



Overview & Network Structure

[Farm to Plate](#) is Vermont's food system plan being implemented statewide by the 350+ member organizations of the [Farm to Plate Network](#). The Network creates the space for strategic conversations and action across multiple audiences and perspectives to:

- 🌱 Increase jobs and economic activity in Vermont's food system;
- 🌱 Improve access to healthy, local food for all Vermonters (especially low income Vermonters);
- 🌱 Improve the quality of our environment (e.g., soil, water, energy); and
- 🌱 Improve the ability of the local food system to support the health of Vermonters.

The Farm to Plate Network builds on the strength of food system stakeholders and encompasses farms, food production businesses, specialty food producers, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, capital providers, and government agencies. The Network is not a stand alone organization and does not detract from members' ability to obtain funding or capital for their own organization, business, or farm; rather it builds greater connections between organizations to collaboratively accomplish the [25 goals](#) of the [Farm to Plate Strategic Plan](#), provides greater access to information and resources including funding (i.e., it expands the pie rather than slicing the existing one thinner), and helps organizations accomplish their own goals.

Guiding Values

Equity—We strive to build an equitable food system that promotes dignity, including affordable access to healthy food and fair working conditions.

Collaborative Interdependence—We recognize that the foundation of the Farm to Plate Network's success is the strength of relationships and trust between Network members, and that the collective impact that comes from collaborative and interdependent action is greater than the impact any organization can achieve alone.

Shared Leadership and Accountability—We value decentralized leadership and transparent governance that empowers Network members and creates mutual accountability across the Network to achieve the Farm to Plate goals.

Transparency and Inclusiveness—We value transparent and inclusive communication, governance, and information sharing that is accessible to a diverse array of organizations.

Intentional and Reflective Analysis—We value intentional and ongoing reflection and performance evaluation through data driven analysis with a systems thinking approach. This helps ensure that programs and initiatives are evidence based, best practices can be replicated, and we remain focused, relevant, and adaptive to changing conditions in the marketplace.

Network Structure: Designed to Accelerate Collective Impact

The Farm to Plate Network structure was adapted from the network governance model first developed by the climate change and energy policy network [RE-AMP](#), and the five conditions of collective impact outlined in John Kania and Mark Kramer's Stanford Social Innovation Review research article "[Collective Impact](#)". The "five conditions of collective impact" are:

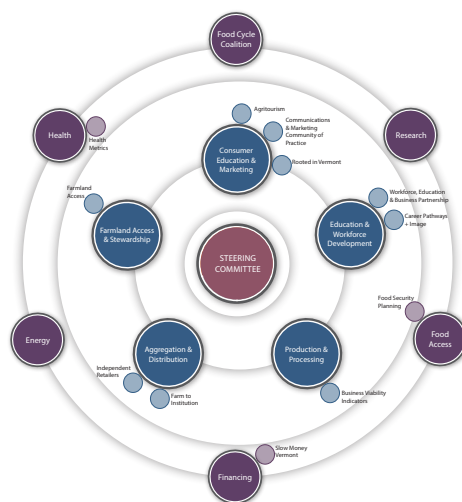
1. Common Agenda:

The [Farm to Plate Strategic Plan](#) articulates a shared vision and identifies ways to strengthen Vermont's food system by 2020.



2. Mutually Reinforcing Activities:

[Farm to Plate Network](#) activities reflect and support existing programs, projects, and organizations; and seek to advance new ideas in a coordinated fashion.



3. Continuous Communication:

The Farm to Plate Network and the [Farm to Plate website](#) provide new and ongoing opportunities for communication and collaboration.

4. Shared Measurement:

The Farm to Plate Network uses Results-Based Accountability (RBA) as a shared measurement framework to track progress on the [25 goals](#) of the Farm to Plate Strategic Plan.

