



## IOWA FOOD SYSTEM COALITION HANDBOOK

*Committed to collective action to advance a thriving, equitable food system in Iowa.*

**Steering Committee:**

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Iowa food system plan development support provided by



## WELCOME TO THE IOWA FOOD SYSTEM COALITION

This Handbook outlines how the Iowa Food System Coalition operates and provides details about the development of the Iowa food system plan. It is a resource for Coalition members and a working document of the practices and policies being developed to support and guide the Iowa food system plan.

### **Get involved!**

**Everyone is invited to join the Coalition**

Steps to Join:

- Start attending coalition meetings (8:30-10:30 a.m. by Zoom)
  - 2023 Schedule: Feb. 22, April 12, Sept. 27, Dec. 6
- Fill out the [2022 Iowa Food System Coalition Partnership Commitment Form](#)

You are strongly encouraged to read through this handbook and to become thoroughly informed as to the workings and direction of the Iowa Food System Coalition.

**To join a Committee** - Read about committees, page 6

**To join a Priority Team** - Read about Priority teams, page 9

For more information, contact [iowafoodsystemcoalition@gmail.com](mailto:iowafoodsystemcoalition@gmail.com).

## **IOWA FOOD SYSTEM PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

The decade since the passage of the 2011 Iowa Local Food & Farm Plan has seen growth in the capacity for local food system development across Iowa along with greater embrace of the critical connections between our food, our health, economic, environmental, and justice impacts. With a commitment to build upon good work and great partnerships, and address core systems issues, a diverse group of Iowans began working together to develop a road map, based upon a collective, long term vision, identified high priority areas and a range of implementation strategies for each priority area.

### **The Planning Process - June 1, 2021- May 30, 2023** (funded by a grant from WKKellogg Foundation)

- Year 1 - Engagement & Plan development: July 2021- Fall 2022
  - Input and visioning sessions with working group members and community-based groups across Iowa to inform a collective vision, values, and identify high priorities which will lead into development of strategies to carry out this plan.
  
- Year 2 - Awareness of and Action to support: Fall 2022- June 2023
  - Development of priority areas to feed plan writing
  - Determination of measurement and evaluation for the plan
  - Development of communication campaign to promote the plan
  - Secure investment to support the plan
  
- Living the Plan
  - Multi-partner, cross-sector collaboration under a coordinated structure
  - Continued and expanded investment and financial support for plan priorities
  - Annual report and celebration

## THE IOWA FOOD SYSTEM COALITION VISION, MISSION, VALUES

### WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

#### **Vision Statement:**

We envision an Iowa Food System that cultivates health, justice, and sustainability for all people, communities, and the environment.

#### **Coalition Mission Statement:**

We are a coalition committed to collective action to advance a thriving, equitable food system in Iowa.

**Coalition Values:** Through our work, we will continuously uphold the following **values** as we work towards fulfilling our vision.

- **Social and Racial Equity:** We will identify and deconstruct white dominant culture and power injustices within our food system and work together to build intercultural solidarity and food justice.
- **Transformative Relationships:** We will practice transparent and vulnerable communication to encourage meaningful partnerships.
- **Community Empowerment:** We will amplify the voices and efforts of people most impacted by social inequity to transform the dominant narrative of our food system.
- **Culture of Celebration:** We will strengthen and uplift intercultural connections and creative food system solutions that feed and give care to our communities.
- **Care for the Environment:** We will conserve and protect our environment which is the source of our food and long-term well-being.
- **Pride in Local and Regional Agriculture:** We will honor, support and invest in food growers, businesses and workers to create a thriving local and regional food economy.
- **Food for health:** We will recognize food as the foundation that nurtures and gives life to our personal and community well-being.

## **COALITION LEADERSHIP**

Iowa Food System Coalition (IFSC) members contribute in a myriad of ways, from using the food system plan to inform their work to guiding the work through active participation on committees or priority teams.

Members of **Iowa's Local Food System Working Groups** have served as founding members of the IFSC Steering Committee. Many other leaders have contributed through core committees and priority teams.

### **Kellogg Budget Supports Grassroot Leaders:**

The creation of this plan is above any local food leader's current workload and has involved a special commitment of time and energy to the myriad details and phases. We believe in building this plan from the grassroots and strive to center this work in racial equity, supporting underrepresented leaders across Iowa. The Kellogg grant has provided funds to support grassroots leaders and supporting input from underrepresented leaders.

