

Community Food Security Coalition

STRATEGIC ROAD MAP July 2009-June 2013

Prepared by OpenSource Leadership Strategies, Inc.
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BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF WORK

In 2008, the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) retained OpenSource Leadership Strategies, Inc. to facilitate a strategic planning process to articulate strategic goals for the coming 4 years, July 2009-June 2013. The following timeline captures key steps in CFSC's strategic planning process:

July 12-13, 2008	Launched the engagement with a retreat of the CFSC board, staff, and selected members to (1) discover and articulate the external and internal strategic issues that frame this process and (2) develop norms and skills for decision-making and communication to enable a successful strategic planning process.
August-September 2008	Conducted targeted data gathering through interviews and online survey to supplement existing data, and reviewed key organizational materials. Held periodic meetings of CFSC's Strategic Planning Committee to strengthen member input into planning process.
October 5-8, 2008	Participated in the 2008 CFSC Conference to conduct additional data gathering and further engage members in the strategic planning process.
October-November 2008	Analyzed and synthesized data into key themes to inform strategic goal setting and design of strategic planning retreat.
November 16-18, 2008	Held a retreat of the CFSC Strategic Planning Committee for strategic visioning and goal setting.
December 2008 – February 2009	Reviewed the emerging strategic direction with CFSC's board and staff. Formed teams that provided additional input to further hone the strategic goals.

March 18-19, 2009	Fleshed out the Strategic Road Map with action steps to guide the board and staff in the change process over the coming 4 years. Ensured integration with CFSC's anti-racism/social justice lens. Codified CFSC's strategic direction in a revised mission statement. Determined remaining steps in the process.
April-May 2009	Finalized Strategic Road Map.
June 2009	Final Strategic Road Map delivered to CFSC. Targeted capacity building for board and staff to enable successful implementation of the strategic plan.

This Strategic Road Map captures results of the data gathering, decisions made throughout the process, guidance to integrate and adapt the plan as CFSC moves forward, and the strategic action plan that will guide CFSC's board and staff in the change process over the coming 4 years.

KEY LEARNINGS AND DATA THEMES

Methodology

At the July 2008 retreat, board, staff, and selected members engaged in a consensus building process to discover and articulate the external and internal strategic issues that frame this process – i.e., these issues define why CFSC is undergoing strategic planning at this time:

External/Programmatic	Internal/Structural
Process note: Policy/advocacy (national, state, local) is a “how-to” for each of the 4 strategic issues. Research, education, TA, outreach, communications (internal and external) are also “how-to’s.”	E. What is the <u>purpose</u> of the CFSC? ⇒ Who do we work with?

<p>A. How do we address the need for better food system infrastructure?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Models for owning/controlling/using/protecting farmland, urban and rural ⇒ Distribution/retail, processing/manufacturing ⇒ Bricks and mortar <p>B. How do we build the capacity of people and community to promote/ensure a just and sustainable food system?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ From earlier part of the conversation, “people” defined as youth, new farmers, activists, immigrants, older farmers, diverse leadership development, educators <p>C. How do we take our work and build it into a response to the “Food Crisis” (aka, rising food and energy prices)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Linking to other movements – public health, fitness, global warming, energy, anti-poverty, living wage, and others <p>D. How do we address the systemic inequity within the food system?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Access to safe, affordable (not “cheap food”), culturally appropriate food for all ⇒ Seed to table ⇒ Local to global 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Why? ⇒ What is our meta-level structure (coalition, NGO, network, etc.)? ⇒ What are our values? <p>F. How do we develop effective staff and board structures and communications in line with the purpose and values of CFSC while effectively responding to changes in the environment?</p> <p>G. How do we develop effective membership structures and communication, engagement, roles and access in line with the purpose and values of CFSC while effectively responding to changes in the environment?</p> <p>H. How do we create effective structures that express and deepen our commitment to a range of diversity and inclusion within CFSC and the food system?</p>
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Following the July retreat, the strategic issues were posed to the CFSC membership for input through a variety of methods. We received input from approximately 125 people (note that there may be some overlap between respondents to these methods, which allowed anonymity):

