the latin migrant farm workers, they offer translation services, transport and they also sell food, sometimes 3 times the market prices, taking advantage of their power position. Creating a conflict of interest between the farm workers and the food providers that benefit from the lack of access to food and mobility.
- Cultural competency - because of the cultural differences in how people eat and feed their families and relate to food.
- Leave room for food to be culturally expansive.
- new American communities and farmers, and the huge variations there in what people need and want; language access;
- Easy and culturally sensitive and responsive ways to develop skills you need to support yourself and your family.
- Increasing and expanding land access for all people, especially marginalized communities.
- Where the food deserts are - when I say that I mean any community or neighborhood without grocery stores, or food choices beyond a gas station/fast food restaurant. Lower income neighborhoods don't have sufficient grocery stores often. Tackling the food desert issue!
- The barriers that represent the fail of culture and society as a system, the way they shape our economy. Because the ones who work the most have the less resources and time to eat and nourish themselves.
- Economic justice and redistribution. Racial justice. Climate mitigation and resilience. Looking out for false solutions that say we will solve food security by making sure there is a robust emergency feeding system, but not figuring out how to prevent people from needing emergency food in the first place. Philanthropy generally supports the former. In general, food aid tends to destabilize local food economies - so important to be aware of concentration of power and decision making.
- It would be sad if one of the main outcomes is that Vermont Foodbank gets a huge influx to their budget to build a new warehouse. Might be needed in the short term but doesn't solve the larger issues.
- Diverse grassroots input (rural communities, urban, new american, BIPOC, economically marginalized, food web stakeholders, farmers, farm workers, etc.), people's genuine needs, root causes, limiting factors, intersections with other structural root causes of impoverishment and inequity, food soveriegnty - there is not equitable food security without food sovereignty.

- Transportation access to the resources that are available for people but aren't accessible. There's no one community, in terms of these conversations, that represents all the 'diversity' here. Each community has different kinds of challenges in accessing and maintaining food security.
- Paying attention to the ways that food access intersects with other structural inequalities is crucial. You can't separate food access out from other inequalities (racial, gender, ability/disability, language, transportation), and looking at it intersectionally is crucial.
- It is also essential to engage and empower communities experiencing food insecurity to develop and implement solutions.
- Conversations around access to healthcare, insurance, housing, dignity, improvements to SNAP system
Focus on VT producers and growers - lifting up small businesses and farm operations
Protections against corporations and conglomerations
- The contributions/ideas from people who have or are currently experiencing hunger.
- This is not particularly unique to Vermont, but there is a clear market failure where we have food producers who struggle to make ends meet and can be food insecure themselves while also having a situation where local food costs too much for many people to afford to eat healthily and sustain local producers/the local economy
- Getting food to people - it's better for more people to get food (even perhaps a small number of people who are in less need than others) than it is to make sure that no one who absolutely doesn't need the food gets some.
- Serving all. Nonprofit sector can't do it alone, we need public and private involvement to make meaningful change. Investment in providing protein/dairy to food insecure families.
- Transmitting message of inclusivity – as community evolves, co-op must also evolve; Lack of diversity; need to work on socioeconomic divide; VT, Brattleboro - 99% of shoppers are low income/middle class white people, even though community has diversity; Program that creates a connection between leaders of POC and co-ops (on a micro and macro scale), what does it mean to have a community market?
- For Feeding Chittenden, we are paying most attention to historically under resourced populations (New Americans, BIPOC) by social support systems

Community Stakeholder Outreach: Local Food

One on One Interviews

- The kids love the farmer's market!
- He sees a disconnect between local/healthy food and affordability/accessibility
- Existing programs go a long way. Continue to incentivize people to shop at the local markets
- Secure local food systems.
- Support small scale agriculture at every level
- Grow food everywhere for anyone who needs it
- Gleaning, Farmer's Markets and growing our own food is important
- Need to support local food and farmers as much as possible. I like knowing who grows my food
- Have community gardens! People appreciate growing their own food.
- Provide a tax deduction for residents who have gardens instead of lawns. Plant fruit trees and create an edible landscape.
- Growing our own food is the most important thing, we should have gardens in all of our schools. Kids should be taught how to grow and appreciate what's on the table.
- We need to recognize food security depends on local food production. Protect and support local producers. There is a triangle between local producers, local distribution, and local consumption, and that is the key.
- Brattleboro needs an accessible community garden that is within walking distance of downtown
- Started to grow own food-started as a hobby but now it is a necessity.
- We need support for farmers so that prices can stay affordable for locals
- We need to focus on supporting local people, especially young people. Look at incomes. We need local education on growing food, sustainability, self-reliance
- Like in Montreal or Europe, we should have a farmer's market that is open 7 days a week. We need support for small farmers.
- We have so many local farmers, we need more consistent outlets for them to sell their food so that they can stay afloat.
- Also, want more food gardens around town, more edible plants could be planted in town planters.
- Importance of local food access. Education on how to garden and on organic farming is super important. Education on the dangers of pesticides and how they are causing an insect apocalypse and a breakdown in global food security.
- Concerned that so little of the food we eat is local. We need to support local food statewide and nationally. Thinks grandmothers should be in charge, we know what's

important.