- Funds have provided financial support to core leaders - each who have an agreement to support committee leadership and the input process.
- Funds have provided financial support to BIMPOC (Black, Indigenous, Mixed, People of Color) leaders who have helped inform our 'All Iowa Talks About Food' input and subsequent visioning sessions.
- Additional plans to support BIMPOC leaders to partner in decision making spaces and help inform the development of this plan will be finalized early 2023.

### **Iowa's Local Food System Working Groups:**

- Regional Food System Working Group (RFSWG) -
  - Steering Committee: Aubrey Alvarez, Marie Boyd, Ilsa DeWald, Jodie Huegerich, Megan Kemp
- Farm to School & Early Care Coalition (F2SEC)
  - Co-Chairs: Chelsea Krist, Krista Smith
- Food Hub Managers Working Group (FHMWG)
  - Co-Facilitators: Giselle Bruskevitz, Kayla Koether
- Additional leaders:
  - Courtney Long: Program Director, Food, Farm, Enterprise Development, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
  - Aaron Lehman: President, Iowa Farmers Union
  - Adam Shriver: Research Fellow & Interim Director Nutrition & Wellness Program, Harkin Institute for Public Policy
  - Lyndi Buckingham-Schutt: State Human Sciences Extension and Outreach Specialist, Food and Health, ISU Extension
  - Kamyar Enshayan: Director, University of Northern Iowa Center for Energy & Environmental Education

## **Coalition Coordination: Positions and Responsibilities**

### **Coordinator - Jan Libbey**

- Keep the project and many partners on schedule, accountable to our objectives, and in coordination with each other.
- Lead Steering Committee meetings
- Coordinate with Courtney Long, Project Input Process Facilitator & Equity Consultant through Input process
- Collaborate with all committees: Partnership and Engagement, Communication, and Investment Committees
- Support Iowa Food System Coalition meetings

### **Co-Coordinator - Kamyar Enshayan**

- Strategize with Project Coordinator and other key leaders to keep the project accountable to our objectives and in coordination with all parties.
- Participate on Steering Committee as much as possible
- Serve on Communication committee
- Cultivate relationships with funders and work in support of the Investment committee to secure funding to fulfill identified priorities.
- Manage fiscal administration for W.K. Kellogg grant, including coordination with UNI Foundation for contractor payments, communications with W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and necessary reporting.

### **Technical support to Coordinator - Adam Shriver**

- Serve as support to Project Coordinator
- Participate on Steering, and other Committees as possible
- Provide support with research and policy recommendations, especially from health and wellness perspective
- Provide assistance with communication plan development
- Co-Chair Investment committee
  - Help identify additional funding for this planning process - community events, communication campaign
  - Assist in planning for Network Development - align structure with values and explore coordinating center role for Harkin Institute

### **Community Input Process and Assist with Coalition Meeting Facilitation - Courtney Long**

- Craft and facilitate statewide community input process
- Craft and facilitate statewide focus groups
- Organize and share results of statewide community input processes and focus groups
- Participate on Steering, and other Committees as possible
- Support planning and facilitation of priority areas and teams
- Support planning and assist with facilitation of coalition meetings

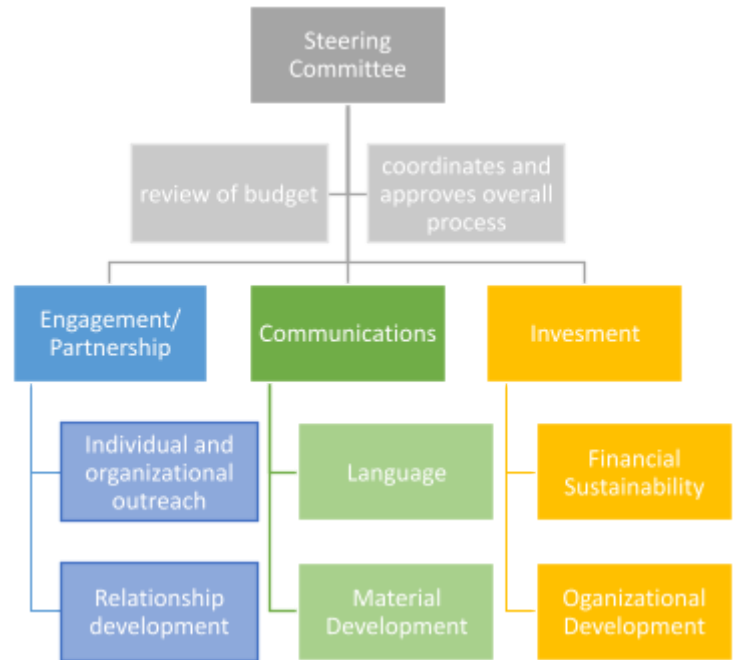
## The Committees, Priority teams, and Member recruitment

