

CAN Community Fair Food System Summit
Local Food Value Chains: Creating Health and Wealth
Thursday July 28, 2022

Local Food Value Chains through an Equity Lens



Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin
Community Farm Alliance



Heather Fuston
Snowville Creamery



Shelly Keeney
The Wild Ramp

Central Appalachian Network

Food & Agricultural Working Group



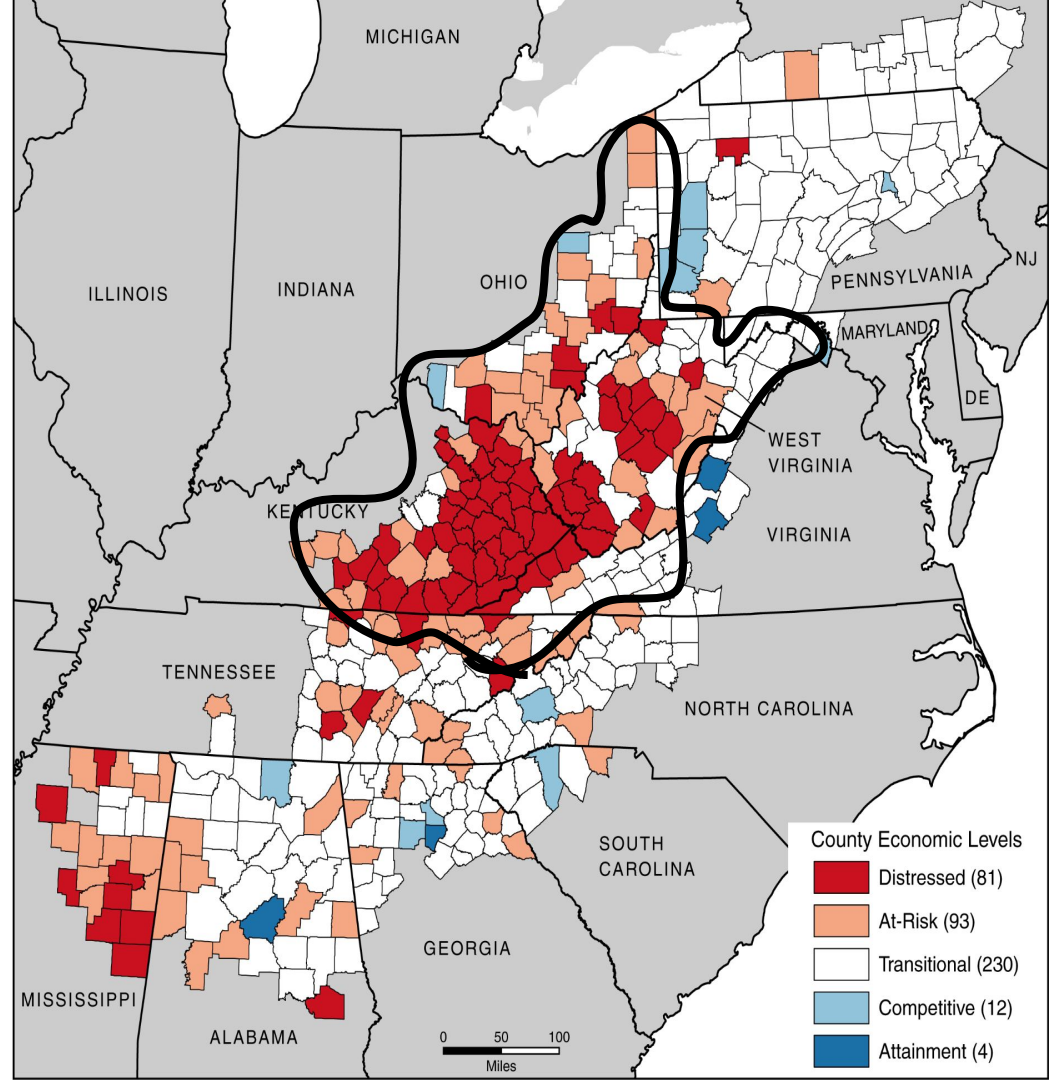
CAN's Footprint

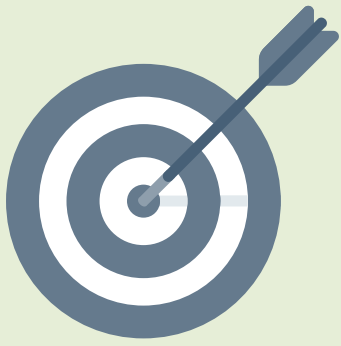
- **Five states**
 - Kentucky
 - Ohio
 - Tennessee
 - Virginia
 - West Virginia
- **Over 170 counties**
 - 39% distressed
 - 28% at-risk
 - 32% transitional
 - 1% competitive
 - 0% attainment

