



San Diego Food System Alliance

Annual Report (2019)

Cultivating a healthy,
sustainable, and just food
system in San Diego County



Our Vision

We envision vibrant community food systems rooted in justice and sustainability, where everyone has equitable opportunity to produce, distribute, prepare, serve, and eat nutritional and culturally appropriate food.

In our vision, producers and food workers are treated fairly, sustainable and regenerative practices are prioritized, people are engaged, communities are empowered, and farms, fisheries, and food businesses are thriving and contributing to local economies.

Foreword

San Diego County is known as a popular food destination—home to bountiful farmers markets, small farms and fisheries, a vibrant restaurant and craft beer scene.

But for many who live and work here, there is a divide between this perception and the reality of our region. We face serious challenges that need to be addressed: a shrinking agriculture sector; barriers to marketing local food; underinvestment in the same neighborhoods decade after decade, which leads to persistent hunger and diet-related diseases.

Nationally, our food supply is heavily consolidated, contributing to climate change and loss of biodiversity. Structural inequities have kept marginalized communities—particularly black, indigenous, and people of color—from accessing healthy food or having the power to determine their food environments.

Meeting these challenges at home—and preparing for those on the horizon—will require San Diego County to take bold and coordinated action.

Coordinating action for a better food system

This year, the Alliance launched our greatest undertaking yet: San Diego County Food Vision 2030. Through research, community engagement, and broad public participation, we hope to paint an aspirational picture of a more resilient food system in San Diego County, and propose actionable strategies to get us there in ten years.

To kick off the project, the Alliance held 60 interviews with food system leaders across the County, from Pauma Valley to South Bay. We recruited a 17-member Steering Committee composed of leaders of diverse backgrounds and occupations, and have partnered with 8 local organizations serving San Diego’s most underinvested neighborhoods.

This process has unearthed many emotions, ideas, and aspirations. What seems to be the common thread—from our aging farmers to our youngest activists—is that if our region can embrace inclusion and commit to solving problems collectively, there is hope.

Preparing for the decade ahead

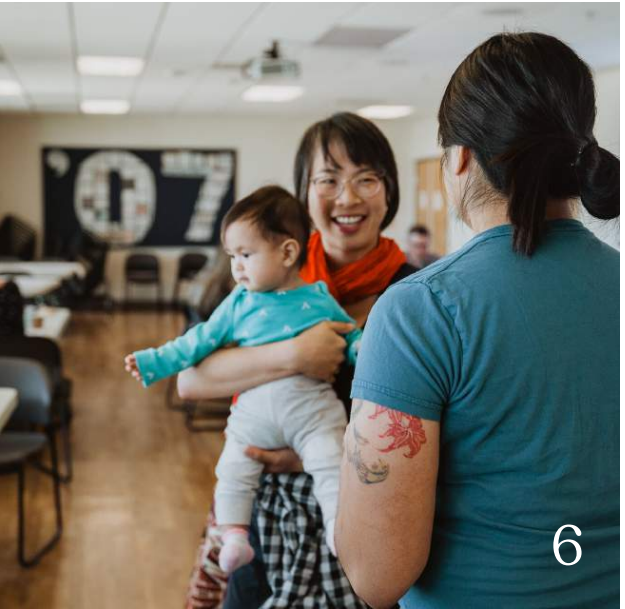
With plans to bring about real change in our food system by 2030, our staff, Leadership Council, and Board of Directors spent 2019 laying a strong foundation for the Alliance.

This year, we developed an Operating Strategy, filed for independent 501(c)3 status, and increased our capacity by tripling the size of our team. We expanded our reach, engaging more followers and subscribers than ever before through social media and our newsletter. Our food waste prevention programs yielded significant results in partnership with some of San Diego’s largest institutions, helping us gain national recognition. Most importantly, as an Alliance, we agreed to unequivocally center racial equity in our work. We hope to live up to our core value, Justice, by elevating the voices of those most impacted by systemic racism in our food system.

The need for food system transformation has never been more substantiated. The Alliance believes San Diego County can be a model for health, sustainability, and justice through our food system. But change, like food, is only made possible through an ecosystem—with the active cooperation of all parts.

We are grateful for everything this year has brought us and thank our community for sharing in our growth.

Elly Brown
Executive Director



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Promoting Collaboration

We promote cross-sector collaboration to create impactful and lasting change in the food system.