### Committees

Steering, Engagement, Communication, and Investment - serve as a central leadership structure guiding the work of the Iowa Food System Coalition during this planning process. Below is a description of each committee scope, and related policy guiding committee operation.

#### **Steering Committee**

- **Responsibility:** Coordinates and approves overall process; review of budget
- **Objective:** keep project on track, support committee work, keep communication channels open.
- **Time expectations:** 4 hrs/month
  - Meetings: 2 hr bi monthly: 2nd & 4th Wed, 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.
  - Support committee plan of work with in-between tasks as agreed upon in committee meetings



#### **Partnership and Engagement Committee**

- Facilitate Statewide Input Processes (2020-2021 coordinated efforts)
- **Responsibility:** Supporting Opportunities for people to engage in the Iowa Food System Coalition at their capacity and with accountability.
- **Objectives:**
  - Increase reach of network
  - Increase the number of opportunities to document and celebrate Coalition success
- **Priorities**
  - Recruitment
  - Maintaining - commitment and tracking
  - Growing awareness - tracking opportunity for awareness
- **Time expectations:** Est. 2 hours/month
  - Meetings: 1 hour; held on the first Wednesday of each month, from 8:30-9:30 a.m.
  - Support committee plan of work with in-between tasks as agreed upon in committee meetings.

#### **Communications Committee**

- **Responsibility:** Developing a clear message to support the Input process and convey concise messages about process and plan goals.
- **Objective:**
  - Build the campaign using clear language that is accessible to all Iowans and conveys a win-win message.
  - Contract technical support and utilize appropriate and effective strategies as the budget can support.



- Time expectations: Est.2 hours/month
  - Meetings: 1 hour, Bi monthly, Tuesdays 10-11 a.m.
  - Support committee plan of work with in between tasks as agreed upon in committee meetings

### **Investment Committee**

- Responsibilities: two-fold - Investment and organizational development
- Investment objectives: Guide investment of the Coalition and the plan
  - Understand financial needs
    - Coalition/staff to play convening/organizing role and supporting ongoing communication
    - Support the identified priorities of the plan, in partnership with Coalition partners
- Organizational development
  - In conjunction with Steering Committee guidance, subcommittee of Investment help evaluate/recommend appropriate organizational structures that meet coordinating, plan evaluation, partner development, policy advocacy, and communication needs. Note: final organizational structure decision rests with the Steering Committee.
- Time expectations:
  - Meetings: 1 hour, monthly
  - Support committee plan of work with in-between tasks as agreed upon in committee meeting

### The Priority Teams

We have identified the following priority areas based upon our Input sessions and additional analysis by the Steering Committee:

1. Farm and Food System Infrastructure- storage, processing and distribution
2. Procurement, Marketing, and Local Food Purchasing
3. Farm and Food Businesses
4. Food Systems Awareness and Education
5. Food as Medicine
6. Networks and Community Organizing
7. Land and Resource Access
8. Stewardship
9. Labor

Teams began working in the Fall of 2022 and will continue collaborating through Winter 2023 to help identify overall goals, strategies, and short, intermediate, and long term outcomes. Details from team deliberations will be added as they become available.

All priority teams will be invited to a large group meeting to better consider the interconnections between the various priority areas and talk more about metrics, evaluation. The future role of priority teams will be further clarified as we move through discussions about the Coalition's long-term organizational structure.

## Committee & Priority Team Member Recruitment

### **Committees**

#### **Committee Membership Level**

It's up to each committee to make their own membership determination based upon needs as the project develops. It's a reasonable guideline that all committees not exceed 12 members. Committee membership level should be responsive to the scope of committee work load (described above) and reflect our commitment to the attributes listed in the next section.

#### **Joining a Committee**

Committee member candidates may approach anyone involved with the Coalition leadership (Coordinator or Committee member) or be solicited by any of the committees. A one-on-one conversation should be held with any member candidate to assure clarity of expectations. A [committee member recruitment outline](#) is provided to guide a consistent overview of goals and expectations.