2015-2019 data sources

Created by the Appalachian Regional Commission, June 2021
Data Sources:
Unemployment data: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, LAUS, 2017–2019
Income data: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, LAPI, 2019
Poverty data: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015–2019

Effective October 1, 2021
through September 30, 2022





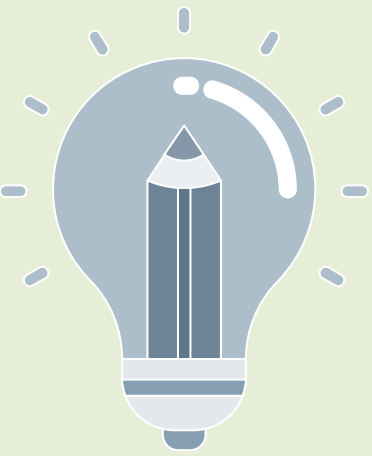
CAN's MISSION

Advance the equitable, just, and sustainable economic transition of Central Appalachia



CAN's STRATEGIES

Connect regional organizations and
community-based practitioners



CAN's STRATEGIES

Synergize local efforts to develop and
grow key economic sectors



CAN's STRATEGIES

Maximize the impact of collective work to
create resilient, diverse, and inclusive
communities throughout our region

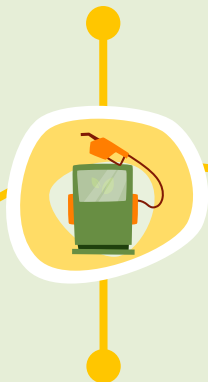


Our Core Work

Working Groups



01



Clean Energy

1. Investments
2. Workforce
3. Policy

02



Downtown Redevelopment

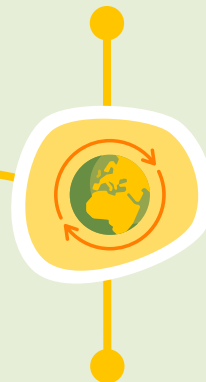
03



Food & Ag Systems

1. PAD
2. Healthy Food Access
3. Beginning Farmer

04



Re-Use





Our Core Work

Think Tanks

Understanding and analyzing local and regional needs, trends, and gaps in sector capacity



