

NOFA-VT

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

Strategic Plan

2024-2030



When we began the process of writing a new strategic plan, it became clear to us that if we continued to do everything we do today—even if we did it all exceptionally well—not enough would be fundamentally different by 2030.

We are living in a time of great environmental and social disruption, and what we do in the next seven years matters. But hopelessness in the face of these challenges is a false narrative that has been fed to us, when really, we have the seeds for the solutions we need. Every day, by tending and protecting land and feeding our communities, Vermont's organic farmers and farmworkers, NOFA-VT members, and community leaders are nourishing those seeds and bringing us closer to the future we need.

This plan seeks to be a bridge from the world we have today to the future in which people and the planet flourish together. In addition to our existing core programs that are critical for supporting people to survive in the challenging conditions in which we're living now, we will add greater focus on working upstream, on building power from the ground up, and putting more time and resources toward efforts that create new systems enabling us all to thrive. Join us.

Mission

We promote organic practices to build an economically viable, ecologically sound, and socially just Vermont agricultural system that benefits all living things.

Guiding Values

Trust & integrity in everything we do.

Care & reciprocity between people and the planet.

Justice & wellbeing for all.

Vision

Vermont is home to thriving farms and agriculturally-rooted communities that support the long-term wellbeing of the earth and all its people.



How We Do Our Work

Relationships. We invest in relationships that build trust and connection to foster behaviors that move towards care, well-being, and social change.

Farmer and farmworker leadership. We value farmworker and farmers' leadership, knowledge, and voice, and seek their perspective to guide what we do and how we do it.

Land and community-based. We believe food and farming systems are key places where Vermonters can create environmental health and social well-being.

Build power. Our members, staff and allies draw on grassroots knowledge and organizing to make truly transformative change.

Collective action. We engage and collaborate with a wide range of people and organizations to work together to create the future in which we all thrive.

Adaptation and transformation. We pursue strategies for both adaptation (surviving in the systems we have now) and transformation (changing the underlying conditions and creating new systems that enable people and the planet to flourish).

Diversity. We celebrate and invest in social and ecological diversity, which lead to greater resilience.

Justice and repair. We understand the history of agriculture in this nation to be rooted in land theft and enslavement, and seek to actively work to repair these harms.

Vision and narrative. We share a collective, clearly articulated vision for a thriving future, challenging the dominant narratives of scarcity, commodification, consolidation and destruction.

Organizational health. We strive for strong internal systems and relationships that foster accountability, efficiency, transparency, equity, and trust, thereby increasing our impact.

Goal 1. Build power from the ground up to position organic food and farming as a foundational element of a thriving, just, climate-resilient future for all.



OBJECTIVE A. Organize people.

We need to grow the number of people involved in the movement for thriving farms and agriculturally-rooted communities. This work originates in the strategies of grassroots organizing and relationship building.

STRATEGIES

- i. Reinvigorate NOFA-VT's identity and practices as a member-led, people's organization.
- ii. Grow and diversify our membership.
- iii. Clarify and expand engagement and leadership opportunities for members.
- iv. Grow the capacity and skill of members to direct our work.
- v. Host community events and convene members to build power, share knowledge, and strengthen relationships.
- vi. Address the legacy of harms in our agricultural system by focusing on strategies that replace old systems with those rooted in equity.

OBJECTIVE B. Organize money.

We realize that those who currently benefit from an extractive, unsustainable, and unjust farm and food system have an extraordinary amount of money at hand to keep things going as they are and in their favor. Therefore, we are taking seriously the work of bringing resources to this work to ultimately build greater public will for change. Furthermore, we are working to bring coalition and philanthropic partners along with us in this work.

STRATEGIES

- i. Increase fundraising to support community-based solutions for farms and communities.
- ii. Assess our endowment and other organizational resources, create a plan to best use them to further our organizational goals, aligned with our values.
- iii. Influence more funders to support organizing people from the ground up to build real power and create transformational change in our food and farming systems—by NOFA-VT, our allies in Vermont, and across the United States.

OBJECTIVE C. Organize ideas.

As we work to organize people, common themes and patterns emerge across varying demographics, geographies, and life experiences. We know that by deeply understanding and tapping into each other's core values and self-interests, we not only gain clarity on the necessary campaigns for change that will have the greatest impact over time, we will also have the buy-in and energy from people that is needed to increasingly win these campaigns.

STRATEGIES

- i. Conduct regular listening and outreach to members, partners, and other stakeholders to inform our work.
- ii. Bring the needs and experiences of our members to state, national, and global arenas to catalyze broader transformative systems change.
- iii. Push back on the dominant narrative by focusing on storytelling rooted in our values for transformation and movement building.
- iv. Organize campaigns to win changes that benefit land, people, and communities.

Goal 2. Protect the health of the land, on which we all rely, by investing in strategies that durably increase ecological sustainability, viability, and equity within the food system.

OBJECTIVE A. Strengthen consumer demand for Vermont organic food.