- Support local organic farmers.
- Continue the EBT 4x matching program. Governmental funding MUST support local food.
- VT is one of the places where I feel more food secure because we produce a lot of our own local food. Cost is still an issue, but things being local helps.
- Farmer's Markets, strengthening local food systems and the local economy.
- We moved here from Florida. Our kids love it here, especially the proximity to the land. We want to grow our own food. Food security is worrisome as is impact of climate change for the youth.
- Growing local is important. Sometimes farmer's markets are too expensive. Need incentives to get more people to farmers markets.
- There are 2 different kinds of shoppers, those who think locally, and those who only shop the supermarkets because they think farmer's markets are too expensive.
- Matching funds at farmer's markets, programs that support farmers. VT can be a leader in food access/security!
- We need to protect our food systems from the roots on up. Local food sources are fragile and endangered
- Fresh, local produce is so important!
- Farming! We have good land here, we should use more of it to grow food.
- We should grow more of our own food here. There is a movement in Portland called Gone the Lawn which aims to get rid of lawns and replace them with native plants and food. We should do something like that!
- Having access to local, naturally-raised food is important, but it's expensive
- grow my own food both for myself and for the environment.
- I grow what food I can at home. I've eaten organic for decades because it really helps my health. We need to get youth involved in backyard gardens. Maybe a program that pairs up youth and elderly people to get involved in gardening?
- One big issue is land access and the cost of land for people who want to farm. As land prices go up and people retire from farming, or get out because they can't make any money from it, we're going to have fewer and fewer people growing food in the state. So less local production
- My final point is more local and organic food in schools
- I still find myself making exceptions and deciding to buy things that are less healthy or less local or produced in a way I don't know about, so there's a lot of compromise on both ends of that. I think also education, helping people to understand both what healthy food is and also how much of a difference it makes when we spend our money

with our neighbors rather than with multi-national corporations where all the money leaves the state immediately and is not recirculated.

- The other thing is, if you're talking about affordable, it's usually cheaper (not necessarily!) cheaper to buy lettuce from California than from a farmstand. So if we're just concerned with affording healthy food, that's maybe different from VT-grown food. If we're really wanting to lift the state as a whole, it's way better if people's dollars stay in VT. And that gets you again into these nested issues. Do we want to feed cheaply? The definition of "healthy" is pretty broad, too. You could eat pretty healthfully but just shopping in the produce aisle at Hannaford. Arguably it's more nutrient-dense if you're getting your food closer, but I'm not going to judge.
- If we can find a way to feed people healthfully and affordably and keep their dollars in VT that would be the gold standard.
Ultimately the way we're going to be most food secure is if we can figure out a way to produce our food here, because of uncertainty in CA etc.
- People are spending money locally that they would not necessarily have spent. If we can get rich people spending EBT at the market, maybe that helps make the single mom with two kids to feel better using it too. What if everybody got a "fresh veggie" or "fresh meat" card that they could only spend at local farms?!
- People think farmers markets are expensive but they're really not - grocery store prices can be ridiculous and I don't even know where this food comes from! Maybe it'd be less for individuals but it's so tricky to pull that apart, I don't know about that. But \$100/month seems like a good starting place. It'd be great to do more, but as a pilot it would be amazing. They could buy burger, or whole chickens, or cheese, and veggies... they could buy a bushel of tomatoes for canning season. They could go strawberry picking and freeze them. I've heard people say how they'd love to buy more and freeze for the winter but can't because of money.
- making sure people who want to start farms and continue farms are able to do so, our biggest problems are leasing all of our land, so that's a big problem. Making sure farms are 1) able to start or continue to stay in business and 2) that food is affordable. So a lot of that comes down to the farmer and what their price has to be.
- The last thing I'd add to school education is there was a big hub about school gardens and it seems like that's died down. A community garden I helped put in seems like it's declining. Robust community gardens at schools, that potentially the more marginalized populations are able to harvest from, or that they contribute to the school lunch. That access to that food is a perk of being part of that school community. So it's more embedded
- On the short term, the state could provide funding for food banks and, with the caveat that the foodbanks would be getting food produced locally

- In the long term, the state is going to have to be proactive about inviting international immigrants. And inviting immigrants based on their relationship to the skills we need for locally produced food. So if you lined up all the people about to be deported to other countries and asked what skills they have and kept people with skills we need, we'd solve our meat-cutter shortage. We tend to attract people in tech and other white-collar jobs, who are good as consumers, but we end up short on people who know how and are enthusiastic to produce the food
- There is a need for permaculture, food sovereignty, nut and fruit trees.
- It starts with permaculture. Should grow fruit and nut trees everywhere. Create spots of abundance. Should create an alternative to the federal dollar, should create a local municipal or state regulated currency.

F2P Participant Survey

- we need to create new or enhance existing policies and taxes to ensure that Vermonters are able to access local food without straining their budgets. It is appalling that products that come from overseas cost a fraction of the same locally produced product
- I do not advocate for protectionism but for just access to nutritious local food.
- One important part is telling the full story of Vermont's food system. I think it is really important that we have a full and accurate understanding of our current reality; one that recognizes the extent of food insecurity, the role of migrant labor, and the environmental impacts of some of our larger agricultural operations. We can't hide behind a false façade of the "Vermont" brand.
- Continue to grow gleaning programs and redirect food waste to those in need. More funding for CropCash and School Food Programs.
- Food shelves are good partners and need subsidy to source locally
- The programs that emphasize local product and connect with restaurants are important for food security, and have the additional benefit of supporting farms and restaurants
- Support local farms reducing standard taxes for property and insurance costs
- I think we will need to see mass, wide scale adoption of agroforestry and perennial plants on our farms to see the kind of landscapes we need to weather the storm of climate change. This will help ensure that we actually can produce food in spite of what challenges may come.

Survey

- Learning what we can grow/produce/store locally is essential. We don't even know because our food system is so corrupted by fossil fuels and agribusiness. We need to build on this land here, on what we have here, and teach our kids how to survive and thrive using local resources.

