

TENNESSEE LOCAL FOOD

2024 STRATEGY AND GOALS



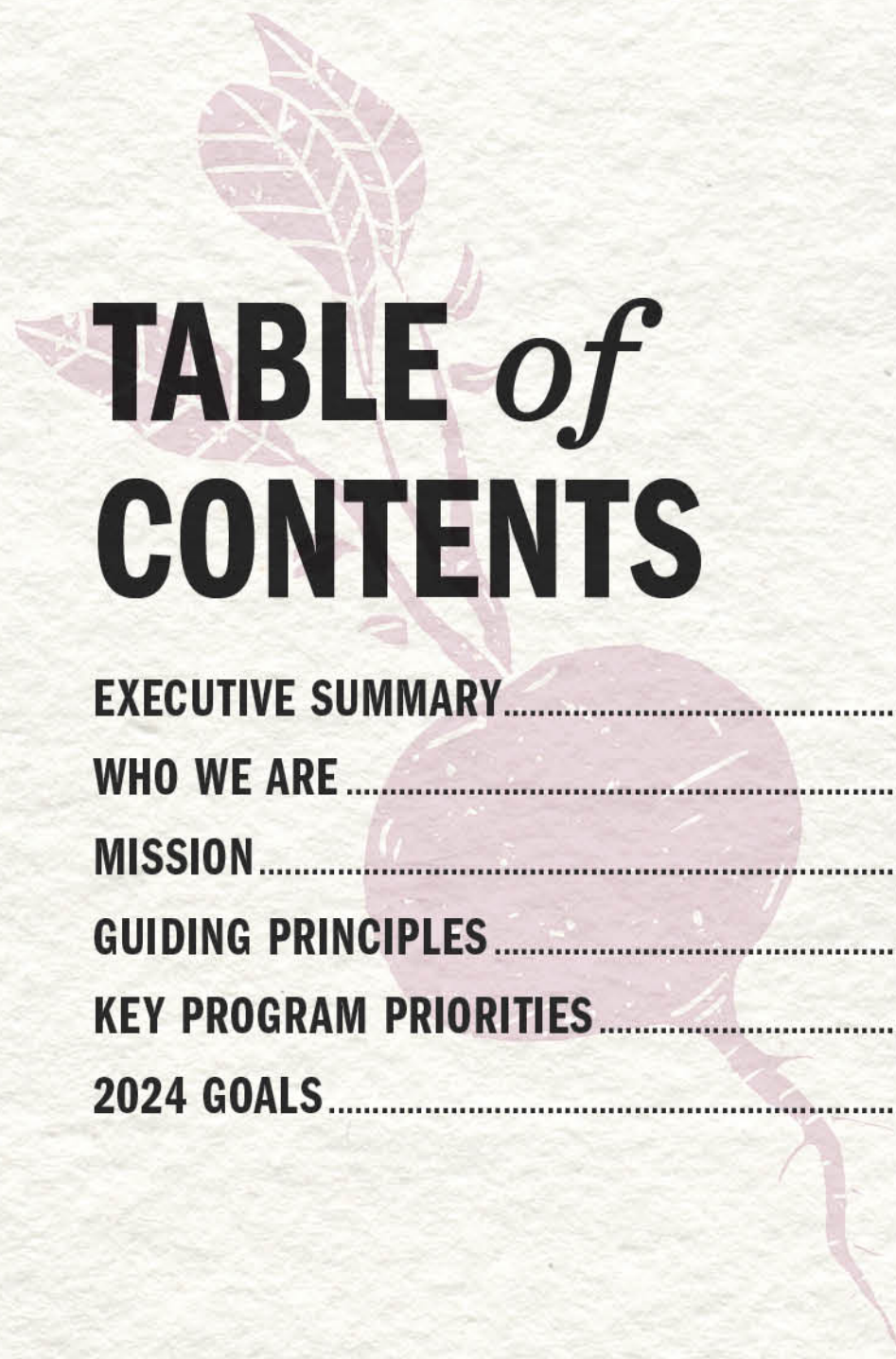


TABLE *of* **CONTENTS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	01
WHO WE ARE.....	05
MISSION.....	06
GUIDING PRINCIPLES.....	07
KEY PROGRAM PRIORITIES.....	13
2024 GOALS.....	15

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The state of Tennessee is currently dominated by an industrialized food system. There is a pressing need to promote health, economic viability, and equitable access to nutritious food. The organizations and collectives who provide an alternative to the dominant food system are small, fragmented, and under-resourced. Tennessee Local Food is a bridge building organization that connects, educates, and supports farmers, consumers, and food system stakeholders with the purpose of addressing the following issues:

1. ECONOMY

Tennessee has an optimal growing climate and ample farmland, yet less than 1% of food dollars are spent on locally grown food. Tennessee food dollars circulate through—and stimulate—the economy many times more than food dollars siphoned off to distant corporations.