- 9 responses received through an online survey
- 10 responses received through “graffiti” posters at the 2008 CFSC Conference
- 5 responses received through one-on-one interviews with members at the 2008 CFSC Conference

- approximately 100 participants at the Town Hall Meeting at the 2008 CFSC Conference

Based on this input, OpenSource developed an interview protocol designed to provide fodder for decision-making about CFSC's strategic direction and address the strategic issues over the coming four years. OpenSource conducted one-on-one phone interviews with 26 additional stakeholders:

- 5 current board members
- 4 former board members
- 10 current and former staff members
- 5 institutional peers and thought leaders
- 2 funders

The OpenSource team also reviewed organizational materials related to past strategic planning, evaluation, grants, finances, board processes, etc. Attending the conference also gave us a first-hand perspective on CFSC's "big tent" of members, issues, and programs, and allowed an opportunity to meet with the Strategic Planning Committee and CFSC board.

Findings

By all accounts, CFSC helped build the community food security movement as it exists today. It was and remains the only organization bringing together food, anti-hunger/poverty, farming, environmental conservation, and more recently public health interests to learn from and network with each other. As the movement, and CFSC's membership, have grown, numerous organizations with more specific focus have been created, thus further growing the movement – and also challenging CFSC to meet diverse needs and interests, to be responsive while also staying on the cutting edge.

The current moment provides an opportunity for CFSC, as the local food movement has reached critical mass and the recent election suggests more favorable government support, at the same time that several crises (food, energy, climate change, financial systems) create a sense of urgency. At nearly 15 years old, CFSC is not only at the precipice of the next era of the community food security movement, it also is at the cusp of a new organizational era. The existential question about CFSC's purpose identified in the "strategic issues" above point to the need and opportunity for CFSC to leap, intentionally and strategically, into its next developmental phase.

To move successfully to its next stage of development, and thus also to remain relevant to the movement, CFSC must be prepared to make significant changes in its organizational habits. These changes will take time, and many of them will require further investment in capacity building.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Through the strategic planning process, CFSC clarified its vision, mission, and strategic goals for the organization.

Vision

CFSC envisions strong, sustainable, local and regional food systems that ensure access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all people at all times – thus decreasing hunger and increasing individual, community, and environmental health and sustainability. We envision self-reliance among all communities in obtaining their food and a system of growing, manufacturing, processing, making available, and selling food that is regionally based and grounded in the principles of justice, democracy, and sustainability.

We believe this vision can be realized when people with the knowledge of how to grow food have the resources to do it, when there is a tipping point in public awareness and support, when strong community-based groups inform public policy, when community organizing and policy advocacy work in tandem to achieve social change, and when food justice is integrated into all aspects of life. We believe that the current moment provides a sense of urgency to advance and institutionalize community food security, and that a strengthened CFSC can take full advantage of this opportunity and address any challenges that arise.

Mission

The Community Food Security Coalition cultivates food systems that are healthy, sustainable, just, and democratic by building community voice and capacity for change.

Core Beliefs

CFSC continues to be guided by these Core Beliefs, adopted during its previous strategic planning process:

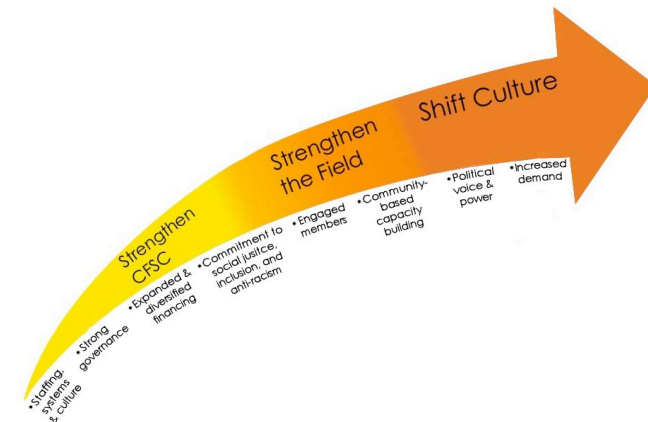
1. Every culture has the right to celebrate, maintain and expand its own traditional and indigenous food knowledge and wisdom for benefit of the whole community.
2. All people at all times have the right of access to high quality, nourishing, affordable and culturally appropriate food.

