



STRATEGIC PLAN

Our mission:

Gardenshare's mission is to solve the problem of hunger in St. Lawrence County through policy advocacy work and by strengthening the food system to benefit all County residents.

Our vision:

Healthy Food – The County has a vibrant, local food system where our food choices are healthy for us, for our communities, and for the environment.

Healthy Farms – Farmers are able to make a living that supports their families, contributing to a robust local economy.

Everybody Eats – Everyone in the County has access to enough nutritious and affordable food to sustain a healthy lifestyle. When food assistance is needed, whether from government or private sector programs, it is provided in dignified ways that respect both the receiver and the giver of assistance.

We believe that:

- Nutritious food is a basic human right, so hunger is universally unacceptable and no one should have to worry about where their next meal is coming from.
- The response to people's needs should be both human and personal, always valuing both those who need help and those who help.
- The availability of food should not be taken for granted.
- There should be an understanding and respect for the hard work and effort it takes to bring safe, nutritious, healthy food to the table.
- Government, business, organizations, and individuals must work together to ensure that everyone has access to good, nutritious food.
- Localized and grass-roots efforts are as highly valued as those that are more centralized.
- Sustained cooperation of many individuals, organizations, and government over time will lead to a hunger-free community.

To implement this vision, we will:

- Operate as an effective charitable organization and make sound business decisions.
- Be good stewards of the human, monetary, and other resources entrusted to us.
- Remember that caring, committed, and compassionate people are our most valuable assets.
- Be honest and open in all relationships, communications, dealings, and transactions.
- Ensure that a variety of voices are represented in our decision-making.
- Remain mindful that solving hunger requires new and innovative solutions and become active participants in finding and implementing those solutions.

Creating a community where long-term solutions are not just desired, but expected may take many years. It will take more than our work to create this kind of societal change. These realizations will not deter us from taking the steps we can, each day, each month, each year, to move the world closer to this vision.

Strategy 1: Help local families access locally-grown food and, in doing so, support local farmers.

Tactics:

- Produce an annual Local Food Guide that lists local farms, farmstands, CSA's, and farmers markets and ensure its widespread distribution throughout the County.
- Help low-income families access CSA's by providing "scholarships" or the farmers markets through the Bonus Bucks program.
- Provide the equipment and training for SNAP redemption at farmers markets. Promote the availability of SNAP at the markets. Provide bonuses to SNAP recipients to encourage usage at the markets, with a goal of doubling SNAP purchases.
- Using the same equipment, make it possible for customers to use credit or debit cards at the farmers markets.
- Distribute Farmers Market tokens to families whose children receive food backpacks near the end of the school year.
- Sell Farmers Market gift tokens to provide an opportunity for individuals or organizations to give a gift of local food.

2017 Actions:

Action	Assigned to	Priority
Implement plans outlined in FMPP grant to recruit and train volunteers to promote SNAP usage at Farmers Markets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new recruitment strategies • Improve volunteer training • Evaluate the program • Develop and implement plans to continue this work after grant expires in September. 	Staff	High
Continue work to provide volunteer back-up to Farmers Market managers.	Staff, including Americorps	High
Work to strengthen farmers markets in the county. Work toward a coalition, which would have goals of standardizing market operations and mutual support. This work will require additional support from the GardenShare team. Develop potential funding sources for this kind of work.	Staff, including Americorps	High
Support low-income and working families in acquiring locally grown food through the Bonus Bucks program and by offering incentives to SNAP clients at the Farmers Markets.	Board Staff	High
Strengthen promotion efforts for local growers, ideas include profiles, posters, social media, and other channels.	Intern	Medium
Enhance the Local Food Guide by adding more vendors, engaging volunteers to sell more ads, and continuing the annual report with a way for people to respond with a donation or other involvement	Board Development Committee Staff	Medium
Research ways to help local farmers sell to schools.	Board	Medium
Research funding opportunities to allow GardenShare to pay local farmers for produce to be donated to food pantries and free will dinners	Board	Medium
Research the possible development of a mobile Farmers Market to serve currently underserved communities. Research to include models from other places, developing possible partners or collaborators, and	Board Staff	Medium

possible funding sources.		
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2018 Actions:

- Build on work to strengthen Farmers Markets
- Continue programming to offer SNAP incentives
- Evaluate new Bonus Bucks program and make changes, as needed
- Local Food Guide
- Continue mobile Farmers Market work, if feasible, and begin implementation

Strategy 2: Help ensure that local households are enrolled in programs that can help them have adequate, nutritious diets (SNAP, WIC, school meals, summer food, etc.) by collaborating with County and local government, school systems, the Food Bank of CNY, and state anti-hunger organizations.

Tactics:

- Implement outreach and education programs like Hunger 101 that break down myths about these programs
- Serve as an information hub on food resources in St. Lawrence County

2017 Actions:

Action	Assigned to	Priority
Work to develop partnerships or collaborations that will lead to an increase in the number of sites and participants in summer food service program in future years	Staff Board	High
Use our communication and education tools - Hunger 101, newsletters, social media, traditional media - to break down stereotypes about these programs, remove any stigma, and help make it easier for people to apply. (<i>assumes UU Fund for a Just Society grant - see notes under next strategy</i>)	Gloria Staff Interns	High (if funded, medium if not)
Strengthen the relationship with DSS and the NOEP contractor.	Staff	Medium
Develop and implement a planning conference around food and hunger issues for all emergency food programs, the local colleges, the food bank, and other interested agencies.	Staff Board	Medium
Update emergency food listing on GardenShare website.	Intern	Low
Ensure accurate information about all government food programs and how to apply is on the GardenShare website.	Intern	Low

2018 Actions:

- Build on summer food service program work to add more sites and serve more children
- Continue public education work to break down stereotypes
- Based on results of first conference planning effort, hold another conference or some other form of education and planning work

Strategy 3: Educate and engage the public and policy makers about hunger, food security and food policy issues to move the County closer to our vision of "Healthy Food, Healthy Farms, Everybody Eats."

Tactics:

- Conduct educational events and programs geared to different audiences and designed to educate and engage people in food policy and food security issues.

2017 Actions:

Action	Assigned to	Priority
<p>Implement the plans of the Volunteer Generation grant to meet the following goals by February of 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 new volunteers doing outreach to SNAP clients encouraging them to use the farmers markets and educating them about the benefits of local food. • 20 new volunteers working at the farmers markets to support the markets in accepting SNAP benefits and to educate SNAP clients about the benefits of local food. • 10 new volunteers working on food system, food security, and hunger issues in new and different ways including, but not limited to, providing nutrition education at the farmers markets, the free will dinner, and the food pantry; conducting education and outreach activities, particularly the Hunger 101 program; and organizing activities geared to improving the food system in their own local community. • 30 new volunteers supporting the emergency food distribution programs in the County, including volunteer team leaders who can train and supervise other volunteers. <p>Use online recruitment tools, including Volunteer Match and HungerVolunteer.org to generate interest. GardenShare will present Hunger 101 to a variety of audiences - churches, schools, civic clubs, large employers - and will educate people about the options for volunteering in meaningful ways. In addition, GardenShare and the partners will engage current and previous recipients of the services provided by our agencies as volunteers.</p>	<p>Gloria Staff Board Volunteers</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Raise the profile of the Volunteer Generation grant partner organizations and build the community's understanding of the issues around food security and hunger in the area through both traditional and social media.</p>	<p>Gloria Board Staff Interns</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>As part of the Volunteer Generation grant, help organize the following events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 11, 2016 - Fight Hunger 5K • Martin Luther King Day, 2017 - work with the Church and Community Program and the Free Will Dinner to engage volunteers in securing food donations and raising awareness about the need for donations and volunteers extending beyond the holiday season. • "I Love My Park Day 2017" work with the Canton and Potsdam Farmers Markets to organize an effort to clean and beautify the parks where the Markets are held. 	<p>Staff Board Volunteer</p>	<p>High</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On or near September 11, 2017 - Fight Hunger 5K • Martin Luther King Day, 2018 - work with the Church and Community Program and the Free Will Dinner to engage volunteers in securing food donations and raising awareness about the need for donations and volunteers extending beyond the holiday season. 		
<p>If funded from the UU Fund for a Just Society, meet the following goals to help change the conversation about hunger, and specifically, SNAP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twelve Hunger 101 presentations over the 12 month period • Twenty local residents taking part in the SNAP challenge and at least five sharing a portion their experience on social media • Video produced and shared with personnel of at least 5 grocery stores, one specialty food store, one cooperative, and two farmers market managers, and 10 farmers market vendors • Five volunteer speakers trained and able to present about SNAP, GardenShare, and/or Hunger 101 • Ten SNAP recipient stories shared 	Gloria Staff Board	High (if funded, medium if not)
Growing Community Award - present the annual award and maximize the value of the award and the event to raise awareness of the issues and of GardenShare. Consider bringing in a well-known speaker and inviting other groups working on food and hunger issues.	O&E Committee	High
Conduct Hunger Action Month activities to raise awareness of the issue of hunger and of GardenShare's and the Volunteer Generation grant partner's work.	O&E Committee Intern	Medium
Develop youth programming to replace the Food Day Youth Summit.	Staff Intern Board	Medium
Regular meetings with elected officials at the local, county, and state level.	Gloria, Carol	Low
Conduct an outreach event during Canton's Winterfest	O&E Committee	Low