2. HEALTH

Tennessee ranks 44th in the nation in health, and fewer than 7% of Tennesseans eat the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables.¹ The local food economy that we support promotes healthy eating and community connection.

3. FOOD SAFETY

Industrialized food travels significant distances which leaves the Tennessee food system vulnerable to supply chain issues and contamination.

4. FOOD ACCESS

Although 40% of Tennessee's land is farmland, and agriculture is an \$80 billion-dollar-a-year business here², more than a million Tennesseans are food-insecure and lack access to affordable and nutritious food. In a number of rural counties in Tennessee, food insecurity rates are 20%-one in five adults go hungry—and that number is even higher for children.³

5. FARM/FARMERS

We don't have enough young farmers trained in efficient, sustainable, regenerative farming, and the young farmers who are ready to farm lack secure access to farmland. Immigrant populations and people of color who wish to grow food are even more affected by lack of land access and security.

6. CLIMATE

Human-caused climate change is a significant threat to our industrial food supply, as droughts, fires, floods, and extreme temperature fluctuations affect the amounts and quantities of food that are grown around the country and imported into Tennessee as the state's current main food sources.⁴ Current corporate agricultural practices account for about 10% of greenhouse emissions, while local, regenerative agriculture can more easily adapt to this changing and unpredictable climate, and simultaneously decrease agriculture's contribution to greenhouse gasses and ability to sequester carbon in the soil.⁵

¹Explore Health Measures and Rankings in Tennessee | AHR." America's Health Rankings, <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/states/TN>. Accessed 24 October 2023.

²Tennessee Farm Facts." Tennessee Farm Bureau, 16 September 2020, <https://tnfarmbureau.org/tnfarmfacts>. Accessed 24 October 2023.

³Explore Health Measures and Rankings in Tennessee | AHR." America's Health Rankings, <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/states/TN>. Accessed 24 October 2023.

⁴Agriculture should think globally, act locally on climate change." National Newswatch, 9 March 2019, <https://www.nationalnewswatch.com/2018/01/02/agriculture-should-think-globally-act%20-locally-on-climate-change/#.W0is3Nlzbtct>. Accessed 24 October 2023.

⁵Hayden, Jennifer. "Soil Carbon Sequestration is a Natural Consequence of Doing Things Right." Rodale Institute, 28 August 2020, <https://rodaleinstitute.org/blog/soil-carbon-sequestration-is-a-natural-consequence-of-doing-things-right/>. Accessed 24 October 2023.

HOW WE'RE SOLVING THE PROBLEM

Tennessee Local Food is a collection of farmers, consumers, and stakeholders who seek to strengthen and bolster this small business economy and remove barriers in the following ways:

1. WE ADVANCE the economic viability and profitability of small farms by providing business and production training, with an emphasis on supporting next generation and Black, Indigenous, and Farmers of Color. farmers.

2. WE CONNECT farmers to markets, which increases local small business income and meets the growing consumer demand for local food.

3. WE ESTABLISH critical relationships between farmers and community stakeholders that directly impact public policy, food insecurity in youth and families, and organizing capacity for traditionally underrepresented farmers.

4. WE EDUCATE consumers about the importance of a local food system, one that connects nutritive foods to the general public to the general public for flourishing community wellness.

5. WE ADVOCATE for regenerative farming practices that enrich the soil, protect our waterways, and adapt to and ameliorate climate collapse.

6. WE PROVIDE access to information for small farmers regarding job opportunities, equipment, available land, and other needs.

7. WE GIVE financial resources through community-raised funds to farmers experiencing hardship.

After over a decade of hosting a statewide conference, we shifted our purpose in 2022 to become a 501(c)(3) to strengthen the organization's capacity to support the community's growing need for a more resilient food system. The purpose of this planning document is to share with the community that we are entering into our second year as an organization operating with clarity and strategic alignment. We aim to provide a comprehensive roadmap to achieve our 2024 goals while articulating who we are, the mission, and the guiding principles that will help us achieve our vision for a more sustainable and economically vibrant food system in Tennessee. By detailing our strategies to support economic viability for small farms, improve statewide access to local food, and promote regenerative farming practices we seek to secure funding and support to achieve the mission and drive change in our communities.





WHO WE ARE

We are a bridge building organization that supports a regenerative local food system.