- Would love to see fresh local food in schools and community centers
- Support local farmers with grants to enhance their resilience which will allow them to continue offering varied products at low enough costs.
- Keeping local/regional farmland, & farms more affordable, minimizing costs and maximizing accessibility to that land, operating those food producing businesses, and supporting younger residents w/ educational as well as financial initiatives to continue multi-generational farming & stewardship of those places/practices. As a result, limited pressure as demand increases on local producers, distribution chains, and retail businesses(grocery) so as not to compromise values, ethics, quality or price for affordable, ample supply to remain. Additionally, farms & their produce, meats, value added and dairy products(food) should be able to stay affordable, their owners be able to remain in business affording quality food product production, dedicated staff who can be paid livable wages & still able to live in Vermont, and business partnerships can still strengthen, & reinforce community food sovereignty while maximizing resiliency, and new opportunities for sustainable ethical growth.
- More community gardens - (as they have in Europe) where large plots of land are set aside for folks that do not own land to obtain and maintain a garden to supplement their food intake needs. It does require a cultural shift of course, but that is already underway. We can encourage more.
- Support the integration of more small-scale local producers into stores, and help/resources for people to begin small plots at their residence
- Grow and encourage the small-scale inputs and help people transition away from conventional “American” diets towards healthful and locally-produced diets
- Funding the local food shelves with money for local produce has been so helpful on many levels - feeding good local food to folks in need, supporting our local farmers, bridging gaps, etc.
- It is so connected with income inequality. When your local co-op is selling local butter for \$7/pound, there’s an issue, and people can’t support local.
- If we don’t support the loop from healthy soil to local farm and producer sustainability to sourcing and distributing as locally as possible, we will be in trouble in years to come.
- Local farmers markets
- Getting healthy, local foods to all Vermonters, especially those in food deserts, is critical.
- Support local farms and individuals that produce organic food of any kind....we are devoted financial supporters of three local farms. We also support Salvation Farms and their amazing gleaning efforts.....
- Local food production is the heart of long term food security
- I believe there is so much untapped potential in scaling down ‘agriculture’ and investing in community based regenerative fertilizer. Vermont is abundant and generous for

conventional farms, but there is a huge gap of resources for folks who are trying to engage with food systems more locally/without land ownership.

- supporting local growers and community gardens is important
- it's also about having a secure food system locally/regionally. We have seen how fickle national and international systems can be. So for me, food security is missing the mark if it is not also working to support small scale farms that treat the environment/their employees well... as well as making sure everyone can access healthy affordable food!
- During Covid I learned the breadth and depth of food insecurity in my town. Local solutions are the best!
- make free locally grown surplus (especially gleaned food) reliably available; maximize utilization of Four Squares and make application as easy as possible
- Make local produce more affordable and accessible
- Reduce all barriers to everyone learning how to grow food. Foster a culture of agriculture. Support all efforts that make locally produced food available a no or low cost to eaters (universal school meals, vee, crop bucks, etc)
- I think investing in our local food system is critical. We have been learning recently due to COVID, inflation, our climate crisis, etc... that supply chains can and will be disrupted. In Vermont, we need State legislation to support Vermont Farmers - perhaps even subsidize Vermont farmers so that they can scale their operation, processing and storage capabilities - and sell food at a lower price point to make it affordable and within reach of more people. Affordability of this food is critical if more people are going to access it.
- A robust network of local food producers, food banks, and the means to get food to people. Additionally, ample funds to do so, so that anyone can procure healthy food, regardless of their income.
- Enable more people to be able to grow their own food, increase food stands, and provide every single farmer's market with the requirement to take EBT.
- Develop more local food options. SNAP and NOFA dollars are awesome!
- We rely too heavily upon exotics, and if we built our menus around local foods and foods that are easily stored from other places, our costs would be reduced. Teaching people ways to prepare low cost delicious foods and celebrating them in opposition to junk food, puts more buying power into the hands of consumers.
- Support farms so local fresh food is cheaper and readily available: support organizations who distribute so people can access: work to help youth and everyone understand where food comes from and build reciprocal relationships with farmers
- Programs like Everyone Eats being supported by more businesses outside of the greater Burlington area. Continuing programs like the Crop Cash program--it significantly helps families, and also farmers who can not compete with food store prices, which are

subsidized by the government.

- The prices of food in the food store reflect government subsidies to large ag companies. The small Vermont farmer doesn't have a chance to compete with those prices, especially if they want to grow food ethically. Continuing the Crop Cash match helps more money stay local.
- Encouraging community gardens so folks can grow their own food and learn how to store it could go a long way to helping folks be food secure.
- I think we need to fund the local programs that directly support families and individuals in need. These small programs can be customized to fit individual differences and really support people.
- supporting local farms and public parks with edible fruit and nut trees and plants
- strengthen our local food systems
- I am a subsidized member of the Littleton food coop because it is the best selection of organic and locally grown food in my area and the state of New Hampshire offers a program called Market Match that gives me 50% off fresh fruits and vegetables. It is a big trip for me, but worth it. Now my car won't pass inspection and I can't get there.
- Keep the food shelves supplied and keep localvore running
- Keep it local.
- Produce, Provide and Develop a strong LOCAL economy that supports all Vermonters. Farmers & citizen Vermonters simply need more money. Grants aren't enough. Subsidies for citizens isn't enough! There needs to be some real hard conversation about what a local economy looks like.
- encourage local gardens and farming
- It is important to be aware of the food insecurity in one's own community. This can encourage local support to reduce food insecurity.
- A general site of all farms throughout Vermont would be helpful. How do we support local food if we don't know where the farm is?
- No junk foods; buy locally grown.
- Incentivize local consumer (reswork on access to land, housing, and childcare - remove the barriers that prevent people from having the financial stability to purchase healthy food. Place less emphasis on affordability, which decreases the awareness of the true cost of food, and instead create an economic system that allow people to pay prices that keep farmers and local producers employed
- Support VT Foodbank and local distributors (e.g. Food Connects). State encouragement and support for local producers.
- In addition to food on the table, food security involves Local growers and producers.
- Everyone has access to local food regardless including farmworkers .. find opportunities

to connect with resources available when they are hard to find

- agriculture education, FFA needs more support to encourage people to get into farming to grow more food locally..
- Wages should be as high as possible so people can afford food and maybe local food can be subsidized to keep farmers successful and prices to customers low.
- There are a lot of people experiencing food insecurity. I believe there should be more programs like CAE to help with supporting not only people in need of food, but also local food producers and restaurants. A program that requires the restaurant to use a certain percent of locally produced food would be excellent.
- grow and make available organic food
- Do what we can to educate the harmfulness of gmo's and food additives from corporate agriculture. Encourage, support local business that are aware of organic and regenerative practices. support co-ops that support food awareness and the local farmers.
- support local farmers (financial supports, access to markets, land) increase local food in all markets
- help people grow their own food and preserve it.
- community gardens, land access, and educational workshops for growing our own food.
- Encourage and enable more people to grow their own food.
- subsidies for local farmers to reduce cost of fresh produce
- More state & local support for small producers, CSA's etc, conditional on keeping prices affordable.
- Support local producers plus self producers. Promote sustainable agriculture / permaculture.