150 organizations
2,000 individuals
6 Working Groups & Task Forces
40 Leadership Council members

GROWING OUR NETWORK

This year, the Alliance actively engaged well over 2,000 community members and 150 organizations representing various sectors across the food system, through our Leadership Council, Working Groups, Task Forces, Board of Directors, Steering Committee, events, and programs.

EXPANDING OUR LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

In 2019, the Alliance welcomed new organizations to its 40-person Leadership Council, including Mid-City CAN (community collaborative), Healthy Day Partners (farm-to-school advocate), and Secret Table (immersive culinary experiences).

COMMITMENT TO CENTERING EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

In 2019, the Alliance began to prioritize Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion organization-wide (p.14). Network members were invited to join this ongoing journey through group educational experiences and shared resources.



The Alliance convenes six working groups and task forces quarterly, in the following areas: Carbon Farming, Good Food Purchasing, Healthy Food Access, Reducing Barriers to Farming, Urban Agriculture, and Wasted Food Prevention & Recovery



"My position on the Alliance Leadership Council made me more aware of the multitude of organizations doing good work around San Diego's local food system—from programs to policy. I no longer felt alone in this fight. And hearing about other organizations' efforts opened my eyes to possibilities for true collaboration. Suddenly, there were people to look toward, admire, and work alongside. This in itself was a game-changer for me and for my nonprofit Healthy Day Partners."

—Mim Michelove, CEO/President, Healthy Day Partners



Influencing Policy

We leverage our network to inform and advance equitable food system policies.

ENCOURAGING GOOD FOOD PURCHASING IN INSTITUTIONS

The Alliance successfully recruited the Escondido Union School District to the national Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP). This program provides a metric-based framework that encourages large institutions to use their buying power to advance five core values: local economies, environmental sustainability, valued workforce, animal welfare, and nutrition.

EUSD will be the first institution in San Diego County to participate in GFPP and will complete its baseline assessment in 2020. We hope to continue encouraging San Diego institutions to adopt procurement models that support food system values.

GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

The Alliance is committed to stepping up our advocacy. Priorities for 2019 included relationship-building with elected officials, introducing them to Food Vision 2030 (p.11), engaging candidates for public office in conversation about food system topics, and increasing our capacity to be a go-to resource for food policy matters in the San Diego region.

ADVOCATING FOR MICROENTERPRISES AND AN INCLUSIVE FOOD ECONOMY

We teamed up with members of the National City community and the Kitchenistas of Olivewood Garden to advocate for AB-626/377, a state law that, if opted in by the County of San Diego, could help create more inclusive food economies by protecting and legitimizing micro-entrepreneur home cooks (MEHKOs). Often, MEHKOs are immigrant women filling a cultural gap in their local food scene, and folks who work other primary jobs but supplement incomes with their cooking.

While the City and County continue to stall on adopting AB-626/377, we know community support is strong and voices were heard.



The Alliance facilitated Q&As with County Board of Supervisor candidates on their positions regarding food system issues

A blog post on a mother-daughter duo who sees legitimizing micro-enterprise home kitchens as an important way of empowering immigrants



"Since partnering with the San Diego Food System Alliance, we have confidently donated surplus food that would otherwise be wasted. Instead of filling trash cans, we are filling hungry stomachs. Thank you for the support and vision to do what we all should have done long ago."

—Chef Robert Lippman, Sous Chef, Viejas Casino & Resort



Catalyzing Transformation

We increase community-level awareness, engagement, and programming in the food system.

SMART KITCHENS SAN DIEGO

15 sites

249,783 pounds of food waste prevented

34% reduction in wasted food

Our technical assistance program, Smart Kitchens San Diego, continues to support 15 of San Diego's largest institutions with significantly reducing their food waste through source reduction and prepared food donation. We are proud of all staff at each site who have made this collective achievement possible!

SAVE THE FOOD, SAN DIEGO! CONSUMER EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

2.9 million impressions since 2017

Through our county-wide food waste awareness campaign, the Alliance provides education to residents about the impact of food wasted at the household level. The goal of our educational efforts is to inspire consumers to realize that everyone has a part to play in reducing wasted food. Small changes in our individual attitudes, behaviors, consumption, and grocery shopping habits can go a long way.

SAVE THE FOOD, SAN DIEGO! ECOCHALLENGE

6 sites

500 participants registered

The Alliance is enabling five major institutions—SDG&E, Qualcomm, CSU San Marcos, University of San Diego, and City of Chula Vista—to engage their staff, faculty, students, and employees in various food waste challenges. Participants track their waste, share progress, and earn points for reduction. So far, over 500 San Diegans have signed up to fight food waste!



