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Objectives 8-10 address major, interrelated challenges that communities of color face in shaping food system policies, practices, and narratives, as well as building resilience against risks that threaten everyone.

OBJECTIVE 08

Black, Indigenous, and people of color are underrepresented and excluded from political, business, and nonprofit leadership positions. As those who are most directly impacted by inequities across our food system, we need to listen to communities of color, respect their wisdom, and follow their lead.

OBJECTIVE 09

The local food movement has largely been driven by corporate interests and White-dominant culture. As we confront pandemics, climate crises, increasing economic inequality, and entrenched racism, many are realizing that fixing our systems requires deeper reflection and a profound examination of power.

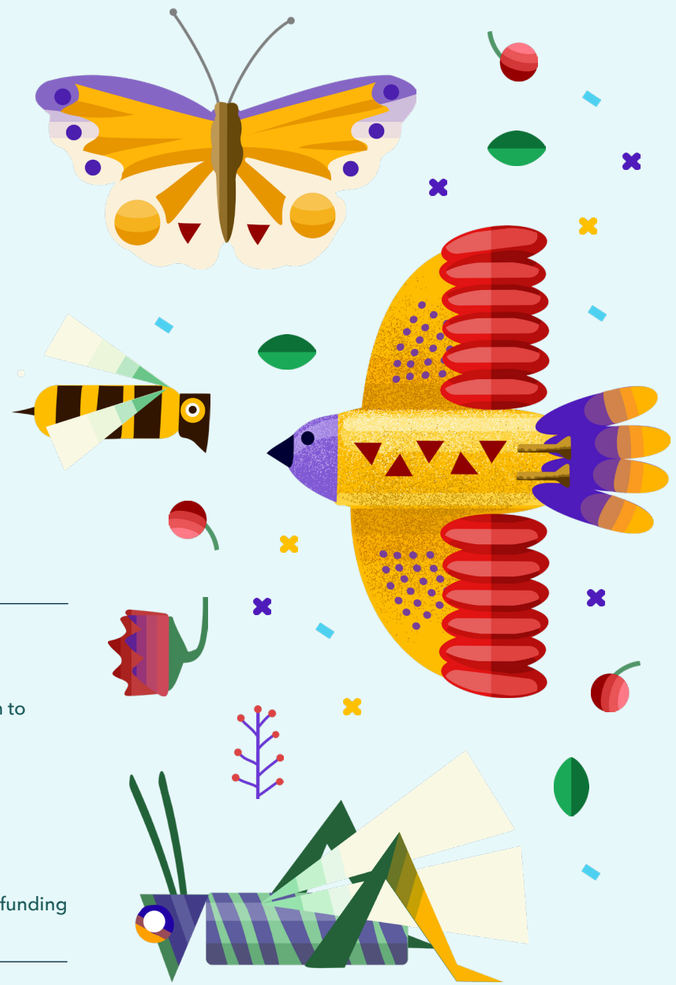
OBJECTIVE 10

In the face of increasing natural disasters, public health crises, and growing inequalities, our food system is showing deep vulnerabilities and testing our resilience. Planning for a resilient food system will require coordination and collaboration to prepare us for future crises. We will need to cultivate working partnerships with Indigenous and other marginalized communities, strengthen our local food economy, and develop bold sources of funding.

OBJECTIVE

10

Plan for a Resilient Food System



STRATEGIES AT A GLANCE

- Support coordinated efforts and collaboration to build a resilient food system
- Partner with Indigenous communities
- Create food system resilience plans
- Strengthen the local food economy
- Develop bold, flexible, and lasting sources of funding

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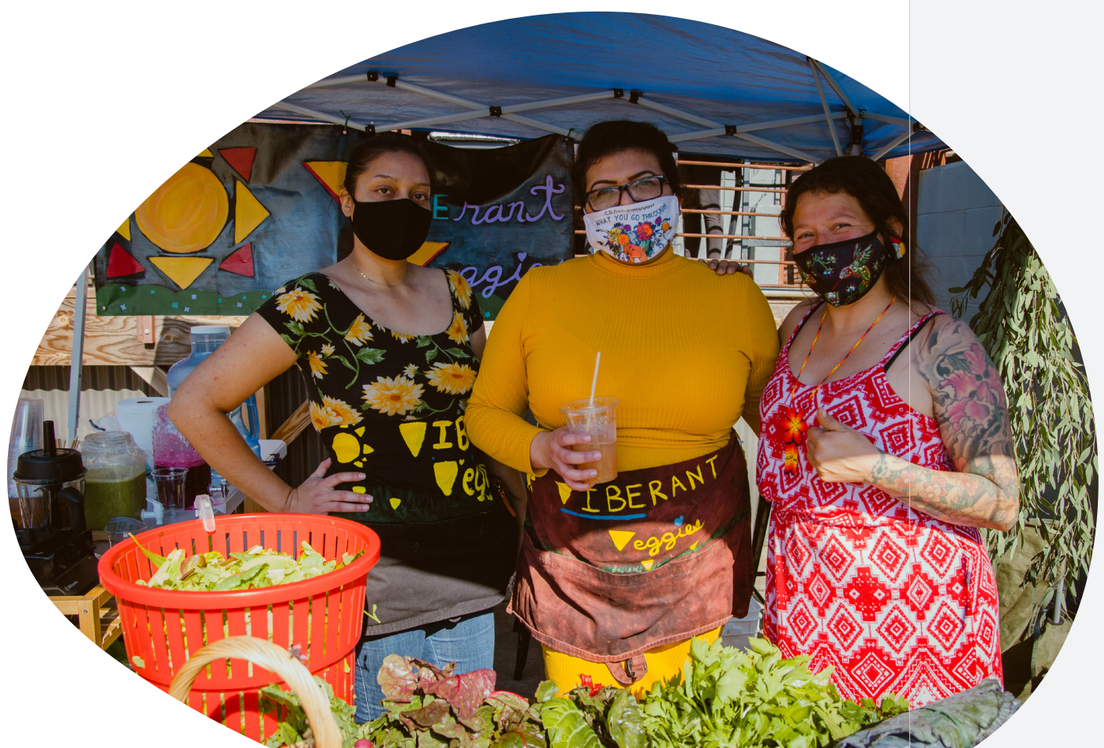
10 Plan for a Resilient Food System