Focus Groups

- How can the food action plan help to support and encourage a more vibrant, local food system utilizing and supporting local farms and producers
- Further localization of the food system
- Make fresh produce more easily available from local organic farmers.
- Stop subsidies to mega-farms and bring the money local. It's a political issue.
- Stop buying food from china that can be produced here
- More investment in the local food system. Vermont has the capacity to feed its people.
- Local matters for the planet and the people
- Emphasis on both strengthening our local food systems and providing easily accessible, quality food that supports the health of our communities
- More community-oriented and centered initiatives (funded by the government)
- How SNAP could fit into a localized Food System and advocacy needed to break down

barriers to this. Would SNAP users be able to feed themselves if the VT food system was mostly local?

- Innovative local partnerships (like Everyone Eats)
- Supporting industrial ag over local growers/farmers
- Everyone should be able to buy local, nourishing foods, make it an affordable option for all!
- Utilizing our farmers to feed Vermonters. Buy Local!
- Prioritizing healthier nutritionally dense local foods over cheap food from far away
- Connecting food-insecure people with local producers to enhance community connections and awareness of the factors affecting each of those cohorts
- If our food system became 75-100% localized, would food-insecure people on SNAP be able to get enough food? Would their benefits still get them food markets, stand, hubs?
- How can we support people to get started growing more of their own foods?
- Public funding for food hubs to help the storage and movement of local food
- An investment in micro-distribution of food within the state.
- Support of local farms in purchasing from larger institutions - fewer barriers to them doing so - to increase the number of small farms in VT and people looking to start farms here
- Access to nutritious, local food should be a right
- School/community-based education about what foods are being produced here. could be enhanced by greater purchasing efforts by local institutions
- The perception that farmers markets and local & organic food are niches and too expensive for regular families to access
- Fresh, local food is for EVERYONE
- make it a priority to serve nutritious and local foods in institutionalized settings.
- Less imported foods from outside our area
- Support of local food producers/farmers
- Setting up purchasing groups for independent grocers or small corner markets to purchase cultural foods at a more affordable price
- Stop importing food - we grow enough to feed ourselves
- Fresh (local) produce should not be a luxury
- Home delivery services to bring locally produced food to people with limited mobility or time
- Buying produce from local farms for food pantry
- Increasing Local cultural food
- Supporting local farmers and producers
- Grants for neighborhood markets to carry more fruits and vegetables

- A greater emphasis on fresh, locally grown food....so many markets drive to NYC weekly to get veggies.
- Making it easier for people to grow some of their own food
- Increase the state's capacity to produce/process/use local foods as well as move foods sourced from outside the state
- More of VT's Charitable Food System sourcing food from VT Farmers
- Community-based buying clubs served by area food hubs. Town clerks are valuable partners in reaching folks in need or with health concerns by town
- New neighborhood gardeners, Grow a row for the local food bank, supported in a listserv with tutorials on seedlings, planting, and frost warnings. The local food bank had a place open all the time to donate produce.
- Providing additional training, workshops, and other supports to enable more people to hunt, fish, forage, garden/grow, can and freeze more of their own, food + barter with neighbors.
- Local Farmers selling each other's foods to their CSA
- Sourcing local food on a mass scale with little notice was challenging - how can we production plan to avoid scramble if ever in this position again?
- What would it be like for the state of VT to be food security? How much are we importing from elsewhere?
- Emergencies--State plans do not currently indicate that they should source VT food as much as possible. How can more food from VT be available? How do we mobilize the food system to mobilize in an emergency?
- Shift federal subsidies to direct into a regional system rather than a national system.
- Dairy Farmers of America- long-term sustainable dairy donation model. USDA policy- helps food banks establish relationships with local coops, so they can more easily make donations the day of.
- Working with local food producers so there is an agreed-upon price so local foods are being fed to the local community
- Local food hub - pantry where fresh and prepared food is available
- Working more with the local economies for feeding local communities.
- Continued funding for Everyone Eats and making sure to involve local food sources, especially our small farmers.
- Involve more local producers: like Rise Up Bakery in Barre, also keep the restaurants involved like happened under Everyone Eats.

Stakeholder Outreach

- Should find ways to make it affordable for businesses and individuals to produce nutritious, high-quality food and finding ways to incentivize local food production over

imported food.

- We should pay attention to opportunities to support the local food system in the process. We should pay attention to dignity and equity and also pay attention to where white supremacy culture creeps in to structures and ideas proposed.
- Would love to see an action plan that provides support for VT food producers and make sure that food is getting into the hands of Vermonters that need it. Can we invest in strengthening our farms and food production then creating channels to get food to Vermonters in a sustainable, long term way.
- More programs 'land back' initiatives, involving anyone who wants to participate. Also education and access to materials to grow food in smaller spaces or in spaces with lesser desirable soil types. Education around 'poly'cultures, growing food in symbiosis like 3 sisters, mushroom production etc. Anything within walking distance to peoples houses.
- Additionally, I'd encourage some of the solutions help support local farmers, producers, and businesses, as this is in alignment with what many people want to eat more of (healthy, local, fresh foods) and provides economic benefit to local communities and families.
- Continue to support local solutions--making local food and choices more accessible to all people.
- Prepared meal programs--like school meals and Meals on Wheels would be a great place to make more local food accessible and available.
- Grow food - working with neighborhoods; Food is connection and care.; Create self resilient neighborhoods that are food independent.
- More reliance of local production, and support for local producers
- Need to have basic commodities near by and need to support grower system since it is different than how larger economy works.
- Make solutions simple. Synergy with the local food movement makes market opportunities for our farmers and therefore more healthy local food
- Having a focus on local food and making sure it's accessible to all. In the long run, really focusing on that could make food cheaper and more available to everyone.
- When I think about food security for the state of Vermont – part of it might also be looking at what are we importing and what role does that play in our food system, are there alternatives that are local? What do we have control over in our state and how can we shore it up and make it even more robust?
- Please do not leave any food producers behind during this planning process. All food produced in Vermont is local and deserves a seat at this table.

