



SERVING LAKE, PORTER, LAPORTE, NEWTON, JASPER, STARKE, & PULASKI COUNTIES



Cultivating a just, thriving, and regenerative food system for all in NW Indiana

Everyone has a right to food. We envision a local food system where everyone has fair access to food that is grown by regional producers using regenerative practices. Through community-based strategies, we enhance collaboration, healthy ecosystems, equity and resiliency for all in Northwest Indiana.

Our **2023-2026 Strategic Plan** was written by our entire Board to reflect our shared values. We believe this plan helps fulfill the mission of NWI Food Council, while allowing us to respond to new challenges and opportunities in the food system. This ambitious plan will require partnerships to support Indiana local food, education, and action for a resilient food system for all involved. **Join us.**

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

LEADING SYSTEMS CHANGE

INCREASING FOOD ACCESS

SUPPORTING FARM VIABILITY

MODELING NONPROFIT GOVERNANCE

Our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan renews our commitment to NWI Food Council's core mission: supporting farm viability, increasing food access, and strengthening connections between those who grow and consume food – all in the name of replacing our extractive food systems with sustainable, just, and equitable frameworks.



NWI FOOD COUNCIL 2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

LEADING CHANGE

To lead and support equitable initiatives and robust partnerships in Northwest Indiana and beyond that disrupt systems of oppression and lead to transformative, just, and reparative frameworks.

Strategy: Deepen commitment to community driven strategies and solutions that strengthen engagement in responsive, reparative programming.

- Support the continued learning and build the competencies of staff, board, partners, and stakeholders to disrupt systems of oppression with anti-oppression training, co-created policies and practices, and nontraditional power structures.
- Create inclusive and equitable food and agriculture programming and policies that promote local food production, processing, and consumption.

Strategy: Build regional capacity at strategic and “boots on the ground” levels.

- Strengthen the region's economy through food and agriculture related businesses that create jobs and recirculate financial capital.

Strategy: Raise awareness of food systems work and an individual's power to make change.

- Utilize local food system expertise to continue education.

Strategy: Continue farmer and community education about the food and agricultural industry's impact on climate change.

- Promote regenerative farming practices.
- Develop a climate action plan rooted in justice.

FOOD

Steward a deeply connected and inclusive food systems network in Northwest Indiana.

Strategy: Improve access for all to adequate, affordable, nourishing, culturally appropriate, and locally-grown food at markets, schools, grocery/corner stores, and restaurants.

- Support community-led food solutions that improve food security and empower BIPOC and other systematically oppressed eaters.

Strategy: Collaborate with diverse, strategic, and local partners to identify root causes of food insecurity, assess needs, and brainstorm solutions to improve food access without duplicating efforts.

- Pay community members, thought partners, and trusted leaders for their time and wisdom.
- Participate in regional coalitions and partner networks to advance intersectional solutions.

Strategy: Continue developing and offering educational programs to schools and communities to celebrate locally-grown and culturally-relevant food.

- Support relationships among food, people, and the Earth.
- Foster a joyful relationship with food.
- Educate about local food.



NWI FOOD COUNCIL 2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

FARMS

To support and empower viability of all farms and farmers throughout Northwest Indiana.

Strategy: Make farming and farm work a viable profession and livelihood.

- Improve working and living conditions for farm laborers.
- Advocate for increased public and private investment in farmland and regional food systems as important resources in Northwest Indiana.
- Develop partnerships with land trusts, conservation organizations, and local government to support and protect farmland of all sizes, particularly small-scale, regenerative, and community driven.

Strategy: Improve access to land, resources, and markets and close the resource gap for BIPOC farmers and decolonize what farming looks like.

- Secure more funding and resources for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers.
- Leverage the Food Council's resources and platforms to amplify examples of decolonized agriculture (review and adapt NWIFC's educational materials to decolonize our own methods and practices).

Strategy: Identify needs of local growers and connect them with resources at all stages and sizes.

- Support farm leaders as teachers.
- Bridge gaps between farm-serving agencies.

Strategy: Establish more direct and beneficial links between farmers and consumers.

- Connect more farmers to community resources.
- Include consumers in conversations about increasing the diversity of local agricultural production.
- Amplify marketing practices that directly promote local food and farmer information.

In support of this strategic plan, the Board of Directors of NWI Food Council commits to values-based governance of our organization. This includes our commitment to transparency, accountability, and equity; developing exemplary models and best practices for supporting the organization's staff; and ensuring the continued financial health and sustainability of NWI Food Council.