The Alliance published a Prepared Food Donation Case Study based on Smart Kitchens San Diego results and findings. It yielded positive responses from readers nationwide!

San Diego County Food Vision 2030

In June 2019, we launched San Diego County Food Vision 2030, a ten-year strategic plan that will guide collective action toward a healthy, sustainable, and just food system in our region.

Food Vision 2030 Steering Committee

- Naomi Billups**
County of San Diego, Health & Human Services Agency
- Anahid Brakke**
San Diego Hunger Coalition
- Belen Hernandez**
Mid-City CAN

- Eric Larson**
San Diego County Farm Bureau (retired)
- Herminia Ledesma**
Farm Worker CARE Coalition (Vista Community Clinic)
- Connor Magee**
Climate Science Alliance
- Debbie McKeon**
San Diego Grantmakers
- Blanca Melendrez**
UC San Diego Center for Community Health

- Diane Moss**
Project New Village
- Derrick Robinson**
Center on Policy Initiatives
- Chuck Samuelson**
Kitchens for Good
- Theresa Talley**
California Sea Grant, Scripps Institution of Oceanography
- Jena Thompson Meredith**
The Conservation Fund

- Eduardo Velasquez**
San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation
- Domingo Vigil**
County of San Diego, Land Use & Environment Group
- Richard Winkler**
San Diego Food System Alliance Board, Victory Gardens San Diego

What was achieved in the first year



PLANNING *Drafted project intentions, strategy, and scope; recruited Steering Committee members*

RESEARCH (DATA)

Gathered and synthesized recent and historical food system data, using sources ranging from locally to federally gathered reports

RESEARCH (INTERVIEWS)

Conducted interviews with 50+ local food system experts

STEERING COMMITTEE

Convened first Steering Committee meeting

With the launch of Food Vision 2030, the Alliance seeks to imagine a more equitable and resilient food system for all San Diegans.

2019: Planning, research, and building relationships

In the first phase of Food Vision 2030, the Alliance conducted extensive research on San Diego County's current food system by examining data and interviewing numerous local food system experts. We also invested time and energy into building relationships with San Diego County's vast community of food system workers and advocates, to form a strong foundation for community engagement in 2020.



ENGAGEMENT *Initiate Community Partnerships*

2020: Community engagement and drafting the plan

In 2020, Food Vision 2030 will focus heavily on community engagement. We have created an inclusive process that engages the full community, including people who produce, prepare, distribute, serve, and eat food. We seek to build a shared vision – one that includes voices from the public, private, and philanthropic sectors, in addition to community members, particularly those most affected by inequities in the food system. The process will culminate in December 2020 with the publication of a report, interactive website, and robust plan for implementation from 2021-2030.



Alliance Associate Director Sona Desai and Research Director Scott Sawyer interview Ellee Igoo of Solidarity Farms in Pauma Valley, CA, on food production in San Diego County



Food Vision 2030 data, examining topics ranging from food production to urban food access is being released on our website, sdfoodvision2030.org



