

CULTIVATE 2020

CSFR
2018-2020 Strategic Plan
Version 1.1: October, 2017

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Letter From our Executive Director

On behalf of Colorado Springs Food Rescue's board, staff, and volunteers, I'm pleased to present our 2018-2020 Strategic Plan. This living document is the culmination of nearly a year of strategic planning, including both internal working sessions as well as external consultation with our partners throughout Colorado Springs. It's been a labor of love, and we couldn't be happier.

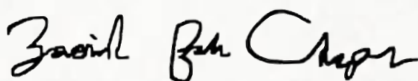
CSFR was built upon the initial project of rescuing surplus healthy food, of which we have redistributed nearly \$3 million worth to 30+ partners since our formation in the fall of 2013. However, from research alongside local universities and relationships with our community partners, we know first-hand that hunger and poor health outcomes aren't just about food. Hunger and poor health in our city are a symptom of deeper root causes, including poverty, discrimination and deficient neighborhood-based resources. Over the past two years we have expanded our tactics to include programs fostering food education, community-building and neighborhood development. In addition to this, we have struck key partnerships ranging from local school districts and jobs-placement programs to affordable housing organizations and promotora (Community Health Worker) groups.

For 4 years, we have used food as a means to drive neighborhood-based change, but it is time to embolden new, innovative tactics and build our partnerships. It is on this note that I'm honored to present CULTIVATE 2020, our three year strategic plan. The plan highlights a three-year strategy for CSFR's integration of low-overhead/high-impact food distribution and education operations heretofore with best practices in local food production and sustainable community development.

Building healthier communities and a more equitable food system won't happen overnight, and we are honored to deepen our roots in a city that values resilience and collaboration.

Onward and Upward,

Zac Chapman
Executive Director



MISSION.

To cultivate a **healthy, equitable food system** in the greater Colorado Springs community.



VISION.

We envision a world where communities are able to remain connected through a resilient, nourishing, and thriving food system.

We envision a community-driven food system that is nourishing for the people, land and economy.

CORE VALUES.

COLLABORATION

Diversity and cooperation push the boundaries of what communities can achieve.

From our very beginning, we have been building relationships, partnerships and coalitions throughout our city, thriving on a culture of collaboration.

COMMUNITY

Strong localities are rooted in relationships that cross generational, neighborhood, class and racial barriers. Our work is grassroots and participatory. We value the diverse 'ways of knowing' that are brought to the table by the people that make up our organization.

RESILIENCE

A community's branches are only as long as its roots. When the going gets tough, we are committed to digging our heels in and supporting each other as community and family.

EMPOWERMENT

No one knows the inequities in our food system better than those who have been directly affected by them. Through education and leadership development, we strive to nurture opportunity & self-sufficiency within our city's most under-resourced neighborhoods.

EQUITY

We hold steadfast to justice, impartiality and fairness in achieving our mission. We are consistently asking "Who has a seat at the table?" in all that we do.

INNOVATION

We continually push ourselves to build resourceful, creative ways to achieve community nourishment.

OUR APPROACH.

We believe in **building healthier communities by way of a healthier food system**. After years of programmatic implementation, community engagement, and research, we've determined that the most impactful approach to achieving our mission is through three integrated pillars of action:



Food Access:

Bolster no-cost grocery programs and explore new programs/partnerships that increase neighborhood-based access to healthy foods.

Food Education:

Increase school-based projects, our Full Circle Food Team & commitment to youth-led initiatives.