Our future is uncertain, and the resiliency of people, cultures, livelihoods, local economies, and ecosystems are all being threatened. For decades, our highly concentrated and industrial food system has been compromising the health and sustainability of people and our planet. Now, in the face of increasing natural disasters, public health crises, and growing inequalities, our food system is showing deep vulnerabilities and testing our resilience.

Resilience is a response to rising levels of insecurity, complexity, and vulnerability in our lives. It refers to our collective ability to respond and recover from adverse conditions, including natural disasters, public health crises, acts of violence, economic hardship, consolidation of power, and cultural loss. It also reflects the capacity of people and communities to heal and rebuild the systems that create and perpetuate vulnerabilities in the first place.



[28] Emergent Pathways, LLC, December 2019, The Case for Funding Black-Led Social Change, Redlining by Another Name: What the Data Says to Move from Rhetoric to Action, ABFE: A Philanthropic Partnership for Black Communities.

[29] Dorsey, Cheryl, Jeff Bradach, and Peter Kim, May 2020, Racial Equity and Philanthropy: Disparities in Funding for Leaders of Color Leave Impact on the Table, *The Bridgespan Group*.

[30] Emergent Pathways, LLC, December 2019.

BUILDING RESILIENCE IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY'S FOOD SYSTEM

The core challenges for building resilience across San Diego County's food system are highlighted in each objective of Food Vision 2030, and are summarized below. These challenges build on one another, are amplified by inequality and climate change, and collectively impact our ability to create a resilient food system in San Diego County.

Increasing Risks to Long-term Food Production: Declining agricultural lands and commercial fisheries landings, increasing water stress, the changing climate, and rising inequality are all impacting the future of long-term food production in the region. (See Objective 1).

Increasing Market Concentration Across the Food System: Competition with large companies that dominate almost all aspects of food production, processing, manufacturing, distribution, and retail limits the viability of San Diego County's farms, fisheries, and food businesses. (See Objective 2).

Increasing Dependence on Food Imports: Increasing food imports to the United States, especially fish and fruit, lowers prices and impacts the marketability of San Diego County's seafood and agricultural crops. (See Objective 3).

Growing Economic Inequality and Persistent Wage Stagnation: Rising economic inequality coupled with wage stagnation over the past four decades impacts the livelihoods of food system workers in San Diego County. (See Objective 4).

Persistent Nutrition and Food Insecurity: Persistent food insecurity, amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, disproportionately impacts communities of color and compromises the health and well-being of thousands of San Diegans. (See Objective 5).

Continued Disproportionate Access to Healthy Food: Segregation and decades of inequality limits access to healthy food and agency across communities of color in San Diego County. (See Objective 6).

Increasing Food Waste: Increasing food waste in San Diego County over the past several decades results in wasted resources and greenhouse gas emissions, and contributes to climate change. (See Objective 7).

Ongoing Systemic Barriers to Leadership: Ongoing and historic inequality and racism denies Black, Indigenous, and people of color access to decision-making processes and opportunities for leadership across San Diego County's food system. (See Objective 8).

Limited Diversity within Food Movements: Exclusive food movements that fail to include communities of color and essential food and farm workers limit our ability to create a local, sustainable, and equitable food system. (See Objective 9).

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The year 2020 illuminated the fragility and lack of resilience in our food system. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted global and national food supply chains, amplified our country's food insecurity crisis, and disproportionately impacted communities of color, low-income communities, and essential food system businesses and workers.

2020 also presented an opportunity to reimagine a way forward. In response to the devastating impacts of COVID-19 across the country, there have been growing calls to build back better and foster a just transition. Although the challenges within our food system have deep roots, the current moment is presenting a unique opportunity to set intentions and sow the seeds for a more resilient food system, one that nurtures people and our planet.

