



New Jersey Food Security 3-Year Strategic Plan Overview: Focus Areas and Strategies

Methodology

This Strategic Plan was built using a careful, step-by-step process that reflects strategic planning best practices and centers the voices of New Jersey communities. It combines research, data, and the lived experiences of residents to make sure the plan is both practical and inclusive.

2022–2024: Laying the Foundation

When the New Jersey Office of the Food Security Advocate (OFSA) was created in 2022, the first step was building trust and strong partnerships across the state. We connected with food banks, schools, farmers, residents, researchers, community organizations, and government agencies to understand shared goals. We reviewed existing data and reports to find common priorities and gaps, and we adopted the Six Dimensions of Food Security—Availability, Access, Utilization, Stability, Sustainability, and Agency—as the framework for this work.

2024–2025: Developing the Plan

An Executive Committee made up of leaders from many sectors helped shape the plan. Together, they:

- Set priority focus areas based on community needs and system gaps.
- Reviewed more than twenty food systems and environmental reports from across New Jersey.
- Collected survey feedback on the potential impact, urgency, and fairness of each strategy.
- Held in-person and virtual meetings to refine ideas, combining survey results with feedback from partners and residents.
- Integrated findings from community conversations and resident surveys to ensure the plan reflects lived experience.

2025 and Beyond: Public Input and Finalization

The strategic plan overview is being shared in summer 2025 so New Jersey communities can review and provide feedback. The final version of the Strategic Plan will include full narratives with background, intended outcomes, and model examples for implementation, providing a richer resource for stakeholders at all levels.

Focus Areas and Accompanying Strategies

FOCUS AREA 1

Enhance Information Exchange and Access to Improve Public Awareness, Optimize Programs, and Support Data-Driven Decision-Making

1. **Data Coordination:** Coordinate state agencies across sectors to make existing data available across programs.
2. **Impact Analysis and Research:** Conduct analyses on the health and economic impacts of food insecurity and research the effectiveness and cost-benefit of food security initiatives and policies.
3. **Cross-sector Data Sharing:** Expand partnerships and data sharing between food security programs and other sectors (e.g., healthcare, industry, technology, food retail, social service, and education sectors) to advance bi-directional information sharing and integrate food security resources into trusted community settings where New Jerseyans already access services and support.
4. **Data Visualization and Dissemination:** Invest in coordinated, intuitive, asset-based data dashboards and visualization tools to support community initiatives.

FOCUS AREA 2

Expand Community-Based Food Infrastructure and Market Channel Creation for Enhanced Ongoing Food Access and Availability

1. **Food Access and Availability Infrastructure:** Increase investment in transportation, technology, and infrastructure improvements to increase availability and access to food across the food supply chain and access to food/nutrition programs.
2. **Agriculture Workforce and Land Access:** Promote community-centered approaches that support the agricultural workforce and increase access to land for food production.
3. **Market Channel Creation:** Promote market channel creation for farmers by leveraging federal, state, institutional, and charitable food purchasing dollars to support regional supply chains, expand local procurement opportunities, and build long-term demand for New Jersey-grown food.
4. **Food Enterprise Investment:** Invest in community-rooted food enterprises and infrastructure to strengthen local food distribution and economic opportunity.

FOCUS AREA 3

Build and Support Local Partnerships to Drive Community-led Food Security Approaches

1. **Tailored Education, Outreach, and Awareness Campaigns:** Launch new, and support existing, community-informed education, outreach, and awareness efforts to increase participation in local food security programs and build trust and partnerships with impacted populations.
2. **County-level Coordination:** Strengthen county-level coordination by supporting action-oriented local food coalitions that bring together partners across sectors to align food security efforts, develop and implement localized strategies, and share funding opportunities.
3. **Bi-directional Community Engagement:** Establish consistent community engagement mechanisms that feed into strengthening coordination between local and state food coalitions

to inform decision-making and support implementation of long-term innovative and scalable food security strategies.

4. **Screening, Referrals, and Policy Advocacy:** Provide technical assistance and training to organizations on screening, closed-loop referrals, and food security policy and advocacy at local, state, and federal levels.
5. **Multi-benefit Hubs:** Establish multi-benefit hubs of various sizes, scales, and modalities to streamline enrollment and access to food and other social services.

FOCUS AREA 4

Collaborate Across Sectors and Across State Agencies to Streamline and Strengthen Federal and State Food Security-Related Program Access and Delivery

1. **Public Benefit User Experience:** Implement locally tailored improvements in accessibility, user experience, and dignity of benefit enrollment and recertification processes through simplified applications, technology advancements, digital access, and customer-centered service design.
2. **Maximizing Program Opportunities to Enhance Participation:** Leverage federal and state funding and policy options to expand outreach efforts, modernize and streamline enrollment processes, and maximize benefits.
3. **Federal Nutrition Program Outreach and Referrals:** Implement comprehensive outreach and referral initiatives to connect individuals with state-administered federal nutrition programs.
4. **Interagency Task Force:** Create a state-level interagency task force focused on aligning, coordinating, and streamlining federal, state, county, and local food security programs, and their administrative processes, definitions, regulations, and policies, where able.
5. **Cross-sector Coordination, Training, and Resources:** Provide coordination, cross-program training, and interconnected digital platforms to support staff across workforce development, Medicaid, housing, transportation, public health programs, and food assistance programs to provide client-centered, comprehensive services.

FOCUS AREA 5

Strengthen Food Systems Resiliency to Enhance Long-term Stability that Withstands Disruptions and Ensure Future Sustainability

1. **Supply Chain Sustainability Infrastructure:** Invest in tangible and intangible infrastructure improvements across the food supply chain—including cold storage, dry storage, climate-resilient technologies, and cross-sector connections—to reduce waste, improve distribution efficiency in times of disruption, and enhance food security stability and sustainability.
2. **Sustainable Food Procurement:** Educate and incentivize institutional, large scale food generators (e.g., hospitals, universities, corporations, and businesses with food retail) to implement sustainable food procurement practices and support food waste diversion programs, prioritizing food donation.
3. **Sustainable Farming Practices:** Promote incremental sustainable farming practices that improve soil health, conserve natural resources, and strengthen long-term food production resilience.
4. **Food Distribution Network Disaster Preparedness:** Enhance disaster preparedness across the food system, including strengthening charitable food distribution networks and providing education and technical assistance on risk mitigation for farmers.
5. **Policy Advocacy:** Advocate for policies that integrate food security with state sustainability and environmental plans.