Community Stakeholder Outreach: Resources and Environments

One on One Interviews

- Worried about the environmental impact of food streams

- Think all farms should do a gleaning program to reduce food waste.
- Reducing food waste is super important! Should have more gleaning programs throughout the state, maybe a central directory of all farms available for gleaning?
- even though they worked to avoid it, there was still some food waste. What are the laws around what can and can't be saved in terms of fresh food, and can they be revisited or made more lenient?
- Distribution. Getting healthy food into schools and into people's kitchens. Access and food waste are also issues.
- course climate change. This year with the drought - I've never had an issue, I have wet land - but this year the drought really had an impact. My yields suffered for sure. I don't have the funds to pay for irrigation. Just thinking about how to support local growers with the impacts of...
- I also think we have to stop putting all our money and have our Agency of Ag focused on dairy. There's a lot of different kinds of agriculture out there.
- There are many farmers that are over-harvest for aspects of their operations. More opportunities for people to go glean.
- Climate change is going to be a big factor. We have no idea how the environment will change in Vermont

F2P Participant Survey

- we must diversify agriculture in Vermont
- One important part is telling the full story of Vermont's food system. I think it is really important that we have a full and accurate understanding of our current reality; one that recognizes the extent of food insecurity, the role of migrant labor, and the environmental impacts of some of our larger agricultural operations. We can't hide behind a false façade of the "Vermont" brand.
- I believe the perennialization of our farms is essential to building climate resilience - more and more diverse pastures, and all of the manifestations of agroforestry practices will be essential to the kind of resilience our food system needs

Survey

- Stop subsidizing and promoting any non organic large scale monocrop farms and instead subsidize and promote/encourage farming that is sustainable for the environment, farmers, and consumers, such as permaculture and other other diversified methods which are more resilient to the changing markets and changing climate.
- PES - payment for ecosystem services for farmers. If they shoulder the burden of keeping air, soil and water clean through good practices, the wider community benefits and should help shoulder that cost. Then they can afford to farm.

- If we don't support the loop from healthy soil to local farm and producer sustainability to sourcing and distributing as locally as possible, we will be in trouble in years to come.
- Business as usual has failed nature and first in failure is our modern system of food. Food takes more land, more water, more energy, more pesticides, and more packaging than any other Human activity. Our food system needs to become more ecological. As a society we need to create greater social justice and greater environmental justice.
- Provide food shelves with funding for staff and purchasing food
- (beyond that, reducing food waste is another critical piece to improving food security, given that 30-40% of food produced globally never gets eaten!)
- Making sure that food that is not used at restaurants, colleges and the like are used at food banks and other places that help the general public and not just thrown away.
- Stay connected with all the resources possible and spread the word to family and friends, visit the local food pantries, grow your own fruit and vegetables and donate what you don't use so others can eat too. Also it's very important to recycle and compost so we can put it right back into the ground.
- I'm shocked at the amount of food that restaurants throw away, it would be nice if there were more ways for that food to go to use?
- universal basic income, fair wages, an alternative polis supplemental currency not federally regulated, direct democracy, permaculture,
- Clean water will always be one of the biggest necessities.
- A growing and diverse economic base. Relying too much on tourism and service related business created a monocrop effect in the last 40 years. Bring back the forest based economy and other manufacturing base growth sectors. Today's technology and processing systems allows for clean healthy forests that serve a vertically integrated forest to consumer production system. Working forest and other creative manufacturing will create quality jobs and demand young people who want to stay here and grow families.
- Keep on promoting organic farming practices
- Food security is closely tied to nutrient sovereignty - the need for affordable, locally sourced fertilizers for farms is especially crucial with the prices skyrocketing. Supporting local nutrient cycling initiatives like the Rich Earth Institute's peecycling program :)
- Do what we can to educate the harmfulness of gmo's and food additives from corporate agriculture. Encourage, support local business that are aware of organic and regenerative practices. support co-ops that support food awareness and the local farmers.
- Grow more food here and give it away for free. Prevent the grocery stores from throwing away so much edible food. We feed around 30 people a day on food that grocery stores throw away, and we don't even collect that much food

- The biggest reason we don't have enough food is imposed scarcity. Food that can't be sold gets destroyed instead of given to people who need it
- Resources should be readily put in place to enhance this plan
- Gleaning on area farms could also be just one of the solutions, but again we MUST find ways to implement a 100% safe, circular (reusable) [cradle to cradle] economy for ALL (instead of what is, alas, still normalized; a cradle to grave/linear/take make waste one).
- Facilitate more connections between local producers and food banks. More support/info about gleaning and distributing still-edible outdated and "wasted" food.
- As the national and global food systems collapse it will be more important than ever to support organic and small farms, particularly those using African and Indigenous wisdom to ensure the fertility and health of the ecosystems.
- Support local producers plus self producers. Promote sustainable agriculture / permaculture

Focus Groups

- Sustainability in our food system and keeping communities engaged in funding foods for those who need them.
- Food waste - food that could be used for human consumption that is wasted and/or thrown away
- To ensure there is continued support of food. To make sure current programs are supported and not subject to a hard stop with no replacement (for example, VT Everyone Eats)
- Free fridges!
- Partnerships with Cabot and other big food-producing companies in Vermont to support food shelves needs
- Transitioning from pandemic response level resources, back to limited resources
- Sustainability of funding for programs
- The environment, conservation of natural resources, and the people - sustainability!
- Tools to utilize the food they have (pots, pans, knives, recipe books)
- Make sure to emphasize that "community" means all of us.
- Food access solutions should consider/align other state priorities as possible (e.g., climate, agriculture)
- Food security and effectively managing food waste are deeply connected
- Keep funding! Meals on Wheels funding has been cut. We are not turning anyone away but the funding isn't there. Funding food for all Vermonters!
- The government looking at increased funding for the food and looking at increased funding to support staffing for the food shelves
- Diversification in manufacturing, so that things like the baby formula shortage do not

occur.