3. The ways in which we produce, acquire and consume food are central to the relationships between family, home, community and the environment.
4. Food must be distributed, produced and consumed in ways that holistically honor human dignity, the land and the humane treatment of animals.
5. Independent farmers and producers of all ages and ethnicities who practice sustainable agriculture in rural and urban areas are central to a healthy food system.
6. Farmers, farm workers, food workers and all others engaged in food production, marketing, processing, distribution, preparation and service have the right to a decent living and just working conditions.
7. Young people need the knowledge base and opportunities to make decisions that help foster community food security.

Strategic Goals

To actualize its mission and realize its vision, CFSC set 8 strategic goals:

1. Increase demand for a food system that produces “good food,” which is fair, affordable, health promoting, green, available, democratic, and community based.
2. Build political voice and power for community food security issues and constituents.
3. Build the capacity of community-based food initiatives – especially in low-income communities, with limited resource farmers, and with youth, farmworkers, and food harvesters – in order to create lasting change in the food system.



4. Build connections and engagement between CFSC and its members, and between CFSC members, especially in communities most affected by food insecurity.
5. Strengthen CFSC's commitment to social justice, inclusion, and anti-racism while demonstrating this commitment throughout our work and within the organization
6. Expand and diversify CFSC's and members' funding base to support strategic programmatic expansion and enable organizational sustainability.
7. Strengthen the skill level, functionality, and structure of the CFSC board.
8. Strengthen CFSC's staff structure, administrative systems, and organizational culture in order to support the strategic direction and continue to provide effective programs and services.

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Strategic Goal 1: Increase demand for a food system that produces “good food,” which is fair, affordable, health promoting, green, available, democratic, and community based.

Indicator(s) of Progress:

- ☐ Increased media discussion around “good food.”
- ☐ More informed and systems-oriented media discussion around “good food.”
- ☐ Greater CFSC presence in the media.
- ☐ Greater public and institutional support for community food security issues and constituents.

Objectives:

Objective 1A: Use media effectively to increase and improve public discourse around “good food,” especially in support of our public policy objectives.

Objective 1B: Strategically collaborate to increase public and institutional understanding of and support for community food security issues and constituents.

Objective 1C: Create a knowledge base that can be disseminated through the media, once a research clearinghouse is completed.

Strategic Goal 2: Build political voice and power for community food security issues and constituents.

Indicator(s) of Progress:

- ☐ New/strengthened alliances with producer, youth, farmer/farmworker/food harvester, health, hunger, and other ally groups as well as under-represented communities.
- ☐ Input systematically tapped from constituents and integrated into policy positions.
- ☐ Increased research and communications capacity.
- ☐ Increased and integrated advocacy that includes grassroots organizing and lobbying at federal, regional, state, and local levels.
- ☐ Increased legislative and administrative gains in venues in which we have been engaged.
- ☐ Become identified as the spokesperson/go-to resource for the community food security movement.

Objectives:

Objective 2A: Cultivate new alliances and deepen existing alliances with producer, youth, farmer/farmworker/food harvester, health, hunger, and other ally groups as well as with those representing under-represented communities

Objective 2B: Elicit input from CFSC members and iteratively work it into policy positions

Objective 2C: Form partnerships and create internal research and communications capacity to gather, interpret, and disseminate evidence for community food security and specific policy positions

Objective 2D: Develop analysis of policy changes required to transform the food system to one based on our values and engage partnerships to achieve this.