A resilient system establishes a threshold, or a standard of well-being, toward which we collectively aspire and defend. Elements of resilient systems include awareness, diversity, integration, self-regulation, adaptiveness, and inclusivity and equity.[1]

Building a better food system must center the provision of healthy, nutritious food for all people, now and in the future.[2] It must also center efforts to cultivate justice, fight climate change, and increase resilience to future shocks. Strategies for building greater resilience in our food system are highlighted throughout San Diego County Food Vision 2030 and other initiatives, including *Reset the Table* and the HEAL Food Alliance.

We can also learn from Indigenous food systems which are based on centuries of accumulated wisdom. Indigenous communities have long practiced agroecology. More recent studies have shown the vital role that agroecological practices play in building climate-resilient livelihoods and food systems. Indigenous communities, along with other communities of color and marginalized communities, demonstrate resilience on a daily basis. We have much to learn from these communities as they embody resilience socially, culturally, psychologically, spritiurally, and often ecologically.

Planning for a resilient food system in San Diego County will require increased coordination and collaboration. In the short-term, it will be essential to create food system resilience plans that prepare us for future crises, cultivate working partnerships with Indigenous and other marginalized communities, strengthen our local food economy, and develop bold, flexible, and lasting sources of funding. In the long-term however, building resilience will require a complete transformation of how we live and relate to one another and our environment.

[1] Harris, Jenileigh and Emily J. Spiegel, June 2019, Food Systems Resilience: Concepts & Policy Approaches, Vermont Law School.

2 Hendrickson, Mary K., May 12, 2020, "Covid Lays Bare the Brittleness of a Concentrated and Consolidated Food System," Agriculture and Human Values, 37.

Commentary

Building Resilience Requires a Revolutionary Transformation

WORDS AND THOUGHTS CONTRIBUTED BY NAOMI BILLUPS AND ARIEL HAMBURGER, COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

According to the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, a resilient food system is "able to withstand and recover from disruptions in a way that ensures a sufficient supply of acceptable and accessible food for all." But what we need is more than that. We need a food system that is strong, impermeable, and interconnected. One that mimics nature, honors balance, and promotes regeneration.

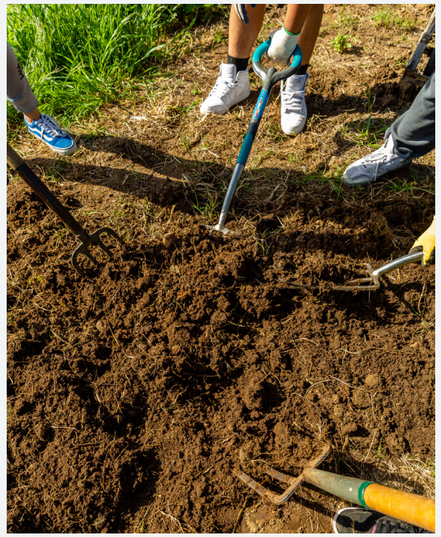
Achieving this vision will require a revolutionary transformation. We must recognize and respect the interdependence of our environment and health, and dismantle capitalism. Getting there requires honoring sweat equity, subsidizing the cost of regenerative food practices, transforming urban environments into areas of food production, and ensuring the health of humans, animals, and the earth.

COVID-19 has amplified existing issues in the food system, including problems with food supply chains and food insecurity. It has visibly exposed the cracks in a system that exploits and extracts, and increased the urgency for redesigning our food system.

To redesign our food system, we must look back, not forward. We have generations upon generations of Indigenous knowledge to learn from. We must heal our relationships with Indigenous people and lands. We must decolonize our food system and honor sacred biomimicry. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. We can learn from existing practices, and provide compensation to those who share their knowledge and wisdom.

Moving toward this vision will take time and commitment. In the short term, building resilience requires integrating nutrition and food security efforts, looking to public-private partnerships for solutions, leveraging and increasing funding, and planning for future disasters.

In the long term, we must look beyond recovery and work toward creating a justice-centered, people-centered, and environment-centered food system. Now that is a system we can get behind.



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Core Challenges

The core challenges to planning for a resilient food system in San Diego County are:

- **Dismantling Racism**
- **Transforming Our Relationship With Nature**
- **Reimagining Our Economy**

Dismantling Racism

Racism is pervasive and affects all aspects of society. Throughout Food Vision 2030, we have highlighted the many ways that racism intersects with our food system, exposing deep vulnerabilities and impacting our ability to build greater resilience. Healthy food access, food and farm labor, and land and business ownership are all divided along racial lines.

Dismantling racism is essential to building resilience, but it will not be easy. Because of its systemic nature and deep historic roots, it is difficult to tear apart. Any progress made is often met with backlash. One year after the murder of George Floyd led to possibly the largest nationwide protests in U.S. history,[3] White people are *less* supportive of the Black Lives Matter movement than they were before Floyd's death.[4]

White people have risen to power by exploiting Black, Indigenous, and people of color for centuries. Undoing the harm inflicted will take an unwavering commitment to cultivating justice in San Diego County.