- Funding supporting the purchasing of local food
- Anticipating climate refugees to this state (from other countries and other states) and what those additional needs will be when they come to our state
- The importance of the health of our soil and waterways we rely upon
- Capture food that is produced and comes into the state, and bring to folks who are going to consume them. Reduce food waste at that level
- Start feeding cows/animals the food that they need
- Small-scale farmers need to have the greater ability to extend their growing season in an environmentally friendly manner (renewable energy)
- The cost of food production is in tandem with the cost of fossil fuels, until we can find alternative production systems (not fossil fuel-dependent)
- Need to be able to produce food using renewable resources
- More food recovery
- Food waste
- Retail food waste
- Food waste in the school meal program
- Sustainability. We cannot promote diets that are not sustainable--this should be a key part of any and all recommendations related to food and nutrition
- More connections for surplus food (to move perishables faster!)
- Incorporating reducing food loss as a long-term strategy for hunger reduction
- There is way too much food waste
- Focus on equitable distribution of food (examine why we waste so much food in some places while so many people do not have enough food)
- Short-term funding cycles for programs like Everyone Eats
- Changing climate
- Climate Migrants/ Increased population in VT
- More decentralized closed-loop organization management on farms - composting as means to offset importing fertilizers
- More visibility/support/recognition of community gardens/community compost sites - raise up this practice
- Environmental implications of the food security plan's recommendations - does it have a 7th generation lens with an understanding of the swift change is needed
- Food Security Plan needs to have set aside funding to help farms and food pantries pivot when insecurities arise and they need to change their business model/operations.
- State and federal subsidies for local food purchases
- Emergencies--State plans do not currently indicate that they should source VT food as

much as possible. How can more food from VT be available? How do we mobilize the food system to mobilize in an emergency?

- Food waste
- Is winter gleaning still done to allow the food from the farms not to be wasted?
- Climate change and preparing for the future.
- We need to find ways to employ economies of scale to create meals that can be made in bulk and then stored.
- More access to heating and refrigeration.
- We need to fast-track whatever plan is created. People need food now, not in the late Spring.
- There will be a huge need for more funding, but we can't be overwhelmed by the cost; we live in a land of abundance and must use it for our people.

Community Stakeholder Outreach Data: Communications

One on One Interviews

- Important that people know about healthy food and about where the resources are
- Getting the info out. Letting school families know. Edible Brattleboro should partner with schools.
- a continuing education program to help people understand what services are available
- We are a rural state so communication and transportation can be an issue especially for our older population.
- Raise awareness of existing programs. We need advisors or point people in the community who can help share knowledge about programs and healthy cooking with people who are lower socioeconomic status. We need community gardens in the housing developments.
- You have to know about the resources to take advantage of them, so more information distribution is necessary.
- We need a central hub or services person who can share all required information on programs/services. Someone who is informed about everything so people don't have to hunt for the information. Person could be available at the library one day a week?
- Let policy makers know the needs
- Raise awareness about 4x EBT match to make the Market more accessible.
- There are wonderful programs in VT. Wish more people were aware of them.
- Widespread advertisement of all social support programs.
- Need more outreach to get people to the farmer's market.
- Articles in the radio/newspaper targeting access to healthy food.
- Getting the word out about events is hard.
- Outreach and communication
- Maybe a central website where prices/sales are posted for all of the local supermarkets?
- Education about benefits so that they are more utilized
- we should be talking to people who experience food insecurity!
- more outreach so more people in those communities know about it. Gleaning and Fair Share being promoted so more people in those group know about it and access it
- Education around how to cook food, healthy choices, and outreach of places where they can get the help they need. Many don't have computers to find out these hours....
- Training programs, They are not listening to the people about what they need or want when it comes to jobs.
- I always think about getting more of the word out to people, and that kind of advertising takes time. Partnering with NOFA and, in turn, other people, has been really helpful in

reaching new audiences with our CSA. NOFA does some of that outreach for us, which has been critically helpful.

- Outreach is important.

Survey

- We do a pretty good job of making food available. We do a terrible job in outreach--to find the people who need food but for many reasons do not come to get it.
- Communicate. Keep the lines of communication open for vulnerable people. Many are too proud to admit they could use help.
- Make info about free/cheap food easier to access (i.e. more widespread, more targeted, more language access features)
- Let people who may not normally use social services know that they can also access food organizations in their community to get food for free
- There is a % of families with food insecurity as most of us are aware of, some more than others. Get the word out...People will help if they know how and if it is not overwhelming to them
- Make sure people know about these programs
- Broad Communication & Easy Access to Families in Need
- Marketing and accessibility. Continuing to make the public aware of Feeding Chittenden services and other food shelf programs throughout VT.
- A comprehensive database or network of ALL resources for those who are food insecure (food shelves, community food cupboards, VeggieVanGo days). There are many opportunities, but to my knowledge, no comprehensive resource exists - not even on Hunger Free Vermont under resource hubs!!!
- People living with food insecurity are not aware of the opportunities that exist in their towns, regions and statewide, potentially due to the fact that many lack resources for internet and transportation. How can information be shared with those populations with those barriers to access information?
- More food distribution locations, especially on weekends . considering those without transportation. Also consider a plan for those without cell phones or computer access. The every one eats program is great , without a phone you cannot get a meal.
- Have food give aways with locations known more clearly.
- A general site of all farms throughout Vermont would be helpful. How do we support local food if we don't know where the farm is?
- Make sure communication is inclusive with the varying languages of those living in VT.
- Make sure there are clear resources on how to get help and that this is a topic brought up in many settings (schools, health care, recreational orgs, etc.
- Understanding who is food insecure and what they would like provided. What are their

needs.