Objective 2E: Advocate effectively for those policies through expanded grassroots participation as well as more effective advocacy in Washington

Objective 2F: Build the capacity of groups in the CFS movement to be effective advocates at all levels of government

Strategic Goal 3: Build the capacity of community-based food initiatives – especially in low-income communities, with limited resource farmers, and with youth, farmworkers, and food harvesters – in order to create lasting change in the food system.

Indicator(s) of Progress:

- ☐ Increased opportunity for members to engage in strategic thinking about their work.
- ☐ Increased synergy between CFSC cutting edge analysis and member experiences.
- ☐ Increased knowledge and understanding of the organizational cultures, assets, and needs of CFPs from low-income communities.
- ☐ Increased satisfaction among members of community-based food initiatives in low-income areas with CFSC.
- ☐ Increased capacity among community-based food initiatives in low-income areas and among farmers, farmworkers, and food harvesters because of their involvement with CFSC.
- ☐ Higher utilization of and satisfaction with CFSC vehicles for delivering services (including conference, hotline, publications, website, peer networking, etc.)
- ☐ Satisfaction with CFSC's training and technical assistance services on a broad range of CFS topics.
- ☐ Increased recognition of CFSC as a leader in training, technical assistance, and information services for community-based food systems work.
- ☐ Strengthened partnerships with leadership development and capacity building organizations.

- ❑ Increased number of potential leaders, particularly youth and people of color, are identified and engaged with CFSC.

Objectives:

Objective 3A: Create dialogue and other methods to identify and articulate the cutting edge CFS issues in such a way that reflects the changing economic, social, and environmental conditions affecting community-based food initiatives.

Objective 3B: Build CFSC's internal capabilities and/or develop strategic alliances in order to address the most critical capacity-building needs of low-income communities and farmers, farmworkers, and food harvesters

Objective 3C: Develop, systematically assess, and improve feedback loops to meet the diverse needs of community-based food initiatives, including low-income communities and farmers, farmworkers, and food harvesters.

Objective 3D: Develop programs and services to meet the diverse needs of a wide range of organizations working to build community food security.

Objective 3E: Support development of new and emerging leaders, particularly youth and people of color.

Objective 3F: Build capacity of farmers, farmworkers, and food harvesters as they intersect with the community food system.

Strategic Goal 4: Build connections and engagement between CFSC and its members, and between CFSC members, especially in communities most affected by food insecurity.

Indicator(s) of Progress:

- ❑ Increased knowledge and understanding regarding CFSC members' interests, assets, and needs.
- ❑ Increased clarity and accessibility in two-way communication between CFSC leadership/staff and members.

- ☐ Higher level of member satisfaction with communication with CFSC.
- ☐ Increased staff and board understanding of how CFSC operates and how decisions are made.
- ☐ Increased member understanding of how CFSC operates and how they can provide input or participate.
- ☐ Increased member confidence that their input is welcome, and that their concerns and their communities' interests are reflected in CFSC planning and decision-making.
- ☐ Increased participation by members in CFSC committees.
- ☐ Increased satisfaction among committee members with level of CFSC support.
- ☐ Increased rate of membership renewal.
- ☐ Increased number of members who understand and value the benefits and opportunities of CFSC membership.
- ☐ Increased number of CFSC members who identify their connection to CFSC as a significant aspect of their work.
- ☐ Increased interaction among CFSC members and potential members in their own regions.

Objectives:

Objective 4A: Amplify two-way communications between CFSC board/staff and members

Objective 4B: Create planning and decision-making processes at all levels that are transparent, accountable, responsive to current political opportunities, and accessible to membership

Objective 4C: Create more opportunities for members to get involved in CFSC activities, including enhancing committees as a vehicle for member engagement

Objective 4D: Clarify benefits to and expectations of organizational and individual members

Objective 4E: Explore the possibility of creating a regional framework to facilitate member input & participation and to increase interaction among members and potential members in their own regions

Strategic Goal 5: Strengthen CFSC's commitment to social justice, inclusion, and anti-racism while demonstrating this commitment throughout our work and within the organization.