Strategy Hubs

Build sector capacity and connectivity across the region

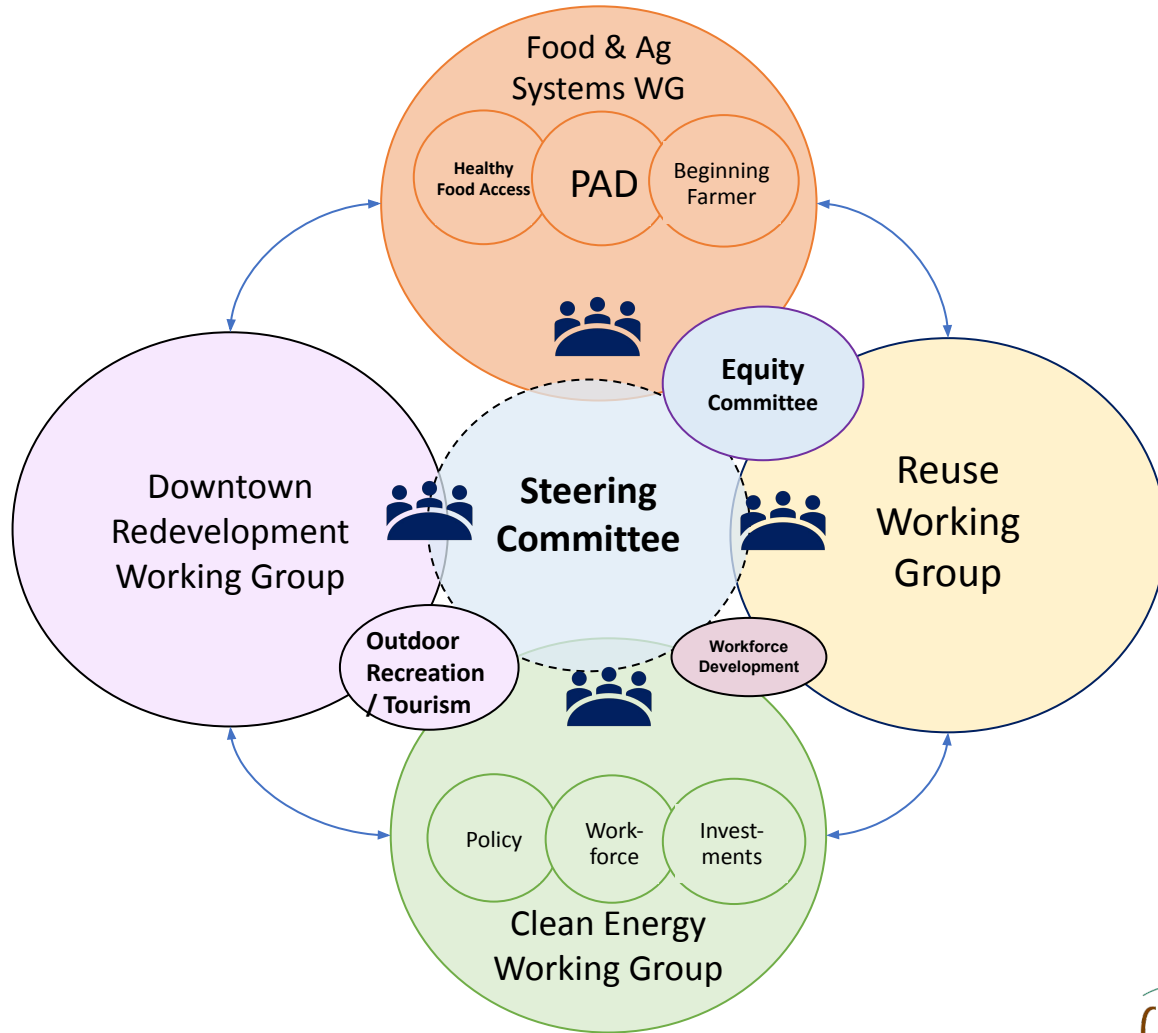
Peer-Learning Spaces

Build organizational and leadership capacity for community economic development efforts



Clearinghouses

Provide resources and technical assistance



CAN's Processing, Aggregation and Distribution Working Group



Strategy

Strategic deployment of regional infrastructure



Creative Use

Multi-use facilities



Growth

Build the pipeline



Peer Learning

& Support Group!



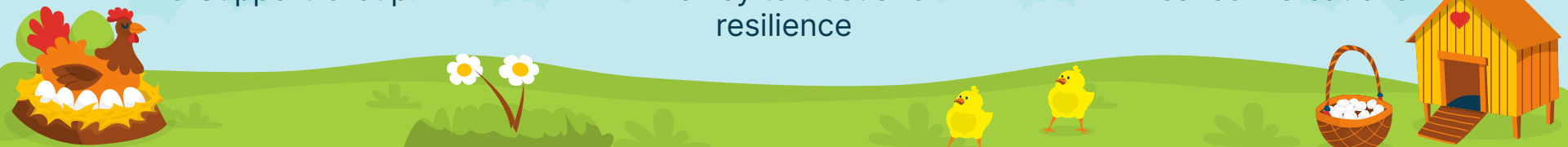
Relationships

The key to trust and resilience



Transparency

Real conversations



Engagement Opportunities



Join us in CAN!