- Provide education to the public for where you can get discounted or free food if you're struggling and provide the food of course

Focus Groups

- Maintaining clear communication around the availability of resources/ hrs of operation etc
- Involve the people in strategic planning. Advocacy
- Encouragement from media/messaging to utilize food access programs and supports
- Ask and involve people who are utilizing the services and what this means for them and their families
- Informing and mobilizing the general public will be key to longer-term solutions
- Making programmatic decisions without input from people it would serve
- False information about the programs
- If they have ever felt hunger and how they felt during that time.

The role of government

Make sure all voices are heard and included

- Community outreach
- Public awareness
- They need to consult with those that are experiencing hunger to write up the plan and have their voices at the table
- Keeping the conversation open/going so we know what people need & how we can provide.
- Better understanding exactly what the needs & wants are.
- Awareness and promotion of the different programs available
- Direct communication between farmers and customers
- Need to do a better job of communicating to the community the access points to get the food that folks need
- More outreach to tell people about food resources--I don't know enough about what is happening with food distribution.
- In NH more outreach about federal nutrition programs. In Grafton County only 37% of those eligible for SNAP are enrolled.
- Decision-making without the people it is impacting
- Voices outside the food security world supporting the efforts- where are the business leaders?
- How can everyone be an outreach organization for federal nutrition programs?
- Communication between organizations for multiple referrals

- Continual communication with all community partners about what resources are available and what each partner is working on.
- Community input fueling our programmatic approaches
- Continued education, knowledge, and programs that support the importance of culturally responsive food access
- Lack of communication between organizations
- Including voices of people with lived food insecurity experience in decisions
- that consumers can easily figure out where to go for help
- Please ASK people what they'd like rather than making assumptions.
- Think about what voices are being listened to and included in helping draft the action plan
- Any plan should include recipients of services.
- Make a photo/story exhibit of successful practices and create a rotating exhibit that travels throughout the state.
- Direct communication/referrals between healthcare staff who work with food insecure patients and food organizations to connect people to local resources easily.
- There needs to be infrastructure for food storage at pantries, and more funding to make people aware of places they can go to access food
- Increased care in centering the voices of people who participate in the charitable food system to get food and allowing them to shape organizations & programs
- How to pull citizens into the conversation?
- The regular 'info sharing' meetings of all kinds around the state were very important- including statewide, topical, and subregional.
- Willingness to welcome many voices and organizations to calls.
- Centering community voices by using surveys to share resources and data between food security and food justice organizations
- Create a safe space in stakeholder engagement focus groups that is at night and/or on weekends and offers food, child care, and translation. Leave the room and get out of the way of these conversations.
- We should be made aware of the food shelf--people who work don't know about it! We work, but the food is so expensive. So, broadcast these programs more!
- Capstone needs a commercial--you do so much, and people need to hear about it!
- When I first started using the food shelf here, I couldn't find it--I looked it up online, and ended up at the food bank! More advertising of services so that people know.
- Engage the folks experiencing food insecurity in the process
- We need a plan that is widely shared with stakeholders so that we can all monitor progress toward those goals.

Stakeholder Outreach

- Hearing from people who are food insecure! And trying to create something really grounded in and specific to community.
- Being intentional about the folks included in these conversations around health/wellness and food insecurity. Folks w/ rich and textural experiences allow for better insight into the needs of under-served communities and allows the community to feel that they are apart of the conversation
- Insight on what we've learned from the pandemic, i.e. needs that have cropped up as this is a harbinger of the future. Community agency is critical, important to listen to what the community needs and wants.

Community Stakeholder Outreach Data: Collaboration

1 on 1 Interviews

- Connecting farms with low socioeconomic status communities. Grateful for VT for existing programs. Grateful to live in a place with social support programs.
- strengthen the relationships between schools/hospitals and farms.
- The Foodbank might be a good resource for connections to folks who have direct experience. Or NOFA, the folks who participate in Farm Share.
- my work is bringing farmers together to learn from each other, Ive just observed a real commitment to constantly learning and getting better and improving their practices. There's such a strong... I don't have a ton of communities to compare it to, but it seems like the community of farmers here is really strong in terms of knowledge sharing and ability to lift each other up... and I think that goes a long way.
- And obviously, pie in the sky wishes, there are so many guerilla gardener groups connected to Food Not Cops and Food Not Bombs, not supported by capitalist market industry, but with all of these people coming with a lot of money, having those populations learn about the severe food insecurity that's occurring and allowing opportunities for their lawns to become gleaned gardens.
- Piggy-back on existing organizations for distributions, or partner with hub-farms who can provide the distribution
- The problem we run into when we want to give people food is that we also need to make food. So getting grants or support from other organizations is really helpful, like partnering with the Shelburne Food Shelf. The more that kind of purchasing-funding can be spread to different organizations so they can pay farms is really helpful.
- Down here in this area we have really worked it out by having non profits and for profits work together to get food out
- We should be interviewing people who have grown crops here the longest. We should learn from their knowledge and experience, and learn/collaborate with people in other parts of the world and other climates.