2018 Actions:

- Wrap-up of Volunteer Generation grant work
- Hunger Action Month, Growing Community Award, Winterfest, and other outreach events

Strategy 4: Improve the food policy environment in St. Lawrence County in order to strengthen the local food system, support local farmers, and ensure that all County residents have access to a healthy diet.

Tactics:

- Work toward the development of a St. Lawrence County Food Policy Council.

2017 Actions:

Action	Assigned to	Priority
Participate in and support the follow-up work from the Local Food,	Carol	High

Local Places project, with the goal of developing this into the Food Policy Council at some point.	Gloria	
Engage local officials in these conversations. Target an interested county level politician to lead the charge on food policy issues	Carol Gloria	Medium
Continue an active public relations campaign that educates people about food policy issues.	Gloria O&E Committee	Medium
Stay abreast of what other areas of the country are doing on hunger and food policy issues and bring new ideas to GardenShare's work.	Gloria	Low

2018 Actions:

- Will be determined from 2017 work

Strategy 5: Continue to build and strengthen GardenShare's infrastructure and organizational capacity to achieve these goals.

Ongoing tactics:

- Build a strong Board of Directors, recruiting and orienting new Directors as needed and building the diversity and skills base of the Board. Engage in an ongoing Board development program.
- Build a strong Fund Development Committee and implement diverse fundraising strategies to ensure ongoing organizational viability.
- Engage a variety of active volunteers, including interns, in the work of the organization.

2017 Actions:

Action	Assigned to	Priority
Conduct all activities required by grants, including proper reporting to the funders.	Staff	High
Implement the Development and Public Relations Plan. Priorities include strengthening the annual fund and Sustainers Circle. Hold three fundraising events, each with its own planning committee.	Development Committee Board Staff	High
Maximize the value of interns - recruiting at all four colleges and engaging interns in new ways	Staff Board	High
Recruit and train two new Directors, with a focus on adding a grower and building the diversity of the Board.	Carol, Sarah, and Board	High
Finalize larger and more appropriate work space for GardenShare, including furniture and equipment	Board Staff	High
Recruit, train, and deploy Americorps VISTA's to further these plans.	Gloria	High
Conduct Board development activities including an annual planning retreat, training and education activities, and social events.	Board	Medium
Recruit and train new volunteers to all committees	Board	Medium

2018 Actions:

- Continued board and volunteer development
- Continued strengthening fundraising and public relations plans