Atlas Charles

Rural Support Partners

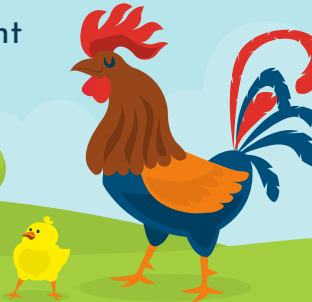
atlas@ruralsupportpartners.com

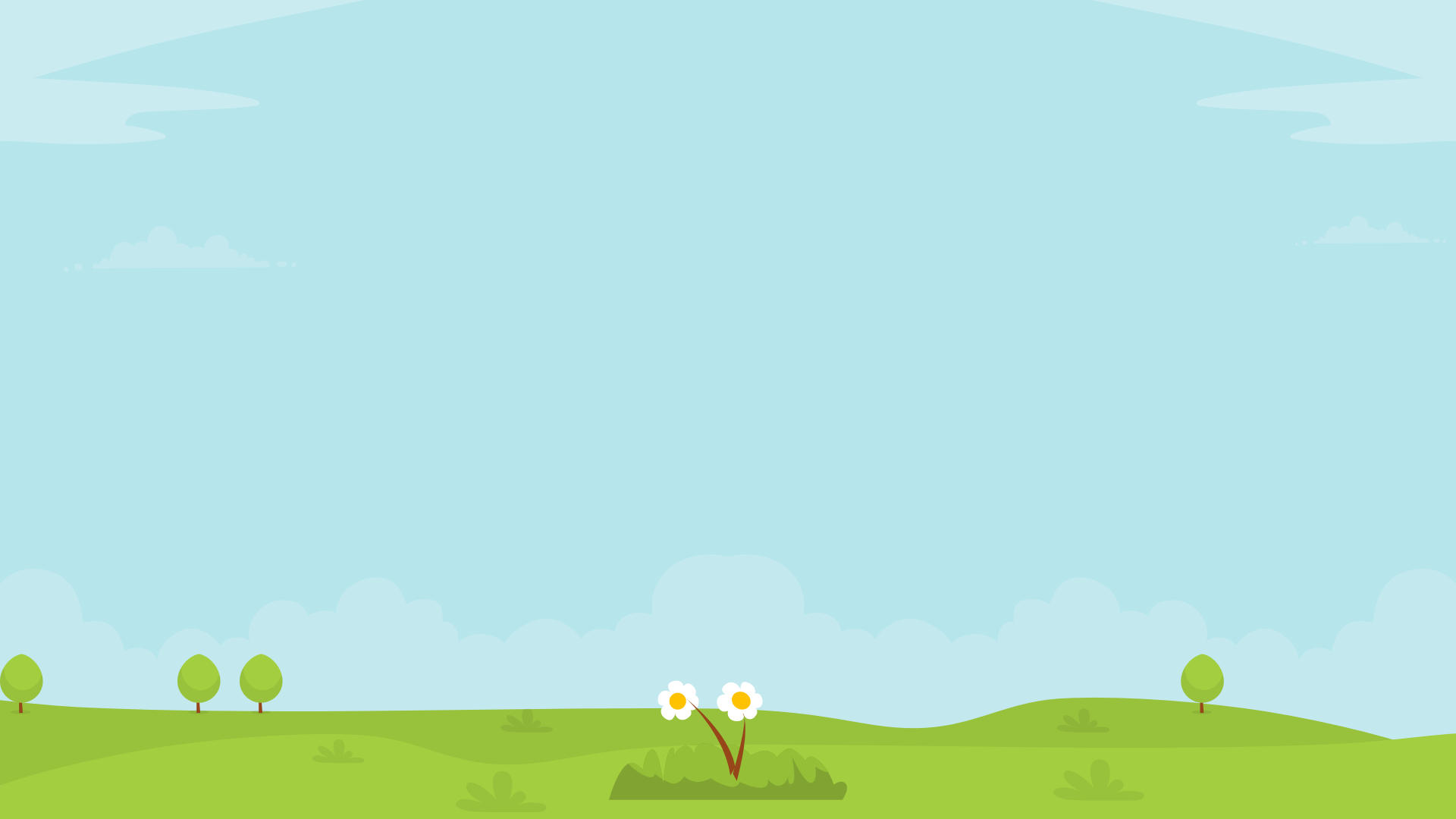


Kathlyn Terry

Appalachian Sustainable Development

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Connecting regional organizations and community-based practitioners

Core Work

Grow Sector-Based Working Group

- Connect organizations, practitioners, R&D, & industries
- Create peer-learning spaces
- Center justice, equity, inclusion, diversity, and accessibility

Short-Term Outcomes

- Stronger relationships partnering organizations in the region
- Trusting collaborations are enabled between sector actors
- A bench of emerging leaders build capacity for local work
- Public, Private, & Nonprofit partnerships are developed
- Increased Understanding, Tools, and Knowledge To Advance Equity

Synergize local efforts to develop and grow key economic sectors

Core Work

Support Sector-Based Working Groups

- Provide resources and technical assistance
- Create peer-learning spaces
- Share promising practices and lessons learned
- Create Space: leadership cohorts and affinity spaces
- CAN Tanks and Convenings
- Provide small grants

Short-Term Outcomes

- Common regional analysis and vision developed
- A bench of emerging leaders build capacity for local work
- Promising practices, lessons learned, and replicable models shared
- Innovations from research and development are shared and field-tested
- Peer support and learning opportunities developed
- Increased funding and resources for collaborative work
- Increased alignment of efforts across regional sector work in public, private, and nonprofit efforts

Maximize the impact of collective work to create resilient, diverse, and inclusive communities throughout our region