Nurturing Our Organization

Operating Strategy

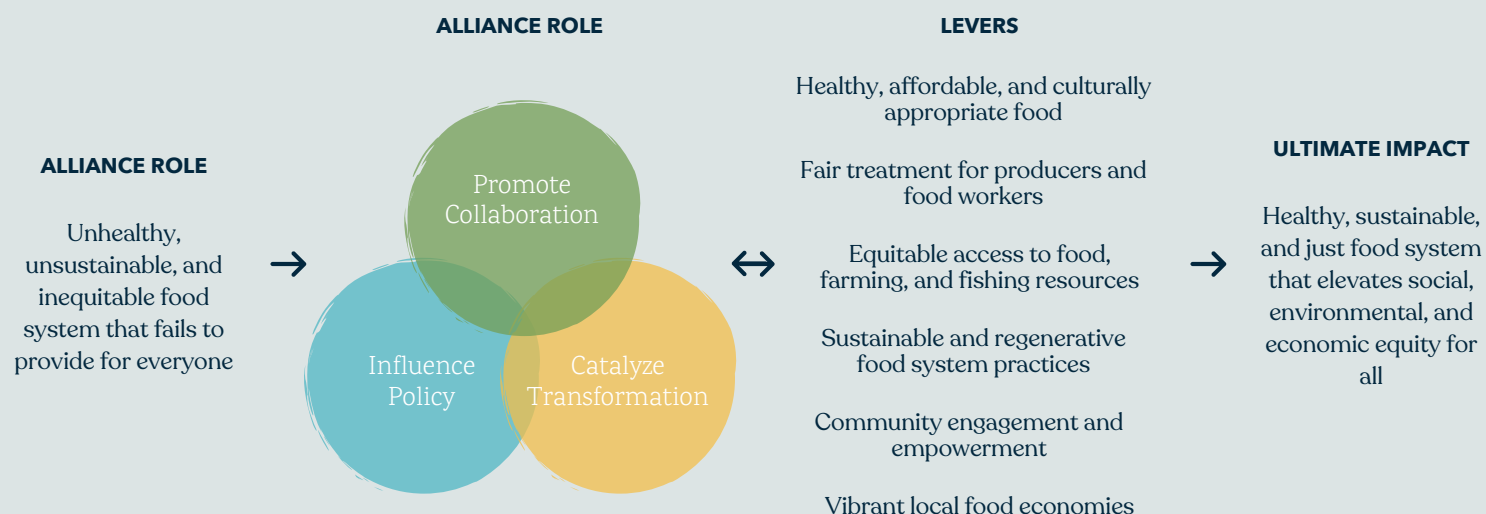
NEW OPERATING STRATEGY

This year, we rewrote our Operating Strategy and brought clarity to our Mission, Vision, Values, and Theory of Change. As we've grown, we've learned that making time for visioning and strategic planning is critical to keeping our network engaged, our team productive, and our work intentional.

INDEPENDENT NONPROFIT FILING

The Alliance is grateful to have been a fiscal project of Leah's Pantry for the last several years. In 2019 we filed to become our own independent 501(c)3, and look forward to the opportunities this will bring us in 2020.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE



Committing to Racial Equity

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION INITIATIVE WITH THE JUSTICE COLLECTIVE

In Fall 2019, the Alliance launched a 6-month Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiative in partnership with social impact consultancy The Justice Collective. We thank the California Endowment for funding this critical element of our work!

With the Justice Collective's guidance and facilitation, the Alliance carried out an organizational assessment, formed an EDI committee, completed a roadmapping exercise, and hosted a full-day EDI learning experience for the Alliance network.

A PIVOTAL DAY: EDI RETREAT

In October, 50 members of the Alliance staff, Board, and Leadership Council spent a day together unpacking Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. We are proud of our network for choosing to be vulnerable, sharing personal experiences, asking questions, and trying on multiple perspectives.

The Alliance closed the day with broad agreement to put racial equity at the center of our work.



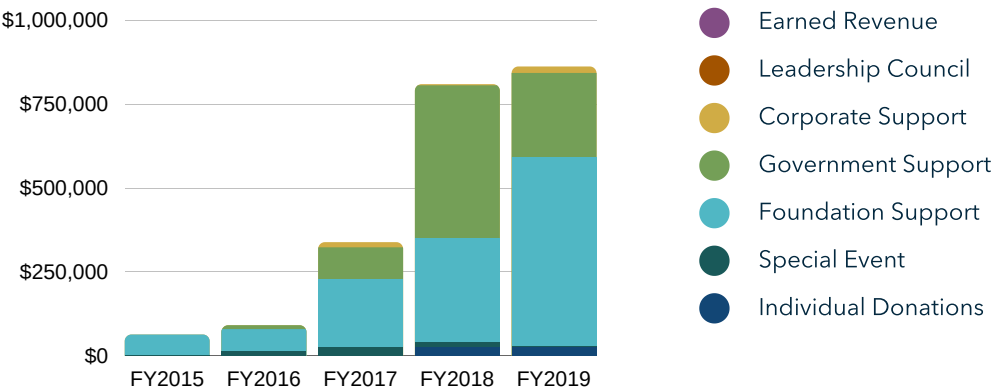
We developed a set of Community Agreements for facilitating more equitable and inclusive conversations



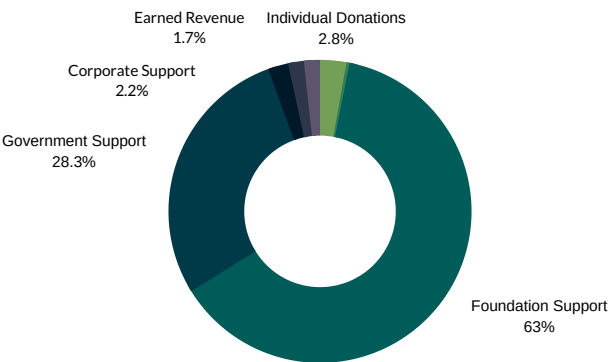
Shaniece Alexander of The Justice Collective leads the Alliance in learning about Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Financials