MISSION


We build a local food network through education, resources and creating connections.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

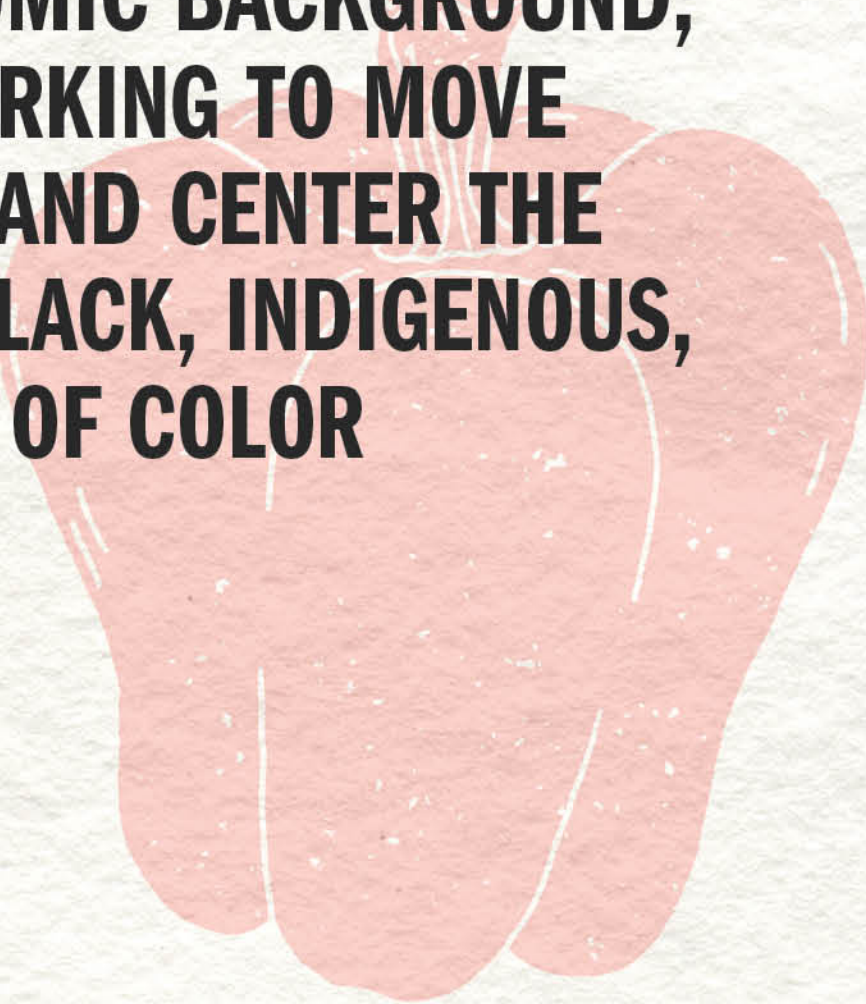
**LOCALLY GROWN FOOD IS
BENEFICIAL FOR OUR HEALTH,
ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY**

**ACCESS TO HEALTHY, LOCALLY
GROWN FOOD IS A BASIC
HUMAN RIGHT, REGARDLESS
OF RACE, ETHNICITY, GENDER,
AND/OR SOCIAL CLASS**