Transforming our Relationship with Nature

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time. The year 2020 was the second warmest year on record, carbon dioxide emissions peaked at 419 parts per million—the highest measure since record-keeping began 63 years ago—and total climate disasters have cost the United States over $95 *billion* in damage, more than any other year on record.[5]

Globally, more people are displaced by climate disasters than by war.[6] In particular, low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately impacted by climate change, and have the fewest available resources to adapt to the changing climate.[7] Redlined neighborhoods across the country are 25% more likely to be flooded than non-redlined neighborhoods.[8] Most redlined neighborhoods are also 2.6 degrees Celsius (4.7 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than non-redlined neighborhoods.[9] In addition, support from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has a history of helping disaster victims from White communities more than those from communities of color, despite equal damages.[10]

Throughout Food Vision 2030, we have highlighted the intersection between climate change and our food system. Similar to racism, climate change exposes vulnerabilities and impacts our ability to build resilience. As a major driver of climate change, food systems generate approximately 21–37% of global greenhouse gas emissions.[11] Even if we immediately

[3] Larry Buchanan, Quoctrung Bui, and Jugal K. Patel, July 3, 2020, "Black Lives Matter May Be the Largest Movement in U.S. History," *The New York Times*.

[4] Emba, Christine, May 26, 2021, "Why Conservatives Really Fear Critical Race Theory," The Washington Post.

[5] Frank, Thomas, January 11, 2021, "Billion-Dollar Disasters Shattered U.S. Record in 2020," Scientific American.

[6] Kamali, Dehghan, Saeed, May 20, 2021, "Climate Disasters 'Caused More Internal Displacement Than War' in 2020," *The Guardian*.

[7] Roos, Michelle (E4 Strategic Solutions), 2018, *Climate Justice Summary Report. California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment*, Publication number: SUM-CCCA4-2018-012.

[8] Alcorn, Chauncey, March 15, 2021, "Redlined US Homes Face Higher Flood Risks From Climate Change, New Study Finds," CNN.

[9] Hoffman, Jeremy S., Vivek Shandas, and Nicholas Pendleton, January 13, 2020, "The Effects of Historical Housing Policies on Resident Exposure to Intra-Urban Heat: A Study of 108 US Urban Areas," *Climate*, 8(1).

[10] Flavelle, Christopher, June 7, 2021, "As Warming Fuels Disasters, Relief Often Favors White People," *The New York Times*.

stopped our reliance on fossil fuels for energy, global warming temperatures would continue to rise simply due to food system activities.[12] Our modern food system is highly extractive, depleting the quality of our air, water, and soils. It also has little regard for the welfare of animals or biodiversity.

While we cannot stop climate change, we can mitigate the impacts through our food system and better adapt to the changing climate. We can also implement regenerative agricultural practices to improve our air, water, and soils. Achieving this however, requires transforming our relationship with nature to one that is built on reciprocity and respect. Minimizing our impacts on the natural environment and working in harmony with nature, rather than against it, must be at the heart of our food system in San Diego County.

[11] IPCC, 2019, Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems, [P.R. Shukla, J. Skea, E. Calvo Buendia, V. Masson-Delmotte, H.-O. Pörtner, D. C. Roberts, P. Zhai, R. Slade, S. Connors, R. van Diemen, M. Ferrat, E. Haughey, S. Luz, S. Neogi, M. Pathak, J. Petzold, J. Portugal Pereira, P. Vyas, E. Huntley, K. Kissick, M. Belkacemi, J. Malley, (eds.)].

[12] Clark, Michael A., et al., November 6, 2020, "Global Food System Emissions Could Preclude Achieving the 1.5 and 2 C Climate Change Targets," Science, 370(6517): 705-708.

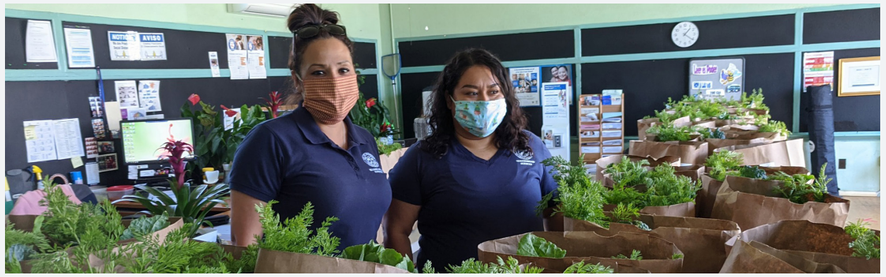
SPOTLIGHT Botanical Community Development Initiatives

"I grew up in Imperial County and never knew that working in food systems was an option," said Bianca Bonilla, the director of the Botanical Community Development Initiatives, an organization that aims to develop stronger communities by introducing people of all backgrounds to plants and the grown environment. "Access to green space is such a privilege, and we want to change that," she said. The organization's Greening Spaces program achieves that goal by introducing urban farms and green areas to low-income neighborhoods. "I am just really motivated by our potential for collective healing—healing our land, healing ourselves, healing each other."

