

A photograph showing several pairs of hands holding and sorting long green beans. The beans are vibrant green and appear to be freshly harvested. The background is slightly blurred, showing an outdoor setting with wooden structures.

2021-2022

Annual Report



**NH FOOD
ALLIANCE**

Our story, so far.

Our Mission

NH Food Alliance is a statewide network that connects the people, businesses, organizations, and communities dedicated to growing a thriving, fair, and sustainable local food system in the Granite State. Together we build relationships, learn from each other, and catalyze collaboration to advance our common goals, respond creatively to challenges, and amplify our collective impact.

Our Vision

We envision a diverse and well-connected network of trusted partners working together to grow and sustain local farms, fisheries, and food businesses, secure healthy food access for all, build climate resilience, and ensure racial equity in our communities and workplaces.

Our Impact

We advance our mission and vision by leveraging the connections and relationships we've been building since 2013 across four impact areas: Network Development, Collaborative Action, Communications and Storytelling, and Learning and Leadership. This report highlights the most impactful initiatives, events, and activities from this past year. Thank you to the Kendall Foundation, NH Charitable Foundation, NH Children's Health Foundation, generous individual donors and our network partners for making this work possible.

Land Acknowledgement

The NH Food Alliance is based at the University of New Hampshire, Durham, on land that is N'dakinna, which is the traditional ancestral homeland of the Abenaki, Pennacook, and Wabanaki Peoples past and present. As we all journey on the trail of life, we wish to acknowledge the spiritual and physical connection the Pennacook, Abenaki, and Wabanaki Peoples have maintained to N'dakinna (homeland) and the aki (land), nibi (water), lolakwikak (flora), and awaasak (fauna), which the University of New Hampshire community is honored to steward today. We also acknowledge the hardships they continue to endure after the loss of unceded homelands and champion the university's responsibility to foster relationships and opportunities that strengthen the well-being of the Indigenous People who carry forward the traditions of their ancestors. For more information about our shared indigenous heritage, please visit Indigenous NH.

Network Leadership Team

Charlene Andersen,
New Hampshire Community Loan Fund
Heidi Barker, UNH Extension, Health + Wellbeing
Elise Bolster, NH Food Bank
Lynda Brushett, Cooperative Development Institute
Jess Gerrior, NH Gleans, Cornucopia Project
Jessica Gorhan, NH Hunger Solutions

Nikki Kolb, NOFA-NH
Eileen Groll Liponis, NH Food Bank
Nancy LaRowe, Vital Communities
Gavin Macdonald, Genuine Local
Shawn Menard, Seacoast Eat Local
Allan Reetz, Hanover Co-op Food Stores
Stacey Purslow, NH Farm to School

NH Food Alliance Backbone Team

Tom Kelly, Executive Director
UNH Sustainability Institute
Katelyn Porter, NH Food Hub Network Project Manager

Nicole Tocco Cardwell, Program Director
Colleen Stewart, Communications Coordinator
Erin Hardie Hale, Strategic Advisor



Network Development

We aim to deepen our existing network connections and actively develop new relationships between individuals and organizations, especially among traditionally underrepresented communities, policy-makers and groups. This year, we accomplished this through the following events, assessments, and initiatives.

Interactive Partner Map

Our Network Partners ARE the NH Food Alliance. To make it easier to identify and connect with one other, we launched the ArcGIS based interactive Partner Map on the NH Food Alliance website. Partners (and potential collaborators) can filter by organization type or geographic location to explore and understand the network.