GOAL 1 TOTAL LOCAL CONSUMPTION 	GOAL 2 INSTITUTIONAL CONSUMPTION 	GOAL 3 FOOD-RELATED HEALTH PROBLEMS 	GOAL 4 FARM PRODUCTION EXPENSES 	GOAL 5 LAND IN AGRICULTURE
GOAL 6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS 	GOAL 7 FOOD PRODUCTION 	GOAL 8 DAIRY VIABILITY 	GOAL 9 FARM PROFITABILITY 	GOAL 10 FOOD LITERACY
GOAL 11 PROCESSING INFRASTRUCTURE 	GOAL 12 DISTRIBUTION INFRASTRUCTURE 	GOAL 13 LOCAL FOOD AVAILABILITY 	GOAL 14 NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT 	GOAL 15 FOOD ACCESS
GOAL 16 EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES 	GOAL 17 JOB AND ESTABLISHMENT 	GOAL 18 ENABLE RANGES AND SAFE WORKPLACES 	GOAL 19 BUSINESS PLANNING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE 	GOAL 20 ACCESS TO CAPITAL
GOAL 21 LEVERAGING FINANCIAL RESOURCES 	GOAL 22 EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY 	GOAL 23 BALANCED REGULATIONS 	GOAL 24 STATE LEADERSHIP 	GOAL 25 STRATEGIC COORDINATION

5. Backbone Support:

The [Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund](#) provides logistical support and coordination to the Farm to Plate Network, maximizes the collective impact of the Farm to Plate Strategic Plan, maintains the Farm to Plate website, provides communication services, and publishes annual indicators of progress.

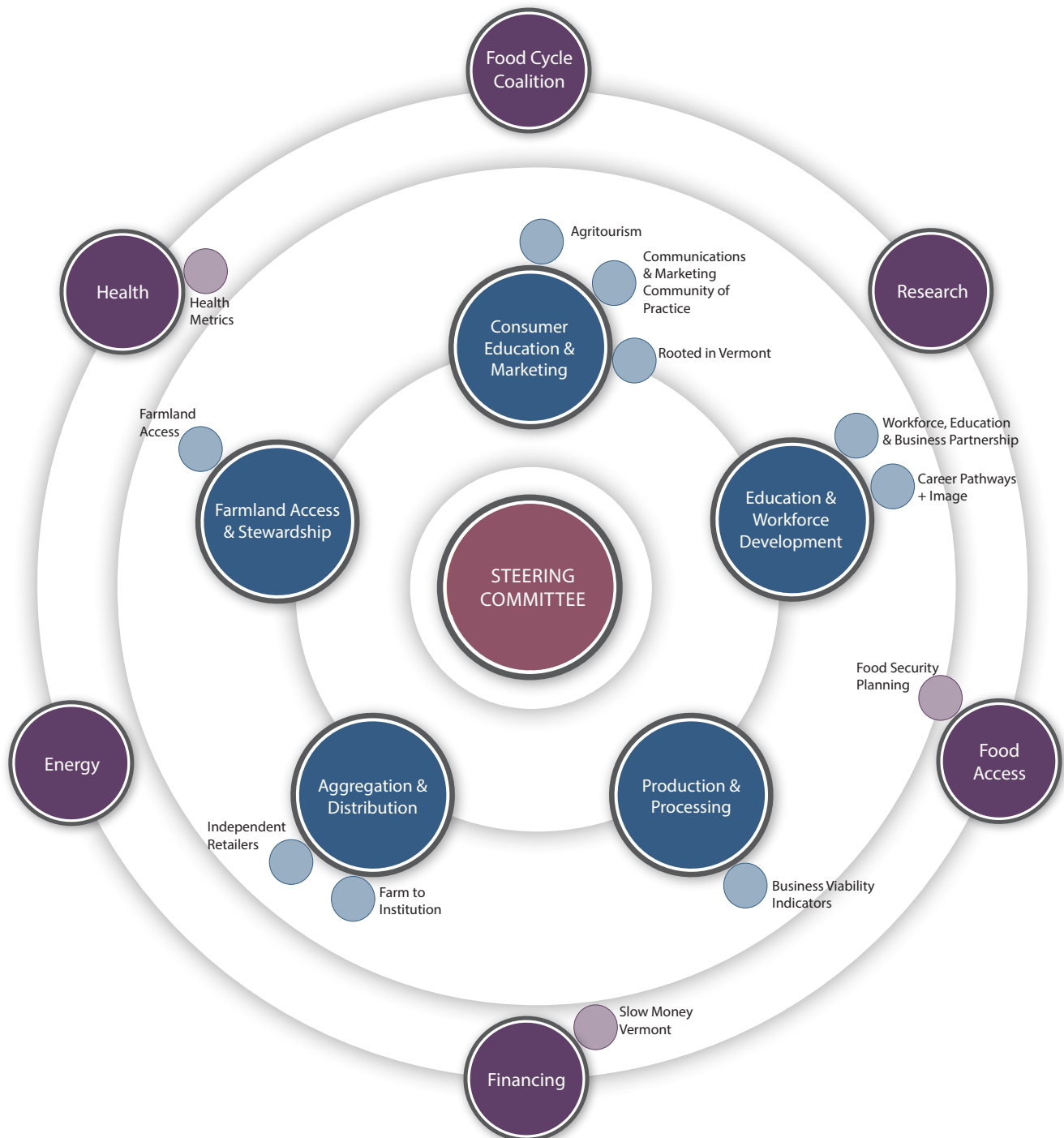
1. Common Agenda: The Farm to Plate Strategic Plan