- This outline includes self assessment and evaluation questions for committee accountability.

#### **Final Committee member selection/invitation**

Each Committee may solicit members to fill their self-determined needs. Changes or additions should be reported on at Steering Committee meetings to assist coordination and reduce multiple asks. The Steering Committee may provide recommendations back to the committees if it's felt further discussion is needed. Committee Chairs are responsible to help keep the [Iowa Food System Coalition Member Log](#) up to date.

#### **Committee Member Attributes: Committee membership is open to partners committed to the Iowa Food System Coalition mission who have one or more of these attributes:**

- Visionary/generative ideas to create system and policy solutions
- Understands the complexities of collaborative planning and food system development, including experience with long term planning, local food coordination
- Strong networking/organizing with other cross-sectional organizations
- Represents or identifies with a historically marginalized group of people (BIMPOC, women, LGBTQ, etc.)
- Represents a coalition or broader group of stakeholders in the food system i.e. meatpacking, food pantries, restaurants, etc.
- Strategic organizing and critical thinking
- Strong communication expertise
- Relationships with funders or financial expertise
- Background in state and local policy development

### **Priority Teams**

Priority team leadership and membership is open to all Coalition members whose work and interest align with the areas and are able to commit to necessary meetings. Membership has ranged from 2 - 10 people participating on these teams.

## GOVERNANCE & DECISION MAKING

The Steering Committee adopted the Consent-based decision making framework to guide its processes. Other committees and priority teams may consider this process, but are not expected to be held to this practice. For more information about this process, check out this [consent-based decision making cheat sheet](#).

### Steering Committee Decision-Making Process

It is expected that the need to make decisions will come up consistently at steering committee meetings. The purpose of this outline is to guide consent around a process for making collective, equitable decisions on matters within the steering committee's purview. The Steering Committee recommends the other two committees refer to this process as a guide in their decision making.

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#### Some Definitions:

- **Communicating decisions:** Upcoming decisions will be shared by a meeting organizer in an agenda in advance of a steering committee meeting.
- **Quorum:** Defined as 51% or more of steering committee members in attendance (currently, 6 out of 10 steering committee members).
- **Right of abstention:** While it is the duty of every member who has an opinion on a question to express by voting, if they are not compelled to vote, they may abstain. There may be situations where a member abstains due to direct personal interest as a result of the vote.
- **Range of Tolerance Metrics ("Fist to 5" voting):**
  - 5 - I LOVE this, let's move forward
  - 4 - I like this, let's move forward
  - 3 - I'm neutral, let's move forward
  - 2 - I would LIKE more conversation before moving forward, but I'm not blocking us from moving forward
  - 1 - I NEED more conversation before we move forward, but I'm not blocking us from moving forward
  - Fist/O - Absolutely not, I'm not comfortable moving forward

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#### If Quorum is Met:

If quorum at a meeting is met, those in attendance will use the Principle of Consent to vote on any drafted proposal(s).

- If consent is reached, the decision will be shared with any committee members not in attendance, providing one additional opportunity for feedback and voting via virtual communication (fist to 5). No response is a vote in favor. Right of abstention applies.
  - If the proposal is within everyone's range of tolerance, then the decision is finalized.
    - Defined as any fist vote between 3 & 5
    - A fist vote of 0-2 is identified as outside of tolerance
  - If the proposal is outside of anyone's range of tolerance, the steering committee will reconvene to continue conversation.

- If consent is not reached during a meeting, the steering committee will reconvene to continue conversation.

**If Quorum is Not Met:**

If quorum at a meeting is not met, any drafted proposal(s) will be shared with all additional committee members not in attendance, providing one additional opportunity for feedback via virtual voting (first to 5). No response is a vote in favor.

- If the proposal is within everyone's range of tolerance, then the decision is finalized.
- If the proposal is outside of anyone's range of tolerance, the steering committee will reconvene to continue conversation.

**SC guidance to committees**

A SC member is on each of the other two committees - invite those committees to use consent-based decision making to guide their discussions.

SC should hold space for the subcommittees to have autonomy to make their own decisions as needed - with attention to situations that impact SC and, therefore, should have their input - i.e. budget related as in the approving the Equity consultant contract being one solid example.

## COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL & RACIAL EQUITY

The vulnerabilities and challenges of our food system are outlined in [our proposal to the Kellogg Foundation](#). As stated in this section of the proposal, we name this as “an opportune moment to make a difference by creating a roadmap that all Iowans can relate to and use to establish food systems that foster equity, health, fairness, and land stewardship in the state of Iowa. Furthermore, as a Coalition, we commit to [center this food plan on social and racial equity](#).”

But what does it mean to put such a commitment into action? Especially for an effort that is currently largely white led?

It means personal work as our equity consultants, Kelly and V, of Astig Planning, have reminded us over and over. The time for denial is over. Expect discomfort. But V says, “enter into this work with curiosity and expansive imagination” - seeking to build a community of care at the heart of our food system. It means to center the humanity of all food system sector players in our solutions.

Additionally, we look at Adrienne Marie Brown’s counsel - she says “...learn to say, and mean, ‘i am sorry for the impact of my white supremacy.’ “say it from your heart and gut directly to people you’ve impacted, especially in situations when you were/are in positions of leadership or authority.” She continues - an apology must be married with action, with shifts in behavior, policy and access to power.

We have begun to take baby steps to build the necessary momentum. We ask you to journey with us to address injustices in our food system and build intercultural solidarity and food justice. Celebrate together when we get it right, keep up the pressure when we misstep.

Our initial efforts have been to create a shared awareness of this core value and guiding principle. Secondly, we are committed to creating safe and welcoming practices that foster trusting relationships. These first steps will open doors to further action around shifting behavior, policy, and access to power to ensure IFSC remains grounded in this commitment.

To date, we

- have worked with Astig Planning for social and racial equity consulting on our processes and provided an intensive racial equity training for Coalition members. Links to recordings of these sessions will be available on the coalition’s website.
- created space and financial support for BIMPOC farmers and leaders (black, indigenous, mixed race, people of color) to inform our All Iowa Talks Input and subsequent visioning sessions.
- are developing policy, procedures, and practices that are rooted in restorative justice.

We are considering how best to

- lift up real life stories from BIMPOC partners through our communication campaign
- provide financial support to BIMPOC leaders to partner in decision making spaces and help inform the development of this plan.

This is a work in progress and this section will be updated as the practice evolves.

## **COMMUNICATION PLAN**

To meet internal objectives of keeping Coalition members informed of plan development and updates, we are using a monthly newsletter provided to a list of nearly 200 partners.

An external facing communication plan is being developed with support from Coalition Communication consultant, Cocoa Creative. The plan will outline a strategy to promote the food system plan through a strategy of frank assessment of the problems, showcasing of real activity at work now, examples of innovative solutions the plan advances, and perpetual opportunities for partners to join in. Throughout, we will lean on stories about lowans who lead with expertise gained through their lived experience.

Note: more detail will be provided as the plan is developed, including where to find communication pieces about the coalition such as newsletter, website, social media.

## **INVESTMENT**

This food system planning project is funded by a 2 year, \$220,000 grant from the WKKellogg Foundation with support from the Harkin Institute for Public Policy and a lot of volunteer contribution of time.

The Investment Committee is the body responsible for cultivating relationships and securing commitment of funders and exploring grants to support the food system plan priorities and ongoing collaboration capacity.

## **THE PLAN**

The food system plan will be the culmination of all this front end work. Input and visioning sessions from Fall 2022 through Fall 2023 helped articulate vision, mission, values and priority areas. Priority teams have brought their experience and insight to bear in developing the context of priority areas. An editorial team of Jan Libbey, Courtney Long, and Adam Shriver, supported by Cocoa Creative, will be responsible for translating all of this input into plan drafts. There will be several iterations of plan drafts with review and Coalition member input to inform the process as the plan is finalized through the winter/spring of 2023.

## **MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION**

This is an essential element of the plan and will guide assessment of implementation on a regular basis. Measures that monitor progress on identified priorities and a feedback loop process will help ensure Iowa's local food system network improves performance and is more sustainable into the future. [details will be added as available]

## APPENDIX

- o [Original WKK Kellogg Proposal](#)
  - o [Theory of Change](#) - submitted with Kellogg proposal
- o [The Input Process](#) (Courtney's document)
- o [Astig Equity Consultant Agreement](#)
- o [Member Recruitment Discussion Outline & Evaluation rubric](#)
- o Collaborating Partners (to be determined)
- o Resources (to be determined)