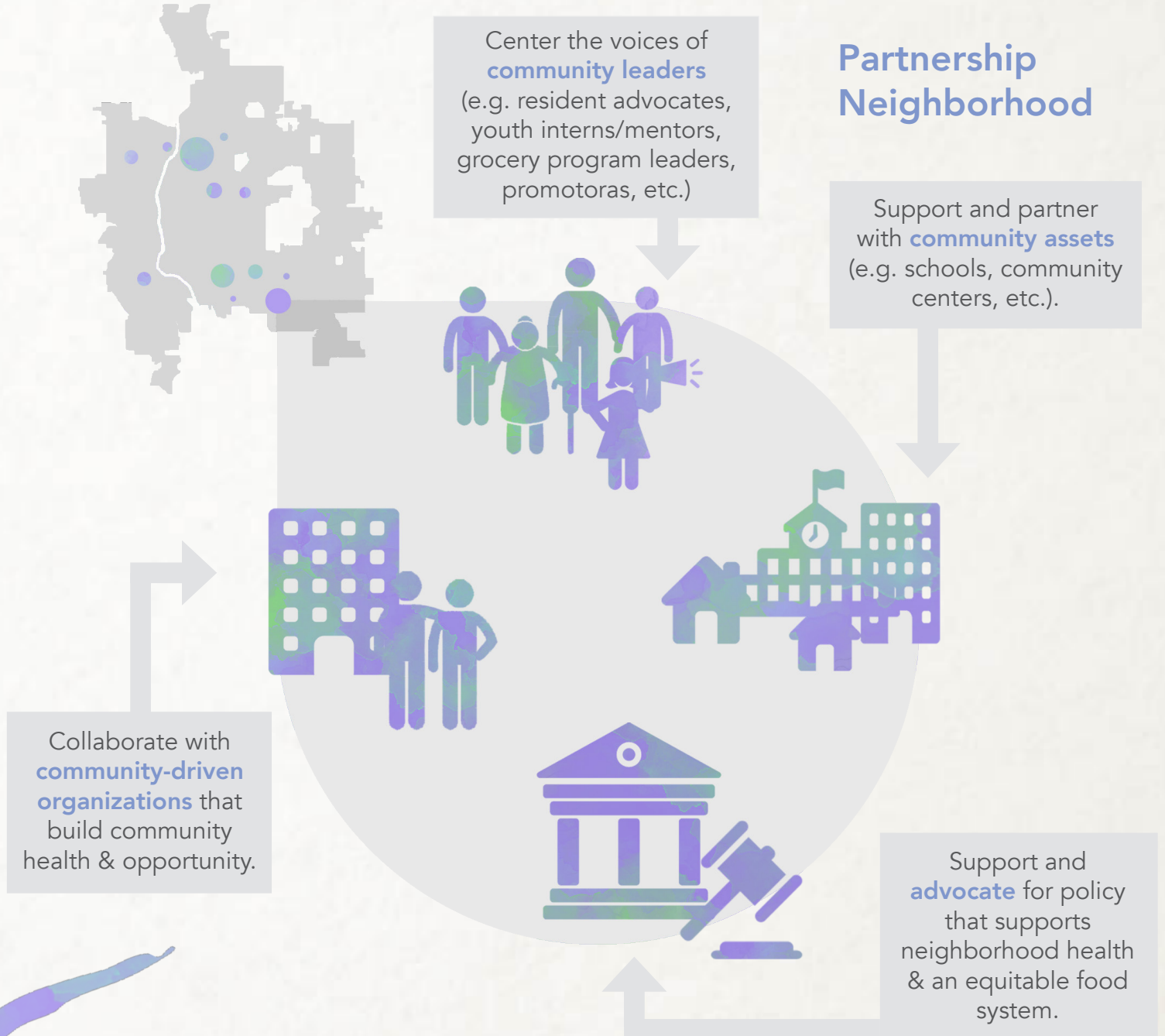
Food Production:

Support an equitable local foodshed through investment in food production.



In order to actualize these pillars, we prioritize under-resourced neighborhoods that have a dearth of healthy food outlets (food deserts) and/or a high propensity of unhealthy food outlets (food swamps). In partnership neighborhoods, we engage the following principles:

City of Colorado Springs



Cultivate 2020 highlights a three-year strategy for CSFR's integration of our low-overhead/high impact food distribution and education operations heretofore, with innovative best practices of neighborhood-based food environments.





2018-2020 GOALS & TACTICS

ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT.