The Botanical Community Development Initiatives was only launched three years ago, but has already been making major impacts through community science projects, new green spaces, and urban educational farms like Community Roots Farm. "We are good at plants. We are good at bringing community together," said Bianca. "It was always about plants and people, there wasn't one without the other, and that is where all of this stems from, this interaction between plants and people. For me, the real work is to remind people of our connections and relationships with nature."

The Seed to Preschool Program seeks to address both childhood obesity and food insecurity for young children through nutrition education, school gardens, and fresh produce provided by local farms. The Plant Lab provides youth and adults opportunities to learn about botany with programs ranging from training at-risk teenagers in horticultural-based S.T.E.M to collaborative events documenting cross-border biodiversity. "Knowledge sharing about plants does not have to come from the ivory tower, our plant knowledge has been passed through language and traditional knowledge sharing," said Bianca, who studied botany and received a grant from the USDA to study sustainable agriculture and agri-ecology. "For me, my call into it was this love for the outdoors and nature and learning about our natural world. My mentor was a botanist and to have someone open my eyes to the diversity of our landscapes, to develop a relationship with plants, it made me realize that relationships with nature are the key to making people more likely to care for it."

The long term goal of BCDI is to facilitate community development through increased access to the land and skills needed to grow. "Everything is relationships. I am pretty deeply rooted in Oceanside, I'm committed to helping in this community. I've been here for seven years and I've seen some of these kids grow up. I care about them and their families. That's what it's about. That's where community development really comes in and is most impactful," said Bianca. "I want everyone to be able to see their landscape, to have botany in public schools, to read and grow their own food, and to know native foods in their region. If that happened, our world would change."



Reimagining Our Economy

Our current economy puts profits before people and our planet. It is highly exploitative, and works for a privileged few while leaving the rest behind. It is also linear and extractive, and threatens our collective resilience. Throughout Food Vision 2030, we have highlighted the impact of our profit-driven economy on our food system.

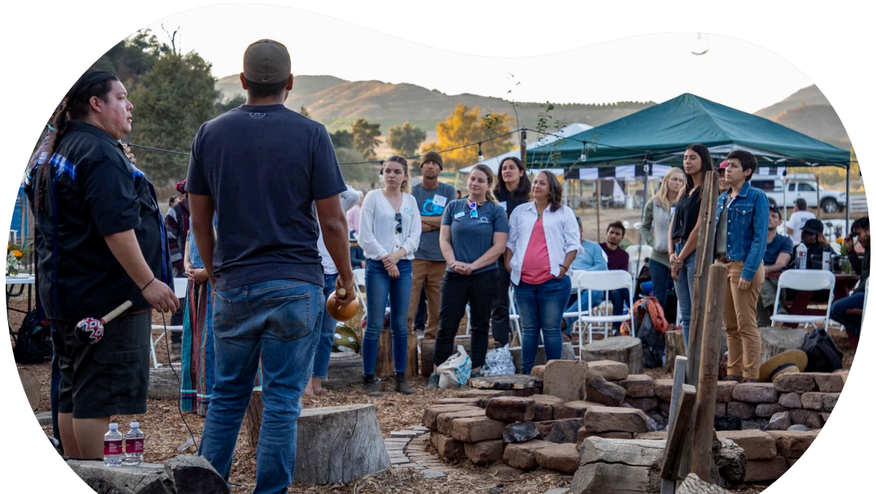
Market concentration, supported by government policies and economic decisions, has created a culture of cheap, fast food. Low prices and convenience come at the expense of low wages for farmers, fishermen, and food system workers; persistent hunger, food insecurity, and diet-related diseases; limited ownership, wealth, and power for underrepresented communities; significant amounts of wasted food; and a profound disconnection from the earth and the soil.[13] There is a significant cost to these social and environmental externalities, making us vulnerable and limiting our ability to build resilience in our food system.

As long as we are dependent on multinational corporations to feed us, our food system will be at risk. Our modern food systems today violate all of the principles of resilience.[14] Insead of awareness we have ambiguity, instead of diversity we have monoculture, instead of integration we have silos, instead of self-regulation we have gaps, instead of adaptiveness we have uniformity, and instead of inclusivity and equity we have exclusivity and inequity.

Reimagining our economy is vital to building a resilient food system. Before we can shift from our industrial food economy to a regenerative food economy, we need to imagine a new possibility in San Diego County, a possibility that reduces reliance on corporations to feed our communities. We need to imagine and work toward building an economy that centers people and our environment, and care and solidarity.

[13] O'Connor, Jennifer, August 2020, *Barriers for Farmers & Ranchers to Adopt Regenerative Ag Practices in the US: Identifying Key Levers and Opportunities*, Guidelight Strategies.

14 Harris, Jenileigh and Emily J. Spiegel, June 2019, *Food Systems Resilience: Concepts & Policy Approaches*, Vermont Law School.



The Opportunity

Strategies

01 SUPPORT COORDINATED EFFORTS AND COLLABORATION TO BUILD A RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEM

02 PARTNER WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

03 CREATE FOOD SYSTEM RESILIENCE PLANS

04 STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY

05 DEVELOP BOLD, FLEXIBLE, AND LASTING SOURCES OF FUNDING

The resilience of our food system is being tested in the face of increasing natural disasters, public health crises, and growing inequalities. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and the impacts of our rapidly changing climate have amplified the vulnerabilities that have existed within our food system for decades. Ignoring these vulnerabilities is no longer an option, and there is a growing sense of urgency to take action.