Core Work

Resource Sector-Based Working Groups

- Resource on-the-ground work of sector actors
- Capture and spread common analysis, tools, innovations, lessons learned, and replicable models
- Inform public and political dialogue on key issues
- Intentionally include historically marginalized groups

Short-Term Outcomes

- Policy recommendations made
- Public and political education and awareness created
- Learning influences CED practices and policy-making for the region
- Historically marginalized groups are resourced and empowered to build new, more sustainable systems
- Cross-sector learning, strategizing, and collaboration opportunities created
- Innovations drive more sustainable and inclusive solutions

Case Model of a Healthy Food Value Chain: The Appalachian Accessible Food Network



Rural Action

Appalachian Accessible Food Network

AAFN Presenters



Tom Redfern

Rural Action Sustainable Ag Director



Molly Sowash

Rural Action Sustainable Ag Manager



Leslie Schaller

ACEnet Director of Programs



Maribeth Saleem-Tanner

CFI Executive Director

Appalachian Accessible Food Network

The **Appalachian Accessible Food Network** (AAFN) is a partnership formalized in 2014 to accelerate the distribution of local foods into low wealth and underserved Appalachian Ohio communities.

Appalachian Ohio local food systems have become a driving force in the region's economic revitalization. AAFN makes sure that the growing demand for local, fresh and affordable food reaches everyone in our rural communities. AAFN has leveraged donations, sponsorships, revenue generation and grants to implement a detailed work plan grounded in an equity framework. Inclusion and resilience are integral to our shared vision.



AAFN Investors in Healthy Food Access



- ★ *The Osteopathic Heritage Foundation of Nelsonville*
- ★ *The Athens County Foundation*
- ★ *The Sisters Health Foundation*
- ★ *Sugar Bush Foundation*
- ★ *The Catholic Campaign for Human Development*
- ★ *Farm Aid*

Philanthropic investment leverages USDA support

- Community Food Program
- Farm to School
- Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program
- SARE
- Specialty Crop Block Grant
- Farmers Market Promotion Program
- Rural Business Development Grants

AAFN Objectives:

1. Coordinate actors and stakeholders all along the supply chain to increase **DEMAND** and make local, healthy food available for all.
2. Grow the **VOLUME** and variety of fresh, healthy foods in order to ensure that all consumers in the region have access to local food.
3. Expand and improve the needed **INFRASTRUCTURE** to grow, process, and distribute local and healthy foods.
4. Ensure equity to healthy, local food in all communities through new **DISTRIBUTION** strategies and food access initiatives.
5. Increase **EMPLOYMENT** and ownership opportunities for underserved individuals to create sustainable livelihoods in low wealth communities.



Let's First Hear from the Partners

- Rural Action
- ACEnet
- CFI



Rural Action

Thriving Communities, Healthy Environments

- Serving Appalachian Ohio since 1994.
- Our **Mission** is to build a more just economy by developing the region's assets in environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable ways.



Program Areas



Rural Action

- **Sustainable Agriculture**
- Sustainable Forestry
- Environmental Education
- Watershed Restoration
- Zero Waste
- Sustainable Energy
- Leadership & Service
- Resilient Communities
- Social Enterprise

Processing, Aggregation, Distribution, and Education





Processing



Rural Action

Processing



Farm to Institution:

Procurement, processing, and distribution of fresh, local produce to K-12 schools, universities, and healthcare providers. Training for K-12 employees.



Rural Action



Aggregation



Rural Action

Aggregation



- Built and expanded a rural food hub, called the Chesterhill Produce Auction.
- Over 200 producers, 50 wholesale buyers, 900 retail customers.
- Estimated \$400,000 in annual sales from 200,000 lbs of specialty crops.





Distribution



Rural Action

Distribution



Rural Action



- Southeast Ohio Food Bank
- Country Fresh Stops
- Produce Prescriptions
- Buying Club

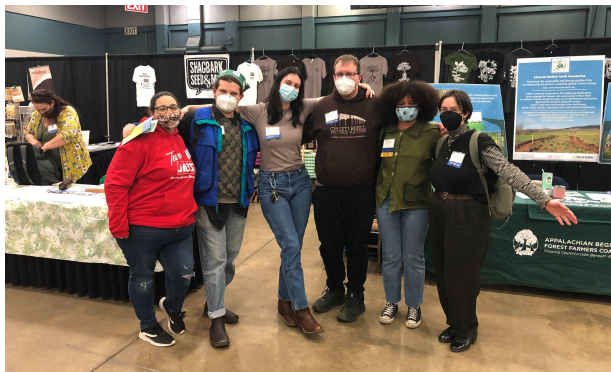


Education



Rural Action

Education



Whole Farm Project

- Annual Whole Farm Planning & Mentoring series
- Site visits
- Forest management plans
- Forest & Farm management plans
- Legal & accounting consultations
- Educational workshops
- Business plan support
- Access to capital (Kiva loans)
- Access to land
- Silvopasture support
- On-farm solar support
- Tree plantings for riparian buffers