STRATEGIES

- i. Develop and share compelling, research-informed, engaging narratives.
- ii. Support Vermonters' connection to the land their food comes from and the people who grow it.

OBJECTIVE B. Support the expansion of market access for all Vermont organic producers.

STRATEGIES

- iii. Support the viability, sustainability, and inclusivity of Vermont's direct-to-consumer markets.
- iv. Support expanded wholesale and institutional market access for Vermont organic producers.

OBJECTIVE C. Support the expansion of equitable access to Vermont organic food for consumers, while ensuring farmers are paid a fair price.

STRATEGIES

- i. Support Vermont households to access and afford more local and organic food directly from producers at farmers markets, farm stands, and CSAs.
- i. Support Vermont institutions to serve more local and organic food.

OBJECTIVE D. Ensure the quality, promote the relevance, and increase the accessibility of organic certification for Vermont producers and processors.

STRATEGIES

- ii. Provide high-integrity organic certification.
- iii. Advocate for the maintenance and improvement of organic standards.
- iv. Develop strategies to make organic farming and certification more accessible to historically excluded and/or underserved communities.

OBJECTIVE E. Support true farm viability.

STRATEGIES

- i. Provide technical assistance and resources focused on soil health, climate resilience, and ecological practices to increase ecosystem health.
- ii. Provide services that support farmers at all stages of business development in meeting their business and quality of life goals.
- iii. Advocate for state and federal policy changes that support increased viability of organic farms and equitable access to their food.
- iv. Increase social resilience through peer connectivity and mutual support.

Goal 3. Strengthen the vibrancy and responsiveness of our organization to best meet the needs of our membership and our staff.



OBJECTIVE A. Ensure our team is well-supported and resourced to achieve our collective goals.

STRATEGIES

- i. Ensure an appropriate staffing structure that reflects realistic workloads, and provides flexibility to be responsive to emergencies and unanticipated priorities
- ii. Provide opportunities for professional learning and skill development.
- iii. Increase cross-programmatic collaboration within our team for increased impact.
- iv. Cultivate an internal culture and programs that are consistent with our commitments to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- v. Foster a people-first human resources approach by designating HR function to a specific staff member(s) and by emphasizing transparency around HR issues, documenting policies and ensuring accountability.

OBJECTIVE B. Ensure nimble and robust core administrative systems for fundraising, finance, and operations.

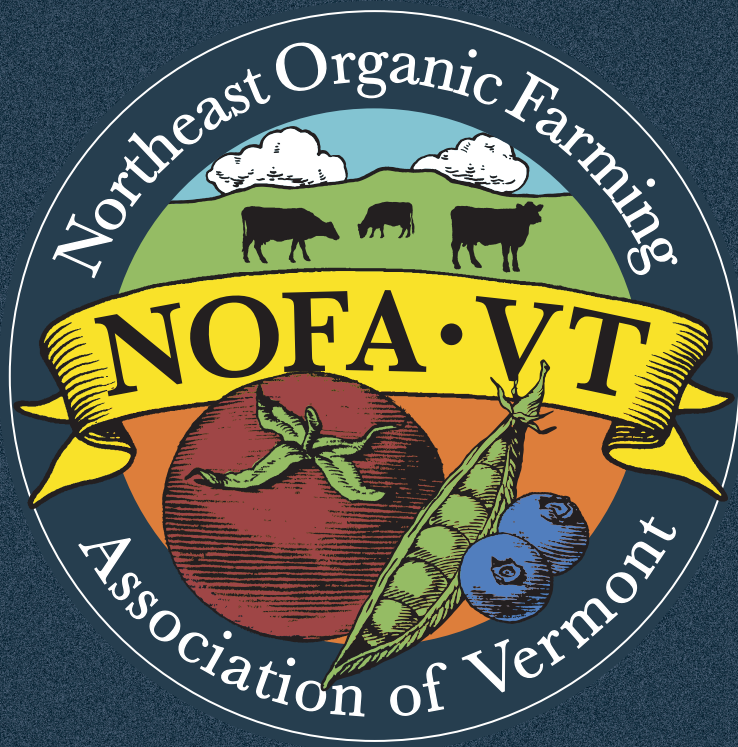
STRATEGIES

- i. Grow our unrestricted fundraising capacity to keep pace with our growth, allowing us to remain vibrant and be responsive to emerging needs.
- ii. Strengthen, streamline, and modernize our internal financial management, administrative, and operational systems.
- iii. Ensure adequate capacity and resources to staff the core administrative functions of the organization, prioritizing rightsizing the administrative staff to match growth in programs and services.

OBJECTIVE C. Ensure an active and inclusive board that has clarity of purpose and helps strengthen NOFA-VT's member and community engagement and leadership.

STRATEGIES

- i. Create a clear succession plan and governance process, continuing to center farmworker and farmers' leadership, knowledge, and voice.
- ii. Develop board members' understanding and capacity to serve as ambassadors of the organization to external partners.
- iii. Develop passionate and engaged board members in the work of building power for the organization's mission.



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