To create a truly resilient food system, we will need to dismantle racism, transform our relationship with nature, and reimagine our economy. We will also need to work better together to prepare for our uncertain future by creating stronger safety nets and investing in diverse local and regional food economies. Ultimately, we will also need to heal relationships with the earth and one another to create a diverse and resilient food system that is capable of nourishing us today and for generations to come.

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01

SUPPORT COORDINATED EFFORTS AND COLLABORATION TO BUILD A RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEM

Recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and working toward greater resilience in our food system will take time. It will require an intersectional, holistic, and deeply collaborative approach. Increasing our capacity to work better together in San Diego County will be essential for creating a healthy, sustainable, just, and resilient food system.

The objectives laid out in Food Vision 2030 provide opportunities for cross-sector collaboration across our food system. Leveraging the power of existing alliances and coalitions to advance these objectives will be key moving forward. It will also be important however, to forge new alliances that are specifically focused on planning for a resilient food system. Increased collaboration will be necessary to develop disaster and food system resilience plans, strengthen the public safety net, and create sustainable strategies for financing resilience efforts within San Diego County's food system.

Nationally, the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, who manages a national network of food policy organizations, recently launched the Food System Resilience project. Through this project, they provide technical assistance and resources to help local governments prepare for and respond to crises that disrupt food security. Examples of resources from the Center include ongoing research on the real-time impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, aggregated peer-reviewed research on food system resilience, coordination of a small Food System Resilience Community of Practice to co-create a toolkit and resources for cities. They are also working with engineers to model the intersections between food, energy, and transportation. A key strategy for San Diego County is to develop a task force or coalition that can provide similar research and planning resources for our region.

Many regions across the country have also begun to develop task forces and working groups that are specifically focused on building resilience in th e food system. One example that provides inspiration for San Diego County is Baltimore. In partnership with the Center for a Livable Future, the Baltimore Office of Sustainability developed an Emergency Food Working Group to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the strengths and weaknesses in Baltimore's food system. The group also developed a set of recommended strategies for protecting the region against short-term and long-term threats to food insecurity. The process included interviews with local organizations, residents, food retailers, food producers, and many others. The findings were incorporated into the 2019 update of the Baltimore Sustainability Plan.

Another example is the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, who developed a Resilience Task Force to examine opportunities to strengthen the public safety net in the region. The task force developed a report titled *Resilience, Counties Strengthening NC's Food System*, with several key recommendations, including developing a baseline food system assessment, connecting with community partners, leveraging county assets related to transportation and cold storage facilities, and developing County-level policies. Both of these examples from Baltimore and North Carolina provide inspiration for greater coordination and collaboration to plan for food system resilience in San Diego County.

[35] Gonzalez, Rosa, 2019, The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership, *Movement Strategy Center*.

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SPOTLIGHT Pala Youth Center

Anna Rameshwar grew up in Fallbrook surrounded by plants and gardening. Some of her earliest memories involve patting down soil and spending time in nurseries. When she grew older, Anna helped out with the family landscaping business, installing landscapes, digging trenches for irrigation systems and maintaining gardens all over the Fallbrook community. She began her first garden in fourth grade with sunflower seeds, and by the time she reached high school, had cultivated a vegetable garden for her mother. While her passion for nurturing all kinds of plants continued to grow, her perspective on certain practices began to shift. "I became skeptical of patterns I saw in landscaping," she says. "I wondered why we kept planting these huge plants that were not drought resistant and always needed to be trimmed. That's when I became interested in Native planting."

Anna took a job at a local nursery and began learning to propagate plants and succulents. At the same time, she also studied childhood development, sign language, and the Indigenous Pala language, eventually becoming a language teacher and musician, teaching children songs in their native tongue. Her two passions finally came together at the Little Feathers preschool.

"A community garden should be at the center of things, so I sought permission to clear out weeds in the small cinder block garden at Pala Youth Center right in front, where everyone can see them," she says. "The existing plants were just landscape plants and weeds, which were removed to grow vegetables instead." The birds of paradise with corn, tomatoes, and chiles yielding an enormous first harvest that went home with students and was distributed at the Youth Center. Thanks to her connections at local farms, places like Bonnie Plants also donated watermelon and soil for the garden, and for community members to plant at home.

"We need to teach our younger generation to be able to identify native plants on the road, and to know how to grow food native to this area," says Anna. "We need to create programs with youth where they get dirty in the garden. We should light that fire for people of all ages, but especially kids. I try to engage them as much as possible."

The little garden caught the attention of the neighboring Pechanga Tribe, who also wanted a community garden and enlisted Anna's help. She paused before agreeing. "When you are the main person caring for a garden, before it is adopted and cared for by the whole community, significant work and upkeep falls on you," Anna says. "It requires year-round attention. I encouraged Pechanga to not start the garden unless they could commit to the upkeep."