Rural Action



ACEnet Focus on Food Sector



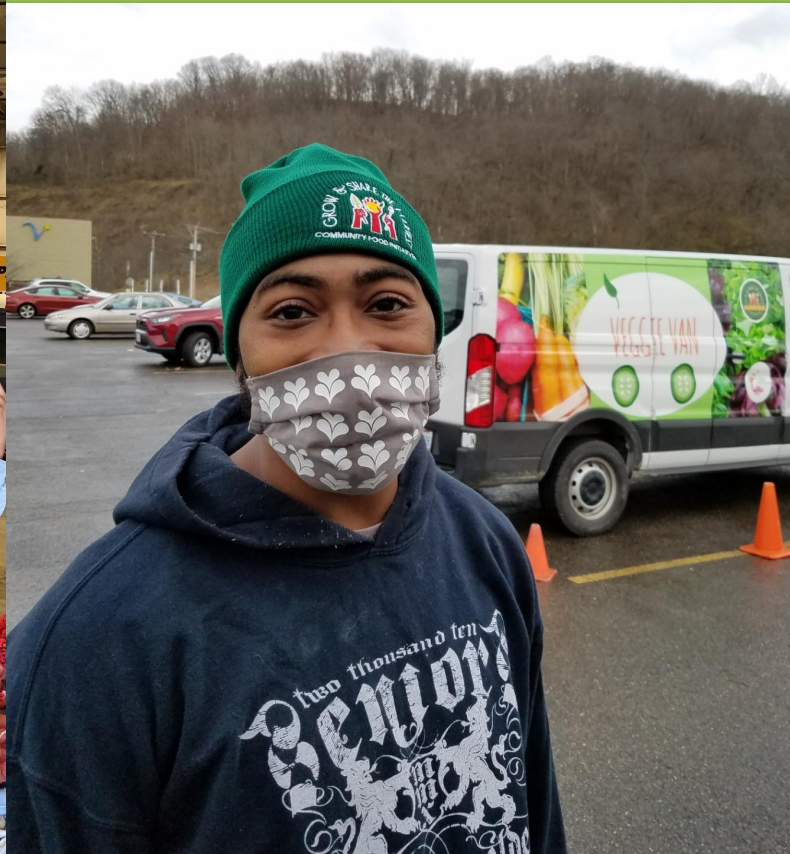
Processing Infrastructure



Processing Infrastructure



Aggregation & Distribution



Increasing Market Access



Farm Entrepreneurs



Local Food Entrepreneurs



Food Workforce Development



CAREER PATHWAYS

29

Serv Safe Food Protection
graduates trained between
January 2021-April 2022

68

STAR residents working with
our clients including: *Butcher's Bites,*
Crumbs, Ted's Pepper Butter, Pork
and Pickles, Seli Foods, Farm on The
Ridge, and To-Go Packs