By many accounts, Vermont has developed the most comprehensive food system plan in the country and the first of its kind in New England. In 2009, Farm to Plate Investment Program legislation was signed into law and tasked the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF) with the creation of a ten year [Farm to Plate Strategic Plan](#). The Plan explores the major issues impacting Vermont's food system through analysis of current conditions, high impact leverage areas and broader cross-cutting issues.



2. Mutually Reinforcing Activities: The Farm to Plate Network

The **Farm to Plate Network** is made up of a Steering Committee, Working Groups, Cross-Cutting Teams, and Task Forces. Network groups convene to work on high impact projects that no one organization can do alone; assess gaps, opportunities, and trends; and monitor progress towards reaching the 25 Farm to Plate goals. The goals of the Farm to Plate Strategic Plan are being implemented by both the collective work taking place within the Farm to Plate Network and by individual Network member organizations.



STEERING COMMITTEE:






The [Farm to Plate Steering Committee](#) (SC) provides overall Network governance and evaluation. The SC is responsible for maintaining a systems perspective by identifying gaps in strategies, developing processes for learning, organizing the annual Network Gathering, approving mini-grant requests from the Farm to Plate Network Fund, and shaping the evolution of the Network infrastructure over time. It is comprised of 10 members, including a chair from each of the five Working Groups, a chair of the Food Access Cross-Cutting Team, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Commerce, a representative of the Sustainable Agriculture Council, and a representative of the Vermont Food Funders Network.

The Farm to Plate Network Fund supports time sensitive, high impact projects proposed by a WG, TF, or CCT. Any Network group can submit an application for funding (up to \$10,000) on a rolling basis as long as funds exist. Decisions on which projects are selected are made by the Steering Committee.

WORKING GROUPS:

Working Groups (WG) are at the core of the Farm to Plate Network, one for each major “systems lever” which will enhance Vermont’s food system and work to reach the 25 goals. Each WG takes responsibility for a set of goals, strategies, and indicators from the Farm to Plate Strategic Plan to further develop, implement, and monitor annually. Each WG devises its own annual work plan and identifies potential resources for their selected high impact strategies. Each WG selects a chair or co-chairs to help set the agenda and coordinate work. WG chairs receive stipends to help cover expenses associated with providing leadership to their WG. Chairs are elected annually for up to 3 consecutive years.

The [Farm to Plate Network](#) currently consists of 5 Working Groups:

-  **[Aggregation and Distribution](#):** this working group focuses on aggregation, processing, storage, and distribution strategies that expand linkages between locally produced and processed food in the full range of market outlets (e.g., schools, hospitals, grocery stores, etc.).
-  **[Consumer Education and Marketing](#):** this working group focuses on strategies which improve consumer's ability to find, purchase, and use local foods. Efforts to increase local and regional food marketing, enhance consumer education and awareness, and expand agritourism opportunities are central to the group, as well as ensuring these efforts reach Vermonters of all income levels.
-  **[Education and Workforce Development](#):** this working group focuses on strategies that improve and enhance K-12 education, higher education, adult and continuing education, and internship/apprenticeship programs that lead to careers in the food system. It also works on strategies which address food system workforce needs and labor issues.
-  **[Farmland Access and Stewardship](#):** this working group focuses on strategies that expand farmland conservation, increase farmers' access to affordable farmland, and promote best practices around agricultural land use and soil and water quality.
-  **[Production and Processing](#):** this working group focuses on increasing food production in Vermont and developing and upgrading the resources available to Vermont's food producers and processors to support improvements in their production, business management skills, and quality of life.