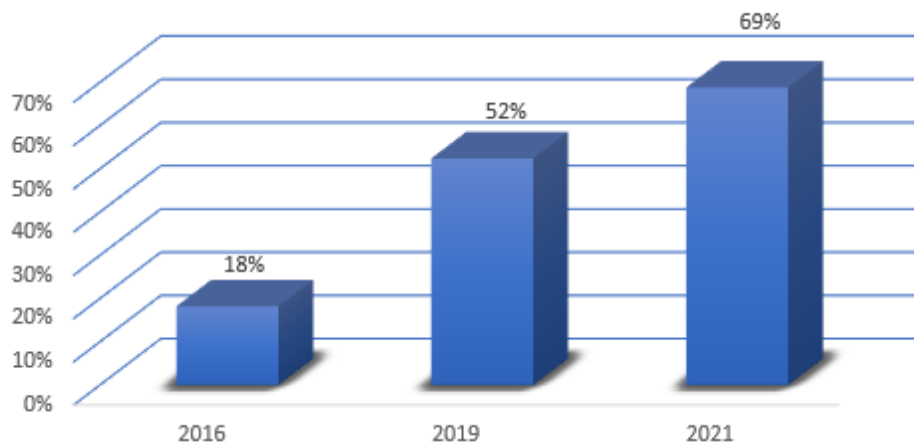


Network Health Assessment

In the summer and fall of 2021, we completed the third bi-annual 2021 Network Health Assessment. Our goals for the assessment were to better understand how people participate in the NH Food Alliance, how it impacts their work, and if the network expanded its reach and impact since the last assessment.

Overall, the assessment showed positive trends in our network development, including increases in partner commitment, better alignment around core values, and finding value in our collective work. We have seen a steady increase in alignment around the value of participating in the network from 2016–2021, with an average 123% increase since 2016 in the number of respondents who have changed the way they work as a result of participating in the network.

Percentage of participants that responded "yes" to the following question: "Has your work, or the way you work, changed as a result of participating in the NH Food Alliance?"



2022 NH Food System Statewide Gathering

May 13, 2022 | Plymouth, New Hampshire | The Barn on the Pemi



The NH Food System Statewide Gathering is an annual event hosted by the NH Food Alliance that brings together individuals, businesses, and organizations from across sectors who are dedicated to growing an improved local food system that works for all in the Granite State.

The 2022 Gathering was designed to meet this unique moment, with the COVID-19 pandemic top of mind. After two years of virtual meetings and interactions through screens, we intentionally put technology to the side and encouraged participants to step away from screens and enjoy interacting with peers and colleagues in person.



Determined to gather safely in person, we chose a unique venue that allowed for gathering outdoors, throughout a large well ventilated barn, and in the property's open-air greenhouse. To ensure the safety of our time indoors, we opened all the doors and windows – and capped the Statewide Gathering registration at less than 50% capacity of the 10,000 square-foot barn.

The resulting energy was palpable and the mood was joyful and celebratory. Interactive breakout sessions covered a variety of topics, from the intersection of health and hunger and a state level policy strategy session to strategic communications to help connect climate change and our diets.



141 participants
13 breakout sessions
93 organizations represented
21 event sponsors
93% of attendees rated the gathering 4 or higher
(when asked to rate the value of the event on a scale from 1 to 5)

“...the most beneficial and comprehensive networking opportunity for anyone involved in Food Systems work in New Hampshire.”

Andrea Tomlinson, Founder/Executive Director, New England Young Fishermen's Alliance

“I can think of no other meeting or conference I have been to that has been as fulfilling as our time together [at the 2022 NH Food System Statewide Gathering]”

Allan Reetz, Director of Public and Government Affairs, Hanover Co-op Food Stores



Highlights of the gathering include:

- Denise and Paul Pouliot, Head Female Speaker and Head Male Speaker of the Cowasuck Band of the Penacook–Abenaki People, welcomed everyone with a song and land acknowledgement
- Opening remarks featured Eileen Liponis, Executive Director of the NH Food Bank, who spoke about NH Feeding NH as an example of the potential of collaboration within our food system
- Gathering attendees connected with one another through Meet the Movement Bingo, a dynamic networking activity, before heading off to the first breakout session of the day
- Meaningful connections were made over a locally sourced taco bar lunch, featuring fish from NH Community Seafood, cheese from Huckins Farm, and produce from Longview Farm
- An afternoon celebration featured live music, a raffle of prizes donated by local organizations and businesses, snacks and refreshments, lawn games, and a display of the Field Photos Project

See the full schedule and explore breakout session notes and resources on the NH Food Alliance website.