86

Internship slots across all
ACEnet campuses

522

Hours STAR residents have
worked with our clients





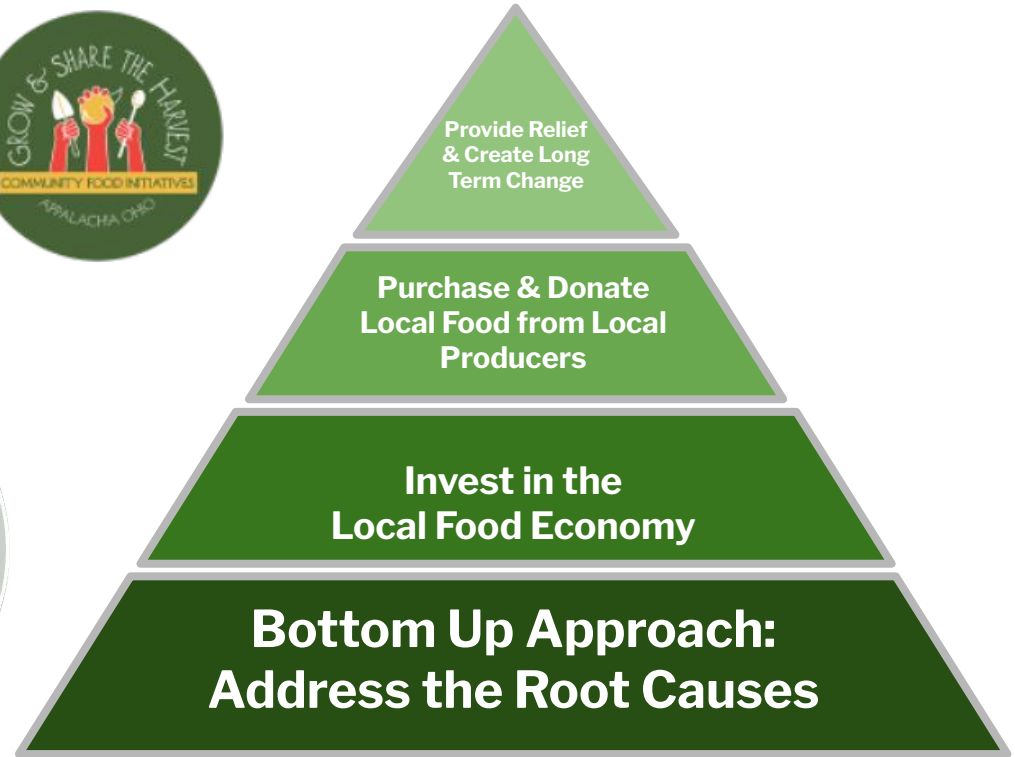
Community Food Initiatives (CFI)



Our Vision:

A resilient region in which everyone in our community has access to an equitable, inclusive, and thriving local food system.

Building Long-Term Community-Based Food Security



Equitable Access



Inclusive Education



Thriving Local Systems





Q&A

Questions for the partnering organizations or their individual work?

Why Networks Matter

Regional networks provide a structure for linking people and places with shared values to design and support the relationships imperative to shift big systems.

Networks empower us:

- To accomplish together what we could not manage on our own
- Engages and empowers all stakeholders & welcomes diversity
- Enables collaborator to be wise stewards to all investors
- Strengthens peer learning and risk taking
- Lift a shared voice for a just transition in the food sector
- Models nature to build healthy and resilient ecosystems



Demand Channels as Access Points



Food Access

The **Donation Station** collects and purchases local food to increase availability of fresh foods at regional food pantries and agencies.

Food Hubs collect, distribute and market local foods into our communities and educate farmers, food entrepreneurs, and consumers.

Farm to School educates school stakeholders, facilitates purchases from farmers and coordinates processing and freezing at Hocking College and the SEO Foodbank and Regional Kitchen for year-round use.

Farmers Markets create direct sales opportunities for regional growers and access to local foods for consumers.

Country Fresh Stops partner with corner stores, colleges, and health providers to sell fresh produce to serve customers in places with low food access.

Food Sector Infrastructure

Athens FOOD VENTURES CENTER & Nelsonville FOOD AND FARM ENTERPRISE CENTER

- Leveraged **\$380,524** to build-out **10,100 sq. ft.** of food sector space
- Built **3 additional walk-ins** to expand refrigerated storage space
- Launched **60+ new food businesses** and farmers creating value-added products
- Opened the **first Ohio Department of Agriculture** licensed, artisanal meat processing facility in the state & a new room for vegetable processing, dehydration and flash freezing



Chesterhill Produce Auction

- Grew auction sales by 56%, grossing **\$385,273** in 2021
- Served about **200 producers** each year who sell through the auction
- Launched and expanded Buying Club, which delivers **115 weekly shares** of fresh produce to **7 sites in 2022**
- Launched the Incubator Farm
- Built livestock barn & expanded the CPA store to sell more goods and crafts
- Hired an auction manager with leveraged funds
- Purchased refrigerated van in 2019 to expand distribution



Farm to School

In the past 7 years...