Pechanga followed through. They held official meetings about how to get their garden funded and make it sustainable. Pechanga community members purchased lumber for raised beds, and the families came together to paint the garden beds. Other community members provided funds for soil and benches. Others chipped in to purchase a peach tree and blueberry bush. It was a true community effort, and to this day, Pechanga has a community garden.

Just as Anna sees involving youth as the key to preserving native plant knowledge, she sees seed saving as critical for preserving biodiversity and resilience. "I've always liked collecting and starting seeds," she says. "It's important to collect seeds so you always have something to plant. When COVID-19 first happened, seeds suddenly disappeared everywhere. In crisis, people realized that a garden can feed you and heal you."

She adds that growing from seeds is better than growing from cuttings. "We have seen diseases—with oleanders, for example—that I think are a result of too much production by cuttings instead of being started by seeds." Seed saving needs to be strategic though. "We can't just collect, we need to plant and restart. We need to keep producing these plants from seed to make them stronger and better adapted to the local environment."

Anna maintains that in modern times, plants remain the most dependable thing we can lean on. "Pushing buttons is not going to keep us alive. Taking care of the Earth is going to keep us alive. What I hope to see is more front yard gardens, instead of grass and lawn. More programs for the youth. And more people looking to nature for their answers. The beauty, complexity, and design behind each plant is all we need to observe to realize that this is where all our answers lie."

Strategies

02

PARTNER WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Efforts to build a more resilient food system must center Indigenous communities as well as other marginalized communities. Building resilience requires dismantling racism and shifting power to communities of color.

Indigenous food systems in particular, are based on centuries of accumulated wisdom and have long practiced agroecology. Indigenous communities protect 80% of global biodiversity with less than 5% of the world's population.[15] They are important partners for building resilience.

Across the country, tribes like the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, Blackfeet Nation, the Pauma Tribe in San Diego County, and dozens of others are developing resilience plans centered on their values, beliefs, and practices.[16] They are leading the way in developing holistic plans to fight climate change while centering spiritual, cultural, and community well-being. Many of the plans Tribal communities are developing are designed to protect lands, livelihoods, and ensure responsible economic development. As sovereign nations, they are often able to experiment to a greater extent than state, county, and city governments. As a result, there is so much to learn from Indigenous communities around building resilience. Increasing funding for Indigenous-led research is vital.

Cultivating trusted working partnerships with San Diego County Tribal communities is one of our most important strategies for building a resilient food system in the region. Integrating the wisdom, shared experiences, and strategies for perseverance from Indigenous communities as well as Black, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian, and other marginalized communities, will be essential for building resilience in San Diego County's food system.

[15] Raygorodetsky, Gleb. "Indigenous Peoples Defend Earth's Biodiversity—but They're in Danger." Environment, 4 May 2021.

[16] Morrison, Jim, November 24, 2020, "An Ancient People With a Modern Climate Plan."

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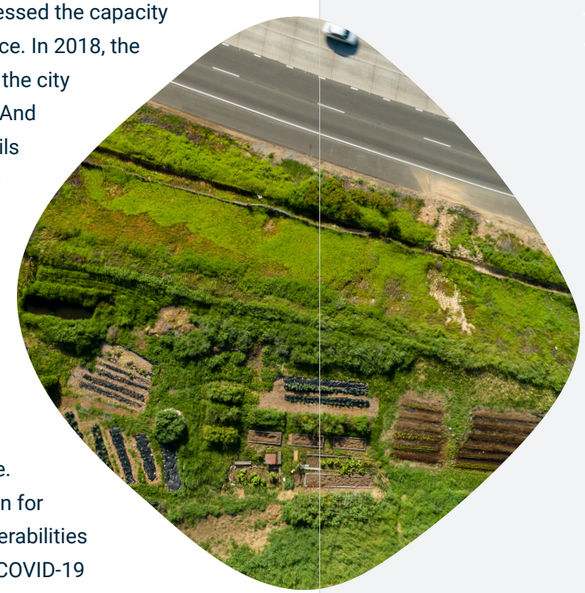
CREATE FOOD SYSTEM RESILIENCE PLANS

Preparing for an uncertain future requires planning. To strengthen the public safety net and ensure that all are fed during future crises, it will be essential to create a food emergency and disaster plan for San Diego County.

The City of Baltimore provides an example of a region that has leveraged the power of collaboration to build a plan for food system resilience. Working in partnership with the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, the City of Baltimore's Food System Resilience initiative has conducted a series of research projects to inform the development of policies that will improve the capacity of local food system organizations to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. Their holistic approach embodies the key principles of resilience: awareness, diversity, integration, self-regulation, adaptiveness, inclusivity, and equity.

In 2017, the development of the Baltimore Food System Resilience Advisory Report identified potential hazards and their likely impacts on the city's food system, assessed the capacity to prepare and respond, and developed strategies for increasing resilience. In 2018, the Baltimore City's Food Environment evaluated food environments across the city and designated several neighborhoods as priority areas for investment. And in 2020, the Safe Urban Harvests Study assessed the composition of soils at urban farms and community gardens to ensure safe opportunities for food production. Adopting a similar approach in San Diego County is essential for ensuring food security and greater food sovereignty in our region moving forward.