Indicator(s) of Progress:

- ☐ Increased ability to articulate CFSC's commitment to social justice, inclusion and anti-racism among CFSC staff, board and members, as well as ways in which this is expressed.
- ☐ Increased knowledge and understanding of how race and class affect food system change.
- ☐ Higher degree of understanding of and satisfaction with CFSC's commitment to social justice, inclusion and anti-racism by CFSC members.
- ☐ Increased representation on CFSC staff and board of people of color.
- ☐ Increased representation of community food security leaders who are people of color.
- ☐ Increased feeling of synergy between CFSC values and actions with those of CFSC members who are people of color.

Objectives:

Objective 5A: Build a racially and culturally diverse staff and board that have a deep understanding of and commitment to social justice, inclusion and anti-racism and are reflective of our membership and stakeholders

Objective 5B: Ensure that the coalition's membership is reflective of the broader movement and includes representation from diverse groups and communities

Objective 5C: Ensure CFSC activities (organizational, program and membership) express CFSC's commitment to social justice, inclusion and anti-racism

Objective 5D: Structure the annual conference to be more culturally diverse, inclusive and welcoming

Strategic Goal 6: Expand and diversify CFSC's and members' funding base to support strategic programmatic expansion and enable organizational sustainability.

Indicator(s) of Progress:

- ☐ Increased federal dollars for CFSC and for member programs.
- ☐ Increased unrestricted funds through earned revenue, individual donations, and targeted institutional support.
- ☐ Increased board and staff involvement in fundraising.

Objectives:

Objective 6A: Advocate for new federal and foundation funding to support CFSC and its members

Objective 6B: Expand earned revenue through fees for service

Objective 6C: Expand member giving

Objective 6D: Expand unrestricted funds from foundations, corporate sponsorships, major donors, and events.

Objective 6E: Develop board capacity to participate actively in fundraising

Objective 6F: Expand staff capacity to participate more actively in fundraising

Objective 6G: Hire development staff, develop comprehensive fundraising strategy and set annual goals

Strategic Goal 7: Strengthen the skill level, functionality, and structure of the CFSC board.

Indicator(s) of Progress:

- ☐ Board composition that reflects the diversity of CFSC's membership and the skill sets needed for an effective board.
- ☐ Increased board engagement in fundraising and programmatic work.
- ☐ Strong feedback loop between CFSC board, staff, and members.

Objectives:

Objective 7A: Create more effective and transparent protocols for board recruitment and election

Objective 7B: Systematically develop the capabilities of board members, particularly related to fundraising

Objective 7C: Improve internal structure of the board so it can better support the internal and external goals of CFSC.

Objective 7D: Ensure consistent, clear, and transparent communication between the CFSC board, staff, and membership

Objective 7E: Develop complementary structures, such as an advisory board, to engage high-profile leaders in the field.

Objective 7F: Cultivate a board culture that reflects our core beliefs and mission.

Strategic Goal 8: Strengthen CFSC's staff structure, administrative systems, and organizational culture in order to support the strategic direction and continue to provide effective programs and services.

Indicator(s) of Progress:

- ☐ Positions are relevant and flexible to meet changing needs.
- ☐ Staff skills fully developed and utilized.
- ☐ Staff are recognized for their competence.
- ☐ Strong feedback loop between CFSC board, staff, and members.
- ☐ Racially and culturally diverse staff.
- ☐ CFSC is recognized as a diverse, inclusive, anti-racist organization.

Objectives:

Objective 8A: Assess and strengthen staff structure in order to better meet CFSC's needs and implement the strategic plan. Support CFSC's organizational development through new staff functions that address program integration, member engagement, planning and evaluation, communications, policy advocacy and grassroots organizing, and operations

Objective 8B: Increase staff time dedicated to connecting with members and/or community-based initiatives.

Objective 8C: Explore viability of a regional initiative with regional liaisons

Objective 8D: Implement hiring practices that encourage a greater diversity on staff