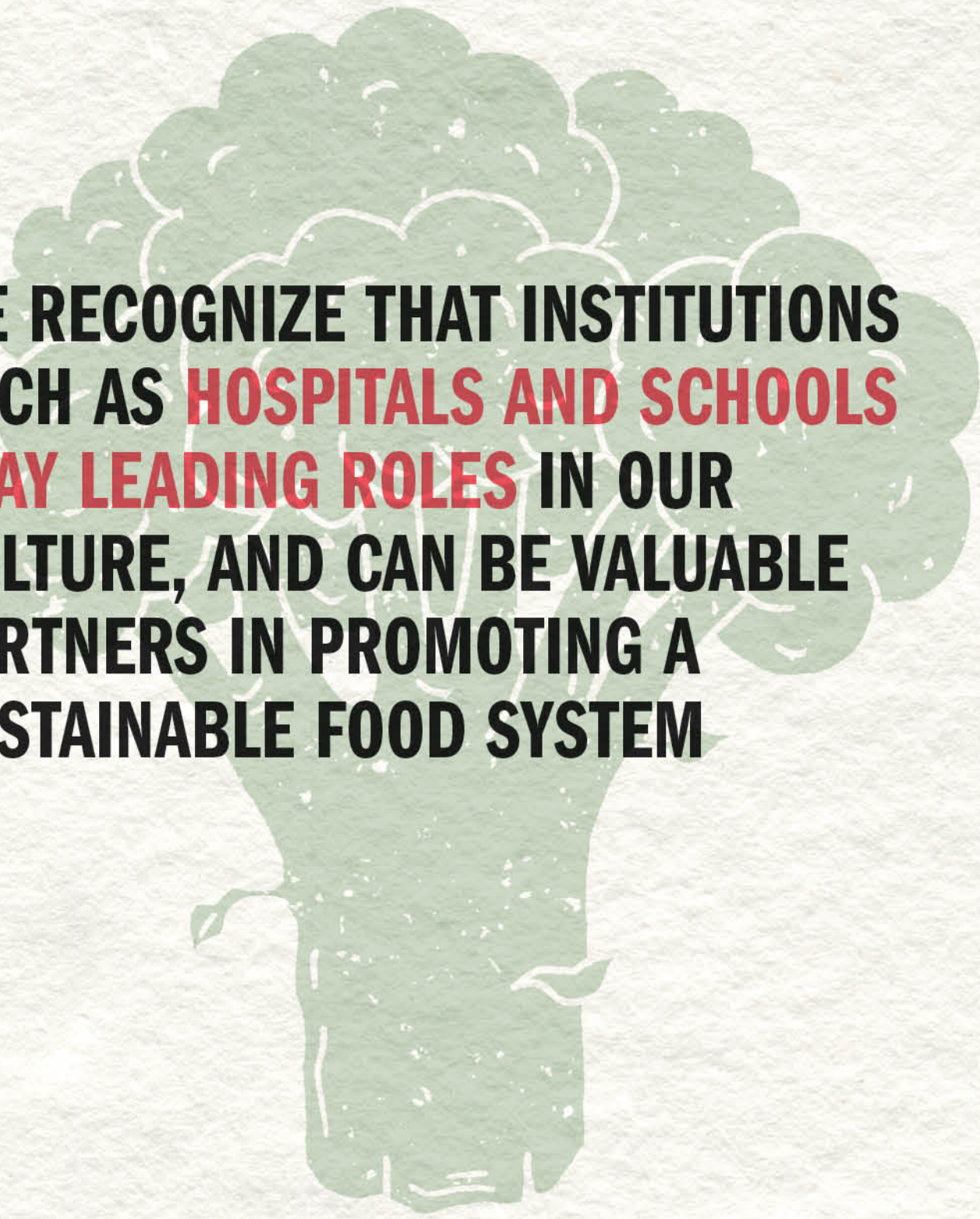


A HEALTHY FOOD SYSTEM DEPENDS ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES, WHICH ARE ROOTED IN INDIGENOUS WISDOM

A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM REQUIRES INTEGRATION AND COOPERATION AMONGST PRODUCERS, DISTRIBUTORS, PROCESSORS AND CONSUMERS



WE BELIEVE IN FAIR AND EQUAL ACCESS ACROSS THE FOOD SYSTEM, REGARDLESS OF ETHNICITY, RACE, GENDER, OR SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND, AND ARE WORKING TO MOVE RESOURCES AND CENTER THE VOICES OF BLACK, INDIGENOUS, AND PEOPLE OF COLOR



**WE RECOGNIZE THAT INSTITUTIONS
SUCH AS **HOSPITALS AND SCHOOLS**
PLAY LEADING ROLES IN OUR
CULTURE, AND CAN BE VALUABLE
PARTNERS IN PROMOTING A
SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM**



KEY PROGRAM PRIORITIES

SUPPORT

Increasing Farmer Access to Markets and Resources

- Provide emergency financial assistance through the Farmer Relief Fund
- Increase access to land through our collaboration with The Commons
- Increase access to retail and wholesale markets through training and outreach

The greatest barriers to beginning and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color farmers are access to capital, land, and resources. We are committed to removing barriers by providing financial assistance in the event of natural disasters, addressing the farmland access crisis by supporting creative land access solutions, and supporting farmers with marketing and business opportunities.

EDUCATE

Providing Educational Opportunities for Producers and Consumers

- Train small farmers on sustainable business and production practices
- Facilitate farmer-to-farmer learning
- Host consumer-focused food system education

Our current food system removes us from the production of food. Consumers want and need opportunities to learn how to support a regional food system, and farmers need opportunities to learn about sustainable agriculture practices that mitigate climate change, regenerate our deteriorating soils, and ensure resiliency in our food supply chain. We host educational and networking events that fill this need.

CONNECT

Building Bridges for Collective Impact

- Share job, educational, and networking opportunities
- Leverage existing resources and network to support initiatives that strengthen our food system
- Bring consumers and growers together

The organizations and collectives who challenge the dominant food system are small, fragmented, and under-resourced. To create meaningful and lasting change, we have to take a collective action approach. We work in partnership and through active coordination to ensure we are addressing the biggest challenges facing our food and farming community.



2024 GOALS

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Grow and diversify revenue streams
- Expand organizational capacity

SUPPORT

- Grow and expand Farmer Relief Fund
- Address land access through collaboration with The Commons

EDUCATE

- Host a minimum of 6 educational opportunities
- Increase attendee equity and minimize financial barriers

CONNECT

- Amplify existing stakeholder resources by expanding network partnerships

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

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