Overview

As CSFR projects large increase in our programmatic breadth and overhead operating costs over the next three years, we believe that clear messaging, committed leadership and an effective fund development plan is crucial to our success. Currently, direct donations, events, fundraising campaigns and grants have been the main funding source for CSFR. A well-strategized development plan will ensure a diversified funding stream and pave the road for our organization to successfully bring earned income into our revenue base.

Goal: CSFR will have the administrative and developmental resources & expertise necessary to fulfill its mission of cultivating a healthy, equitable food system in the greater Colorado Springs Community

Objective I:

CSFR will be fully rebranded as a food systems & health equity non-profit.

Tactic A:

Revise website, brochures, and all marketing materials to include information on our “Three pillars of action”, advocacy efforts & neighborhood-based approach (2018).

Tactic B:

Change organizational name and/or slogan to better fit our tactics in food access, education, production & advocacy (2019).

Objective II:

Attract and retain talented, passionate leadership at CSFR.

Tactic A:

Benefits packages for full time employees (2018).

Tactic B:

All supervisors hold formal bi-annual check-ins and informal monthly check-ins with their staff (Q1 & Q4 2018).

Tactic C:

Invest in a minimum of one annual professional development opportunity for all full time staff (e.g. leadership/departmental development modules, workshops & symposiums) (Ongoing, 2018).

Tactic D:

Hold regular employee appreciations (Ongoing, 2018).

Objective III:

Cultivate financial stability through opening diverse revenue streams, in-kind donations and earned income.

Tactic A:

Devise and continually manage a comprehensive 2018-2020 development plan (Ongoing, 2018).

Tactic B:

Develop earned income revenue streams that will support a percentage of organizational operating budget (2020).

FOOD ACCESS.

Overview

In 2015, through sociological research, CSFR found that there are neighborhoods that remain disproportionately under-resourced in our city, with strikingly high rates of poverty in conjunction with low rates of transit/automobile access. Based on GIS data, we prioritize and collaborate with neighborhoods that both have the lowest health outcomes & face the highest barriers to healthy food access.

Goal: CSFR will distribute healthy food surplus from retailers, schools, farmers, and gardeners in order to achieve the goal of increasing access to healthy foods in communities & families that face high-barriers.

Objective I:

Support current and build new resident-led, no-cost grocery programs.

Tactic A: Maintain partnership with El Paso County Food Systems Assessment Group & build new research relationships to determine highest-need locations for new grocery programs (2018).

Tactic B: Have at least one no-cost grocery program in all LILA (low-income/low-food access) neighborhoods in Colorado Springs (2020).

Objective II:

Provide fresh, perishable foods for small-budget partner organizations, free-of-charge.

Tactic A: Increase perishable prepared food redistribution from cafeterias/caterers for non profit partners (2018).

Tactic B: Redistribute excess healthy food from all farmer's markets in Colorado Springs (2019).

Objective III: Advocate for local, state and federal nutrition assistance programs and policy that increases accessibility to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Tactic A: Continue partnerships with Hunger Free Colorado & Food Rescue Alliance, providing advocacy support when necessary (2018).

Objective IV:

Pilot innovative programs to increase consumption of healthy fruits & vegetables.

Tactic A: Pilot collaborative "Food Pharmacy" with select medicaid patients and participating doctors (2018).

Tactic B: Support micro-enterprises of community partners & highlight micro-entrepreneurial products in Helen Hunt space (2018).



FOOD EDUCATION.

Overview

CSFR has included food education as a programmatic priority since 2015. In 2016 we expanded our Full Circle Food Team (FCFT) food education youth development program to three school districts (D 2, 11, & 20). FCFT-led accomplishments in 2016 included the creation of new school-based food rescues (e.g. Fountain Valley School and Sierra High School), community cookbooks, food waste reduction media, participation in immersive field trips, management of healthy food distribution programs and visiting the Colorado state capitol to talk about food security.

Goal: CSFR will educate communities on healthy, equitable food systems.

Objective I:

Expand Full Circle Food Team (FCFT) youth intern/mentorship program.

Tactic A: Offer 8 internship opportunities & 4 employment opportunities for Atlas Preparatory School students (2018).