Collaborative Action

We catalyze collaboration to find shared interests, advance policy changes, generate knowledge, and build collective solutions at the community, state and regional levels through the work of our action teams, workgroups, and the facilitation of various strategic meetings.

Racial Equity Action Team

Coordinated and facilitated monthly meetings of the NH Food Alliance Racial Equity Action team, which promotes racial equity in the New Hampshire food system by supporting Food Solutions New England's 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge, ensuring representation of diverse voices in the NH Food Alliance network, hosting and promoting equity-related learning events and resources, and serving as a community of practice for partners working to advance diversity, equity, inclusion and justice in their communities and workplaces. This team is also helping to spearhead a *Measuring Racial Equity in the NH Food System* metrics project, working with UNH Extension, the Carsey Institute, and others to better understand current inequities in order to inform how we work to dismantle racial injustices in our food system.

Climate Action Team

Coordinated monthly meetings of the Climate Action Team, which was formed in the Spring of 2020 to bring together advocates at the intersection of climate resilience, food systems, and emergency planning and policy development. Team members represent a variety of organizations, including the League of Conservation Voters, the NH Department of Environmental Services, Vital Communities, NOFA-NH, Cornucopia Project, Clean Energy NH and more. The team is focused on making connections across organizations, institutions, and initiatives to ensure that food systems are a part of climate-focused activities and climate resilience is part of food system planning, policy, and initiatives.

NH Food Hub Network

The NH Food Hub Network is a statewide network of food hubs working to improve the local food economy through increased sales, aggregation, and distribution of locally grown farm products. Launched in 2020 in partnership with the Kearsarge Food Hub, the network is currently housed within and coordinated by the NH Food Alliance.

Food hubs and food hub networks are continuing to prove as a successful model of building resiliency through collaboration over competition, despite the present-day challenges. In 2021, the New Hampshire-based food hubs moved a combined \$5.77 million worth of locally-produced foods, served over 400 regional farms, and employed around 45 full-time equivalent staff. The group is diverse in terms of business structure, mission, rural vs. urban location, age, experience, scale, price points, programming, resources and more.

In the past year, the NH Food Hub Network:

- Launched a NH Food Hub Network website
- Developed and launched two project groups within the network: the Food Safety Project Group and the Market Connections Project Group
- Developed and signed a Memorandum of Understanding for members of the NH Food Hub Network, which helps to streamline document creation, accelerate product trading, and generate needed resources for the hubs
- Created an interactive food hub map, in partnership with the UNH Geospatial Science Center and UNH Extension, which is accessible to all the food hubs as a tool to create distribution efficiencies



NH Food Access Coalition

Each month, 40–50 food access leaders from across the state meet to build advocacy capacity, discuss opportunities for collaboration, and share information about how to reduce food insecurity and promote equitable access to healthy and local food in New Hampshire. This past year, the NH Food Alliance co-facilitated monthly NH Food Access Coalition meetings alongside NH Hunger Solutions and supported the Coalition as it transitions to a permanent home within NH Hunger Solutions.

This year, the Coalition helped to secure passage of a bill that requires the state to file an annual SNAP outreach plan with the US Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services and made great progress toward re-establishing the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program in New Hampshire, securing commitment from key legislators to include funding in the 2023 biennial state budget. The Coalition also has identified champions for future school meal legislation, especially toward supporting Medicaid Direct Certification.

NH Feeding NH

In 2020, the NH Food Bank, in partnership with the NH Food Alliance, NH Farm Bureau and NOFA-NH, launched NH Feeding NH, a statewide initiative designed to support the purchase of New Hampshire grown food to feed our food insecure neighbors with nutritious, locally grown produce throughout New Hampshire communities during COVID-19 and beyond.

