

New Jersey's Food Security Action Plan

Taking Action and Planning For The Future



2024 Garden State Conference on Food Security:
Setting a Table for All, for Always

Presented by the New Jersey Office of the Food Security Advocate



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As part of the legislation that created the NJ Office of the Food Security Advocate, the office must work with State and community partners to develop a strategic plan to address identified gaps in areas underserved by current food insecurity programs.

Laying the foundation:

- Grounding the work in research, evaluation, and gathering publicly available data
- Being out in community to accurately advocate for needs
- Supporting state agencies
- Advising the Governor's Office and the Legislature on policy
- Building partnerships in philanthropy
- Supporting coalition building in community



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Taking Action:

5 Goals -

1. Establish direct connections between NJ's food supply sector and community organizations to create new markets, infrastructure, and efficiency.
2. Facilitate robust participation in programs that draw down federal funds that increase access to healthy school meals and support students during the summer.
3. Support county-level food security coalitions.
4. Administer, Oversee, and Evaluate food and hunger state funding.
5. Develop a New Jersey Food Security Strategic Plan



1. Establish direct connections between NJ's food supply sector and community organizations to create new markets, infrastructure, and efficiency.

We must create lines of sight between the food in New Jersey and the organizations providing food to families that need it.

- Agricultural pilots
- Support and advise existing collaborative efforts
- Homeplate
- Explore county coalitions as aggregation hubs
- Connect farmers and organizations with buying power





2. Facilitate robust participation in programs that draw down federal funds that increase access to healthy school meals and support students during the summer.

- Support Summer EBT efforts
- School meal application awareness campaign
- Conduct a study on school food security issues and recommend further State-level action
- Draft strategic recommendations for expanding access to and supporting school meals in NJ
- Disseminate the study's reports and recommendations to state and department officials



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3. Support county-level food security coalitions.

Collective impact work that brings together organizations from multiple sectors to work collaboratively with county and municipal governments and departments is essential to NJ's food security goals.

- Assist county coalitions to connect with county government or county-level offices
- Share research & evaluation tools and technical assistance with coalitions
- Support networking and engagement through storytelling on community strengths, efforts, and best practices



4. Administer, Oversee, and Evaluate food and hunger state funding.

Legislation passed in January 2024 requires that OFSA, in consultation with the emergency food organizations (EFOs) that receive state funds through an annual appropriation from the legislature, develop a process for eliciting and gathering data about local distribution agencies' (LDAs) food and capacity needs.

- Oversee grant planning, implementation, and reporting
- Conduct overall process and impact evaluation of food and hunger state funding



5. Develop a New Jersey Food Security Strategic Plan:

Outline areas of need that New Jersey stakeholders will focus on and define what outcomes and outputs will be worked towards and what resources, policies, and programs will be required to achieve those outcomes and outputs.

1

Gather Data Across Food Security Dimensions from July 1, 2024 to September 1, 2025

2

Gather Stakeholders into an Executive Committee and Working Groups from October 2024 to January 2025

3

Selection of the Executive Committee will be informed by learnings and takeaways from Year 1 evaluation and engagement efforts

4

OFSA will bring together stakeholders from multiple sectors to form a Working Group of partners

5

Host an in-person Executive Committee kickoff meeting in December 2024

6

Conduct Strategic Plan Development Activities as Defined by Working Group Executive Committee from January 2025 to June 2025

7

Publicly Share a Draft Version of the Food Security Strategic Plan in August/September 2025

8

Mark, you are so awesome



“The opposite of poverty is justice” – Bryan Stevenson

“Our goals must AT LEAST be as big as the problems we are facing” – Nick Tilsen

“Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world’s grief. Do justly, now. Love mercy, now. Walk humbly, now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it” – The Talmud

“So I make this wish, to have something more for us than this” – Asha from Disney’s Wish