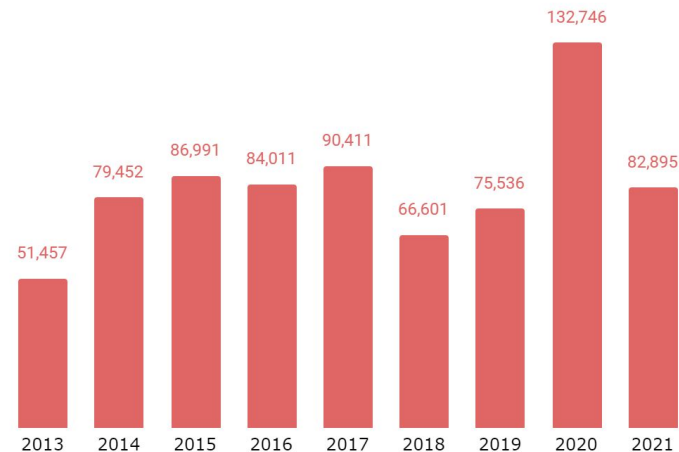
- Distributed over **65,000 lbs.** of food to **30 schools** in **8 districts**
- Processed food with over **200 volunteers**
- Hosted over **600 second graders** annually for “School Day at the CPA”
- Fed-Hock summer food bus
- Delivered about **5,000 apples** to **12 schools** annually for Apple Crunch Day
- Professional development trainings for cafeteria staff
- Hosted re-entry employment training in food processing
- Participated in CCMEP program for at-risk youth, employing individuals to assist with Farm to School processing



Donation Station

- Distributed **614,748 lbs.** of food, equaling **513,123 meals**
- Served **216,781** food insecure individuals
- Grew to serve **59 pantries** in **7** counties
- In 2020 alone, we **invested \$51,856** in our food system

Donation Station Pounds of Food Distributed



School and Community Gardens

- Managed **101** community garden plots
- Supported **12** school gardens
- Taught **607** lessons in school gardens
- Led **310** Discovery Kitchen educational cooking events
- Reached **8,991** individuals through Discovery Kitchen tasting tables, workshops, and recipes promoting local, seasonal food



Expanding Access

VEGGIE VAN

- Launched the Veggie Van!
- Distributed **3,866 lbs of food**
- Served **382** Veggie Van customers

PRODUCE PRESCRIPTIONS

In 2022...

- Purchasing, packing, and delivering **325 weekly shares of fresh produce**
- Partnering with **2 federally-qualified health centers**
- **5 counties in West Virginia, 4 counties in Ohio**

COUNTRY FRESH STOPS

- Distributed over **68,796 lbs.** of fresh produce
- Established and supplied **11 Country Fresh Stops**
- Served **6 counties**



Ability to Pivot for COVID Response



COVID-19 created challenges and opportunities for AAFN. Relationships, a track record of trust, and a willingness to pivot allowed the network to serve our constituencies without interruption.



In 2020, two initiatives were launched with healthcare and community partners: Rural Action's Produce Prescriptions, distributed through Federally Qualified Health Centers; and Community Food Initiatives' Veggie Van, a mobile market designed to increase food access in underserved communities.

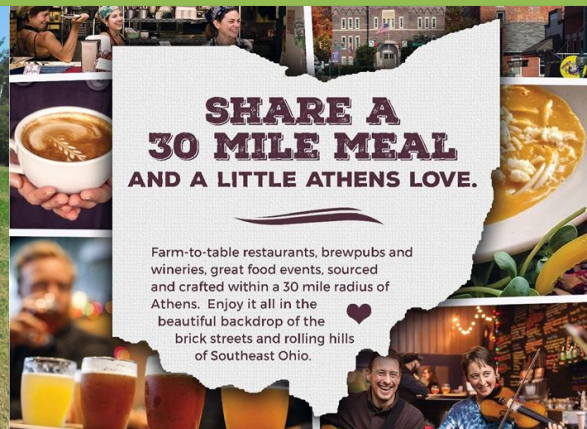
Collaboration is Key



The Appalachian Accessible Food Network continues to evolve and expand as a network of networks. No one stakeholder can do this work in isolation.

Working with other regional CAN members and funders is essential to strengthen networks. AAFN will continue to connect with like-minded organizations, agencies and institutions to build a just, local food economy.

Networks Nourish What's Next



Q&A

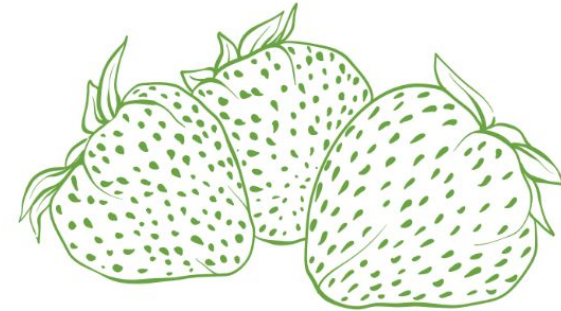
Questions about the AAFN
and collaborative work?

Links to Resources



Appalachian Accessible Food Network

- Rural Action
- ACEnet
- Community Food Initiatives



Thank You