This past year, the NH Food Alliance team coordinated and facilitated monthly project meetings of NH Feeding NH during its transition to becoming a full fledged program of the NH Food Bank. The NH Food Hub Network Project Manager participated in monthly project meetings to ensure that the NH Feeding NH team is better connected to New Hampshire food hubs and the farms they source from.

ARPA Funds Request for Local Food Production and Distribution

In the spring of 2022, the NH Food Alliance team facilitated a group of network partners, including the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food, NH Association of Conservation Districts, NOFA-NH, NH Community Loan Fund, Hanover Co-op Food Stores, Genuine Local, and others, to identify, document, and submit a request to the Governor's office **for \$3.75 million of American Rescue Plan Funding for local food production and distribution in New Hampshire.**

Regional Collaborations



The NH Food Alliance continues to be a voice representing the New Hampshire food system in regional efforts—sharing learnings, projects, challenges, and opportunities with our neighbors and colleagues from nearby states.

New England Feeding New England Project

Representing NH in a USDA funded effort among all six New England (NE) States to build resilient regional food supply chains, with a goal of 30X30 (30% of the food consumed in NE produced within NE by 2030).

Food Solutions New England (FSNE)

Engaged with the work of FSNE through support of the 21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge, participation in the New England Food Vision Update, and the Food Solutions New England Network Team.

Farm to Institution New England

Engaging with other New England food systems advocates through participation on the 2023 FINE Summit Steering Committee.



Communications & Storytelling

We amplify the voices and missions of our network partners by developing communications platforms that reach both professional and general food system audiences. Our communications strategies include sharing tools and resources, as well as lifting up storytelling that advances food systems work throughout the state.

NH Eats Local Month

Eating local is a 365, 24/7 celebration in the Granite State. But we pull out the stops in August to celebrate NH Eats Local Month! For 31 days, the NH Food Alliance, its network and hundreds of NH Eats Local Month Partners rally around the hardworking farmers, fishers, and food businesses of our great state.



2021 NH Eats Local Month Highlights

- Governor Sununu and NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food Commissioner Shawn Jasper, participated in the 'NH's Big Bite' campaign
- 197 local businesses and organizations joined as NH Eats Local Partners
- During 2021 NH Eats Local Month:
 - 68% of participating Granite Staters spent \$50 or more at farm and food businesses
 - 55% of participating Granite Staters learned about a farm and food businesses they did not know about previously

Plans for 2022 NH Eats Local Month

During this year's NH Eats Local Month, we're challenging New Hampshire residents to the "Live Free + Eat Local Challenge." By eating at or from five different New Hampshire farms or food businesses, participants are entered in a chance to win local prizes. So far, over 60 local businesses signed up to distribute 5,200 Live Free + Eat Local Challenge submission forms and over 30 local businesses and organizations donated a prize.



Field Photos Project with Ink + Light Creative

In 2021, NH Food Alliance, Ink + Light Creative, and a UNH Sustainability Institute intern came together to produce a photo-interview series that tell the story of our vibrant and diverse food system. The project features six New Hampshire food and farm businesses:

Archway Farm	Highwater Farm
Cornucopia Project	Throwback Brewery
Fresh Start Farms	NH Community Seafood

Read the full interviews and see more from this (ongoing) project at nhfoodalliance.org!

This past year, we also:

- Participated in the New England FoodComms Community of Practice, coordinated by Food Solutions New England
- Participated in a workgroup of the New England FoodComms Community of Practice to develop a strategic collective narrative framework and workbook for food systems communications professionals.
- Explored the possibility of expanding NH Eats Local into a year-round marketing campaign



Learning & Leadership

We foster learning and skill-building among our network partners so that we can be effective leaders, collaborators and advocates for change.

NH Food Systems News You Need to Know

NH Food Systems News You Need to Know, the monthly newsletter of the NH Food Alliance, now reaches **more than 2,100 subscribers**.