CROSS-CUTTING TEAMS:

Cross-Cutting Teams (CCT) gather a few times a year to assess key issues that cut across the entire food system supply chain. CCTs can serve as a “community of practice” to share best practices and information across the Network, organize events, or conduct research to inform future network action. CCTs can also play a consultative role to the Network and act as liaisons to various WGs and individual stakeholder groups – both within and outside the Network. Currently, there are 7 CCTs: [Energy](#), [Financing](#), [Food Access](#), [Health](#), [Research](#), and [Food Cycle Coalition](#)

TASK FORCES:

Working Groups and Cross-Cutting Teams may form Task Forces (TF) in order to implement high impact projects that address key objectives and strategies identified in the Strategic Plan. They can be tasked with specific strategies and indicators to further develop, implement, and monitor. For a TF to be formed, a project charter must be completed to define leadership, scope, and resources. TFs are created and disbanded based on need.

3. Continuous Communication: The Farm to Plate Website & Communications

The [Farm to Plate website](#) is an online platform that enables information sharing and collaboration. Launched in May 2013, the website features thousands of food system resources, including stories, events, videos, job listings, data visualizations for the 25 Goals, and all sections of the Farm to Plate Strategic Plan.

The Farm to Plate website is also the space for Network groups to share information, including meeting dates and activities accomplished. All Network groups have pages to populate with updates, shared files, and other information. A list-serve function sends out rapid communication to group members.

Other Farm to Plate communication includes a monthly newsletter ([Vermont Food System News](#)), Twitter account ([@VTFarm2Plate](#)), social media sharing, online and printed editorial, and communications outreach strategic planning for Network group projects.



The [Vermont Food Systems Atlas](#) is a searchable mapping tool, housed in the Farm to Plate website, designed to help farmers and food businesses find resources on education, financing, and technical assistance, as well as build relationships with distributors, processing centers, other farmers, and all entities who are part of the state's food system.



4. Shared Measurement: Results-Based Accountability

The Farm to Plate Network uses [Results-Based Accountability \(RBA\)](#) as its shared measurement framework. RBA distinguishes between results for whole populations (i.e., population indicators) and results for particular programs, organizations, or services (i.e., performance measurements).

The [Getting to 2020](#) page on the website features population level indicators, and some performance measures, for the 25 goals from the Strategic Plan. We are currently working to populate additional performance measures from organizations and Network groups for each goal.

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5. Backbone Support: Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund



The Farm to Plate Network is supported by staff based at the [Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund \(VSJF\)](#) to provide overall backbone support and Network coordination. VSJF provides a range of services to the Network, including:

- Meeting facilitation and notetaking
- Project development and management support to Network groups
- Data gathering, visualization, and reporting on indicators of progress to the Legislature each year
- Updating and revising the Farm to Plate Strategic Plan as needed
- Farm to Plate website development and maintenance
- Communications and outreach about Vermont's food system to member organizations and the general public
- Organizing the annual Farm to Plate Network Gathering and other Network related trainings
- Assisting with major fundraising efforts that support the work of Network members and strategy implementation

VSJF staff providing support to the Farm to Plate Network include:



Jake Claro, Farm to Plate Network Director

Jake is responsible for overall Network coordination. He works directly with Working Groups, Cross Cutting Teams and Task Forces, as well as representing Farm to Plate externally. Jake is integral in all Farm to Plate planning functions, and oversees Network Activities and Projects.



Sarah Danly, Farm to Plate Network Manager

Sarah works directly with Working Groups, Cross Cutting Teams and Task Forces by providing facilitation, meeting design, and project development and management support to the Network. Sarah also performs data analysis of Farm to Plate Indicators.



Lydia Pitkin, Farm to Plate Coordinator

Lydia provides logistical support to the Farm to Plate Network, coordinating website content and updates, group meeting logistics, the Farm to Plate Network Gathering. She also does Farm to Plate Network Outreach and assists with Farm to Plate Communications.



Kelly Nottermann, Communications Manager

Kelly provides communications leadership and project assistance to Network groups, based on need, and manages public outreach and media for Farm to Plate.



Shane Rogers, Rooted in Vermont Project Manager

Shane manages the Rooted in Vermont campaign, which was designed and initiated by the Consumer Education and Marketing Working Group.



Ellen Kahler, Executive Director

Ellen facilitates the Farm to Plate Steering Committee, raises funds for the Farm to Plate Network, and represents the Network in the greater New England region.