Tactic B: Implement FCFT educational curriculum in conjunction with youth-led no-cost grocery programs in 4 schools in Colorado Springs (2020).

Objective II:

Expand FCFT School Food Rescue Program.

Tactic A: Rebrand school-based cafeteria food rescues as formal position under FCFT (2017).

Tactic B: Solidify formal partnerships with school district 11 & Harrison District 2 (2018).

Tactic C: Increase student-led food rescues in Colorado Springs School districts from 5 to 20 (2020).

Objective III: Continue annual Forward Food Summit educational conference.



FOOD PRODUCTION.

Overview

Creating more local and small scale farms, small urban farms, year-round greenhouse operations, backyard gardens, community gardens will cultivate healthy “food environments” in the greater Colorado Springs community.

We believe that local food production & distribution to LILA (Low-income/Low food access) communities works to keep money local. Urban farmers spend money locally to develop and grow produce; small local farms spend money locally to develop their farms and grow their produce. Currently, more than 95% of the money we spend as a region on food/food production, leaves the community/region. As Larry Stebbins, Director of Pikes Peak Urban Gardens, states: “Colorado Springs has less than a 5 day supply of fresh produce. If the highway corridors into the city were closed (as in a bad storm or other catastrophe) we would have to rely on canned, packaged and frozen food. To best of my research that supply would last less than one month,”.

CSFR hopes to make it easier and affordable to use the existing water supply for small-scale food production directly benefitting local communities. Tentative ideas range from: assistance in connecting to existing water lines, expansion of the waiver program for development fees and/or tax incentives for those that use water for local food production that directly improves community healthy food access & equity. Removing the barriers for those that build greenhouses in residential areas, if those greenhouses are used for food production.

In addition, strategic local food production & distribution creates jobs. If Colorado Springs were to shift to 10% local food production and distribution, this would result in 2,000 local jobs, with more than \$65 million in wages.

Goal: Create healthier neighborhood food environments through increasing neighborhood-based production of food.

Objective I:

Expand Fresh Food Connect neighborhood “Grow-a-Row for Community” program.

Tactic A: Increase partnerships gardeners, community gardeners & school gardens to have 70 total participants & 8 participating zip codes (2018).

Tactic B: Construct a mobile produce stand to display and distribute veggies at FCFT-led donation-based pop-up markets (2018).

Tactic C: Partner with youth summer programs to get students involved in pick-ups (2018).

Objective II:

Support pre-existing and create new urban farms in low-income/low-food access neighborhoods.

Tactic A: Conduct feasibility study on purchase/long-term lease of Prospect Farm &/or Lane Foundation for urban farm projects (2018).

Tactic B: Participate in and bolster local food working groups such as the Food Policy Advisory board of El Paso County (2018).

Tactic C: Advocate for the removal of barriers for landowners to dedicate vacant, undeveloped land within the city, for use as an urban farm or community garden with tax incentives or other financially rewarding incentives to the owner (2019).

Tactic D: Build upon strategic partnerships with local food production organizations such as Pikes Peak Urban Gardens (2018).

Objective III:

Pilot innovative food production programs.

Tactic A: Pilot indoor, under lights potted herb and lettuce production in Helen Hunt campus (2018).

Tactic B: Conduct feasibility study on cooperative ownership model for food production/distribution enterprise (2018).

GET INVOLVED.

VOLUNTEER

In order for our model to work, we need lots of help! Would you like to help reduce food waste while empowering yourself and fellow community members? Find out more by visiting our website.



PARTNER

Looking to start a school-based food rescue, community growing project or healthy food distribution program? Reach out and let's make something work!



GIVE

Diversity and cooperation push the boundaries of what communities can achieve. From our very beginning, we have been building relationships, partnerships and coalitions throughout our city, thriving on a culture of collaboration.



RESOURCES.

GROCERY PROGRAM/FULL CIRCLE TEAM

patience@coloradospringsfoodrescue.org

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VOLUNTEERS, DONORS, RECIPIENTS

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PRESS, FUNDING, OTHER

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