In addition to sharing information from the NH Food Alliance team, this monthly e-newsletter pulls together events, news, jobs, and other announcements from partners in the network – and ushers readers towards the recently renovated "Network News" section of the website, where all of that information is available in a searchable, filterable format.



NH Local Food Counts project

The Local Food Count is a New England-wide initiative that grew out of the collaborative work of the New England Feeding New England (NEFNE) Project of the New England Food System Planners Partnership. The goal of the count is for each state in New England to utilize a proven methodology of data collection and analysis to account for the amount of local food purchased and sold in one calendar year. Once collected and analyzed, the data will be used by each state to inform food systems and economic development work. The NH Food Alliance is spearheading the creation of an Advisory Council to support and oversee the process and has started the process of securing funding to lead the NH Local Food Count team.



Developing the Six Ways to Build a Climate Resilient Food System Framework

Everyone, from regenerative farmers to clean energy advocates to school gardeners, plays a part in building a climate resilient food system. But how can we align our individual work to collaboratively move our priorities forward? And, better yet, how do we clearly communicate how our work in the food system contributes to climate resilience?

The NH Food Alliance's Climate Action Team identified six ways we can build a climate resilient food system and developed each into a talking point for clear and easy communication. We introduced the "Six Ways to Build a Climate Resilient Food System" at the 2022 NH Food System Statewide Gathering to our network and plan to build on the utilization of this framework in communications efforts in the coming year.

Semester in the City Fellow

University of New Hampshire student Dorothy (Dory) Goodrich joined the NH Food Alliance team this spring as the Sustainable Food Systems Communications and Engagement Fellow through the Semester in the City Program. In her role, Dory focused on researching ways that the NH Food Alliance and our network of partners could better engage with UNH students, programs and resources to further our missions.



Network Café Series

Network Cafes are monthly conversations to learn from partners across the New Hampshire food system. Held virtually this past year, these informal conversations about critical issues in our food system have become an opportunity for the NH Food Alliance team to respond nimbly to evolving issues. Network Café topics often leading to further collaborations and projects, turning talk into action.



337 registered participants. Endless possibilities.

2021–2022 Network Café topics and partners

Facing Challenges Together: Centering Mental Health for New Hampshire's Farmers

featuring the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN)

Learn and Reflect: Advancing Racial Equity in the New Hampshire Food System

featuring the 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge of Food Solutions New England

It Takes a Region to Be Resilient: Let's Get To Work With Food Solutions New England

featuring a New England Food Vision update and introduction to the 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge

Galvanizing Around Grant Season 2022: Putting Food System Funding to Work in NH

with real time creation of a grant roundup resource

New Hampshire's 2022 Legislative Session: What You Need to Know

with NOFA-NH, League of Conservation Voters, NH Hunger Solutions, and Vital Communities

Cost-Saving and Climate-Friendly: Accelerating On-Farm Solar in the Granite State

with Vital Communities, Revision Energy, and the Cheshire County Conservation District

Roll Call: Policy, Regional Network Development & Community Engagement

with NH Farm to School

Healthy Soils in New Hampshire: from Legislation to Community Action

with Representative Peter Bixby, Stonewall Educational Farm, and NOFA-NH



104

network partners
(and counting!)

"There is immense power when a group
of people with similar interests gets
together to work toward the same goals."
Idowu Koyenikan



Thank you for your ongoing support of the NH Food Alliance.



The NH Food Alliance is a program of the Sustainability Institute at the University of New Hampshire. Our work is made possible with generous support from the Kendall Foundation, NH Charitable Foundation, NH Children's Health Foundation and generous individual donors.



**University of
New Hampshire**
Sustainability Institute

NH Food Alliance

University of New Hampshire

107 Nesmith Hall

131 Main Street, Durham, NH

(603) 862-8564

nhfoodalliance.com | [@nhfoodalliance](https://www.instagram.com/nhfoodalliance)