Survey

- The delivery of food to the food-insecure is enormously fragmented among a large number of groups. There seems to be no coordination.
- Disrupting the have/have nots dynamic - people coming together to listen, build relationships and and cultivate the connectivity, respect and care that are foundational to community-based resilience and change-making.
- developing partnerships between nonprofits, for profit farms, and government programs would be an exciting way to explore solutions
- Rural partnerships with farms and families, building relationships, knowledge about

growing, harvesting, preserving food

- Please partner with as many similarly-minded groups as possible, even if the connections aren't as immediately obvious. We need to pool our voices and work together.
- Support farms so local fresh food is cheaper and readily available: support organizations who distribute so people can access: work to help youth and everyone understand where food comes from and build reciprocal relationships with farmers
- State-promoted on-site school composting and gardening; community gardens; more community involvement from VT Master Gardeners/Composters; more publicity/recruitment from gleaning organizations
- Food insecurity is one of the major problems in Vermont. Systemic solutions originating in the statehouse should be proposed to reduce waste and connect the many, many individual groups that are doing identical work.
- Should have more coordination between food provider's
- Community Kitchens & Pantry in Every possible town, Grange Halls and Farmers Unions, self led orgs
- that barn raise and Mutual Aid Crop mob and hwlp do big projects like grain or processing hay, mulch, etc. WE NEED community Potlucks, Canning bees, sap boils or pig roasts and conversations about Mutual Aid Agreements. We need to know each other across the lines of Gender, Race, Age and Class
- more sharing of resources
- Providing food at schools and community centers, strengthen neighbor-to-neighbor garden harvest sharing
- The importance of different agencies/nonprofits working together to solve problems.
- paid coordinators to organize LOCAL produce pick-up & distribution in neighborhoods; small grower subsidies to encourage excessive gardening; more seed and plant swaps & local cooperative neighborhoods information exchanges
- Connect with organizations like Salvation Farms to support gleaning efforts providing food to places with the need.
- educate all sectors in the initiative and include organizations like, NOFAVT and Rural VT in the discussion and training/education around it.

Jam Board

- Program Accessibility. More Teamwork!
- Programs working together to share resources and encourage people to utilize everything available to them
- Coordination of efforts - holistic care
- More coordination and communication about what is available in the area. Encourage

more folks to serve hot food out the door - Incentives and availability of funding.

- Continue to work in partnership with various sectors of our communities - restaurants, local farms, community partners who provide meals
- Partner collaboration locally and across the state
- A way for food shelves to come together jointly to obtain food at wholesale prices in the quantities that we need
- Partnerships with Cabot and other big food-producing companies in Vermont to support food shelves needs
- Sharing of ideas across all Vermont food shelves, including ideas on the best ways to utilize available grant money (VT Fresh, VFV, etc)
- Fresh produce programs are wonderful and very needed, however, there are many people who are unable to use them to prepare meals for themselves, so if there could be more collaboration between programs that offer prepared meals to funnel the subsidized ingredients to prepared meal makers they could all be more effective (+1)
- More collaborations with local farmers/local sources of food rather than commodity meal boxes
- Cross-sector partnerships (healthcare, schools, nonprofits, retail stores...)
- Collaboration between schools and food shelves
- Increase collaboration between community based organizations and other sectors (grocery, health care, etc.)
- More conversations about food help availability across ALL sectors
- Look at where else people are receiving regular services (health care, for example) and strengthen collaboration
- More partnering with organizations that know who is not getting the food they need
- How organizations can network and work together to address these issues.
- Cross-organizational partnerships (like the Healthcare CSA COP)
- Ways to connect farms with local organizations/institutions to partner with on Vt feeding VT grants
- Setting up purchasing groups for independent grocers or small corner markets to purchase cultural foods at a more affordable price
- Collaboration with local farms
- "Silos" for programming---we all need to work together
- Lack of communication between organizations
- Shared refrigeration/freezer spaces with other organizations
- Greater collaboration between businesses, as opposed to competition
- Finding ways to coordinate work/shared understanding of the work being done in Vermont, so that organizations working towards food security understand each others'

work

- Collaborative gardening incentives/ resources
- Collaborative CSA models that became 'hubs' to aggregate and distribute local food; if formalized it will be easier to connect those groups with resources that would make those local products more accessible to all.
- New neighborhood gardeners, Grow a row for the local food bank, supported in a listserv with tutorials on seedlings, planting, and frost warnings. The local food bank had a place open all the time to donate produce.
- More frequent Hunger Council meetings for organizations to collaborate and share information and resources. Very helpful as things during covid changed so quickly and frequently.
- Business-to-business collaboration and shared marketing
- How can there be a robust network between groups working on food security?
- Leveraging organizations and networks like Hunger Councils and Migrant Justice to create a safe space for people to come together, talk about food insecurity, and vision what food security would look like for them/us.
- Statewide collaboration across sectors
- Community collaboration -partnerships with organizations to help with funding, meal distribution, etc.
- Collaborations with health care centers for medically tailored meals
- More across-sectors collaborations
- See if there are ways to promote partnerships between consumers and producers: work out crews to go do gleaning.
- Programs that help multiple organizations spread the available dollars further seem to be the most effective and efficient results.

Stakeholder Outreach

- To non profit organizations // and food hubs; To Connect all parts of the food system; To Put food at the center.; To identify local and regional human infrastructure that can make this happen;
- There are so many other huge factors that influence food security - like racism, poverty, transportation, low wages, etc. that it seems futile to work on just food security. We would never solve the problem because it is multifaceted. What work needs to be done in those other areas? What can we do, now, with the current situation to make a dent in food security? Can we work simultaneously on those other issues - WHO is working on them? Can we work together?
- Building and/or leveraging trust between individuals and/or organizations. Voices of those experiencing food insecurity.

- There are so many different, individual activities and programs to support food security in Vermont. I think keeping an eye to avoiding redundancy and promoting collaboration is important.
- Recognition that 300 individual efforts (the approximate number of VT Foodbank Network Partners, i.e., food shelves, pantries, meal sites) to address local food insecurity in the state is incredibly inefficient, a drain on resources (human and financial), and not able to meet the need. The Foodbank works hard to provide cohesion and broad support for their partners, but their resources simply can't meet the full need
- One possible solution is a collective effort that provides support in the form of: regional buying networks to reduce food costs, delivery networks of both inventory to local hubs and food orders directly to homes to reduce volunteer fatigue and fuel consumption, assistance in securing safe, accessible, and clean spaces to serve as sites for food distribution (food shelves, pantries, etc.), reducing stigma to help normalize the process of receiving assistance