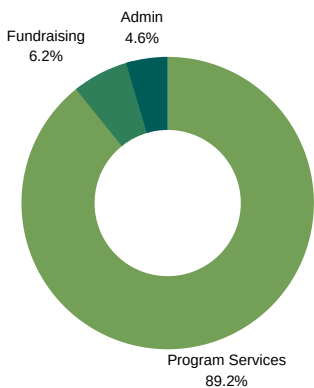
Revenue Growth (FY2015-FY2019)



FY2019 Revenue: \$891,298



FY2019 Expenses: \$880,192



Communications & Reach

2,800 subscribers

Email Newsletter

27.5%

Unique Open Rate

19.8%

Industry Average

2,100 followers

Facebook

1,200 followers

Instagram

400 followers

Twitter

400 followers

LinkedIn



Local press coverage of Alliance events and programs

Staff



Elly Brown
Executive Director



Margaret Chiu
Communications &
Events Associate



Sona Desai
Associate Director



Sarah Feteih
Program Coordinator,
Wasted Food
Prevention



Emilio Flores
Development Manager



Geertje Grootenhuis
Program Manager,
Wasted Food
Prevention



Tida Infahsaeng
Senior Policy Associate



Rachel Oporto
Partnerships &
Operations Associate



Scott Sawyer
Research Director

Board of Directors



Mary Abad
BBVA Compass



Vanessa Moore
San Diego Food Bank



Katie Stokes
Edible San Diego



Jena Thompson
Meredith
The Conservation Fund



Richard Winkler
Victory Gardens San
Diego

Leadership Council

CHAIR

Karen Melvin
Formerly Department of Agriculture,
Weights and Measures (retired)

VICE CHAIR

Chuck Samuelson
Kitchens for Good, Founder

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Darcy Cook
Berry Good Food Foundation

Trish Watlington
Farm to Fork San Diego

Janice Luna Reynoso
Mundo Gardens

Nita Gilson
Produce Good

Diane Moss
Project New Village

Pablo Fernandez
Secret Table

FOOD SECURITY

Alicia Saake
Feeding San Diego

Lindsey Seegers
Kitchens for Good

Henok Getaneh
Mid-City CAN

Vanessa Moore
San Diego Food Bank

Anahid Brakke
San Diego Hunger Coalition

EDUCATION

Mim Michelove
Healthy Day Partners

Claire Groebner
Olivewood Gardens & Learning
Center

GOVERNMENT

Domingo Vigil
County of San Diego, Land Use &
Environment Group

Naomi Billups
County of San Diego, Health &
Human Services Agency

MEDIA

Katie Stokes
Edible San Diego

PRODUCTION

Hannah Gbeh
San Diego County Farm Bureau

Richard Winkler
Victory Gardens San Diego

Stepheni Norton
W.D. Dickinson

PROCESSING

André Nantkes
A.B. Jones & Co.

Adam Hiner
Boochcraft

DISTRIBUTION

Ron Troyano
Alchemy San Diego

Iana Castro
Brightside Produce

INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Dwight Detter
Healy Vigderson
Karen Melvin
Dr. Pascale Joassart-Marcelli

Funders

We are grateful to our generous supporters for making this work possible!

This list reflects funders who donated over \$1,000 in 2019.

GRANTS

Angell Foundation
Beyster Foundation for Enterprise Development
CalRecycle/California Climate Investments
County of San Diego Community Enhancement Program
County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency
Dr. Bronner’s Family Foundation
Food 4 Less/Ralphs/Kroger Foundation
Kaiser Permanente Southern California Fund
Kasperick Foundation
Leichtag Foundation
Moxie Foundation
Nordson Corporation
Panta Rhea Foundation
Parker Foundation
Price Philanthropies Foundation
SDG&E Environmental Champions
The California Endowment
The San Diego Foundation - Anonymous Donor Fund
The San Diego Foundation - Hervey Family Fund

FOOD VISION 2030 CORPORATE SPONSORS

Aetna Better Health of California
RMG Recycling
SDG&E
Specialty Produce

And thank you to our Leadership Council members and countless individuals for their contributions!





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