In addition to food emergency and disaster plans, it is also important to develop comprehensive resilience plans that focus on climate change and equity. The California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan is a good example of a plan that focuses on building resilience in the face of increasing and catastrophic wildfires in the state. Another example, the Seattle Planning Commission has developed a plan for A Racially Equitable and Resilient Recovery in response to growing vulnerabilities related to the intersection of climate change, structural racism, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Both of these plans serve as inspiration for our region.

The County of San Diego and several local cities have initiated Climate Action Plans that should incorporate food system elements. The County of San Diego is currently updating their Climate Action Plan, providing several opportunities for integrating food system resilience planning.

In San Diego County, there are significant opportunities to further diversify current leadership across the food system and ensure that more Black, Indigenous, and people of color are reflected in local government, philanthropy, business, and nonprofit sectors.

Investing in future generations of BIPOC leaders is equally essential. Below are examples of local and national organizations that provide food policy leadership training, board training, philanthropic fund management training, and movement building training. They represent models for greater investment and replication in San Diego County.

SPOTLIGHT

County Climate Action Plan

The County of San Diego Climate Action Plan (CAP) contains a series of measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions over the next 30 years. These measures are administered through multiple County departments and focus on activities that occur within the unincorporated area and emissions associated with operating County facilities across the region.

CAP was originally released in 2018 and is currently being updated by the County of San Diego.

Climate change is a global issue that must be counteracted through consistent and progressive local action. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have contributed to record-breaking heat waves, drought, tree loss, and some of the most intense wildfire seasons ever documented. Extreme weather conditions are occurring around the globe, including hurricanes and floods, with deadly repercussions.

"Reducing greenhouse gas emissions locally benefits the environment, the economy, and creates a cleaner community for us all to thrive in," said Kelly Bray, Chief, Departmental Operations for Sustainability Planning for the County of San Diego's Land Use and Environment Group.

One of the greatest impacts of climate change, though often overlooked, is connected to our food system. "Increasing the resiliency of our local food system in a changing climate supports the local economy and ensures the availability of healthy food for everyone in our community," Bray said.

The CAP supports resilience in the food system by implementing measures that preserve agricultural lands, maintain healthy soils, and increase consumption of locally grown and raised food.

"Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by implementing the CAP reduces the severity of global climate change effects that impact our food system, including increasing temperatures and wildfire risk and a decrease in water supply," she said.

As a result of the Climate Action Plan, 130,075 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions were reduced in 2019.

"The Climate Action Plan strives to achieve a more sustainable future for San Diego County," says Bray. "Local and regional governments play an important role in leading efforts to reduce climate change and increasing the resilience of food systems."

04

STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY

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10 Plan for a Resilient Food System

A strong, local, and adaptive food economy is the centerpiece of a resilient food system. Cultivating a local food economy means investing in our local farms, fisheries, food businesses, and workers (See Objectives 1 through 4).

As we witnessed during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, local producers and businesses were some of the first to respond to ensure that communities throughout San Diego County were fed. Nurturing our local food economy is our best defense against food insecurity and an uncertain future. There is also a multiplier effect when investing in local food economies, keeping dollars circulating within local communities, creating jobs, and providing greater economic security for the region.

In addition to strengthening our local food economy, it is also important to invest in circular food economies to reduce vulnerabilities and build greater resilience throughout our food system. A circular food economy is designed to increase the resilience and diversity of food supply chains by incorporating regenerative practices, reducing food waste, and creating transparent value chains. Investing in long-term food production (Objective 1), scaling up food waste prevention, recovery, and recycling initiatives (Objective 7), and scaling up local, sustainable, and equitable food value chains all highlight strategies for investing in circular food economies in San Diego County. Closing the loop and conserving resources are essential elements of a circular food economy.

Investing in local and circular food economies is vital for creating a resilient food system, one that can fight climate change, withstand future shocks, ensure healthy food for all, and provide decent livelihoods for essential food and farm workers.

05

DEVELOP BOLD, FLEXIBLE, AND LASTING SOURCES OF FUNDING

Planning for a resilient food system will require significant and sustainable sources of funding, especially in the short-term. Funding for climate adaptation, food security, food sovereignty, local food economies, and other resilience projects will need to draw on a wide range of public and private financing. In particular, it will be important to leverage federal and state grant funding, develop creative public-private partnerships, and generate funds through local taxes.

Public and private funders have been stepping up in several ways, especially in the wake of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Expanding funding opportunities and streamlining them to make it easier for communities to access funds will need to be a top priority in the coming decade. Several organizations are aggregating funding opportunities for building resilience such as the U.S Climate Resilience Toolkit and Naturally Resilient Communities.

Aggregating funding opportunities in San Diego County is a clear opportunity moving forward. Increasing collaboration across public and private funders in the region is also an important strategy. Ultimately, efforts to develop bold, flexible, and lasting sources of funding should embody participatory grantmaking processes and center equity in order to build true resilience across our food system and communities.

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