



# 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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"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



# 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.

## **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.

## **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).



*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*







# 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**

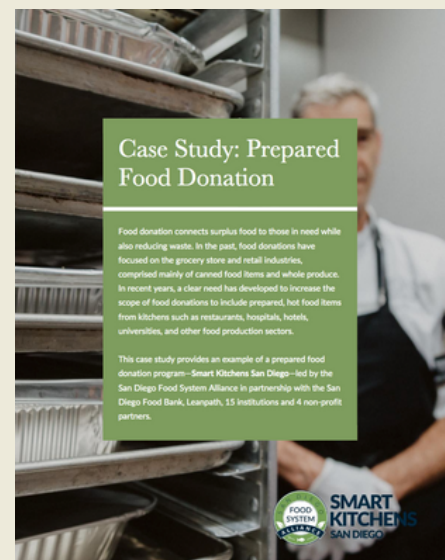
Through our county-wide food waste awareness campaign, the Alliance provides education to residents about the impact of food wasted at the household level. The goal of our educational efforts is to inspire consumers to realize that everyone has a part to play in reducing wasted food. Small changes in 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

## What was achieved in the first year

2019

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

Nov

**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.

**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 &amp; Environment Group

**Richard Winkler**

San Diego Food System Alliance Board, Victory Gardens San Diego

2020  
Dec Jan

**ENGAGEMENT** *Initiate Community Partnerships*

Alliance Associate Director Sona Desai and Research Director Scott Sawyer interview Ellee Igoe 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](http://sdfoodvision2030.org)

## 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.





# Nurturing Our Organization

## Operating Strategy

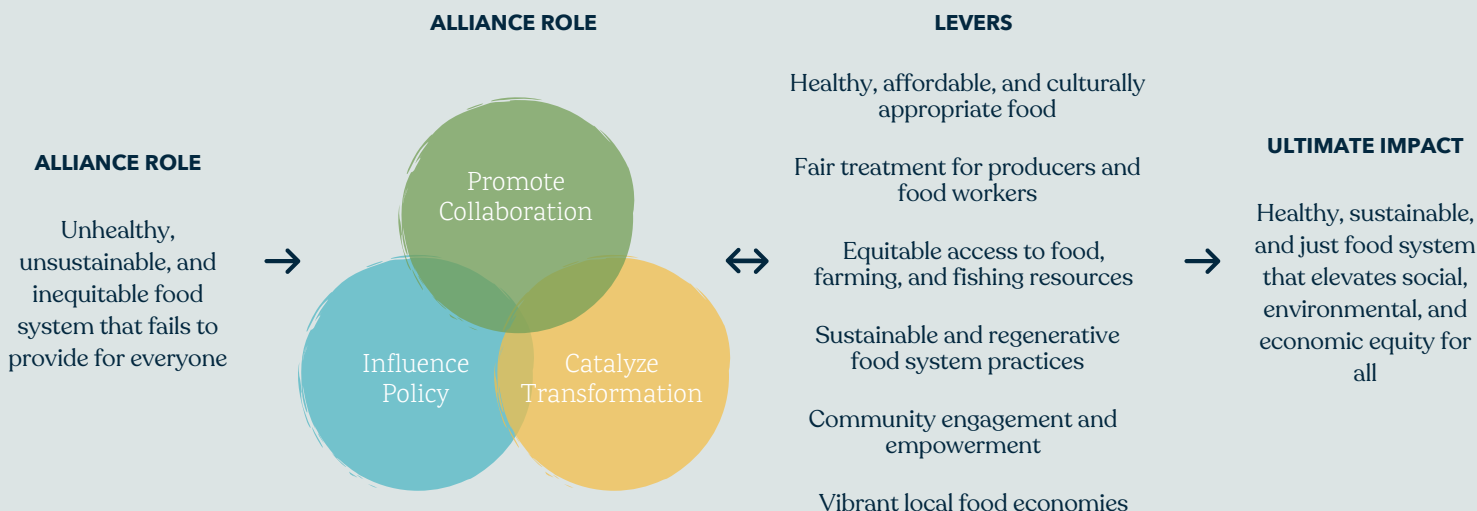
### NEW OPERATING STRATEGY

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*

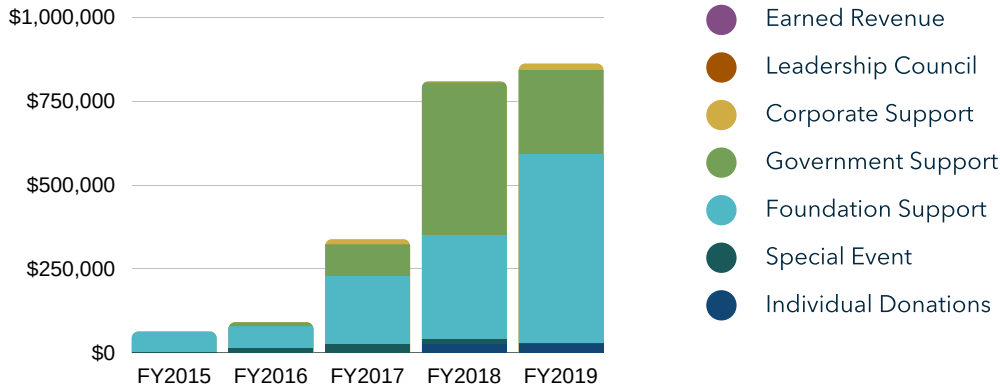


*Shaniece Alexander of The Justice Collective leads the Alliance in learning about Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion*

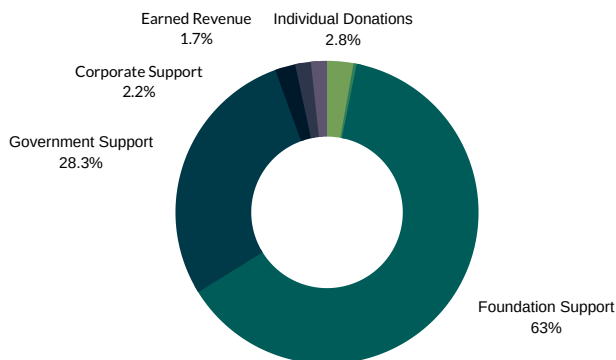


# Financials

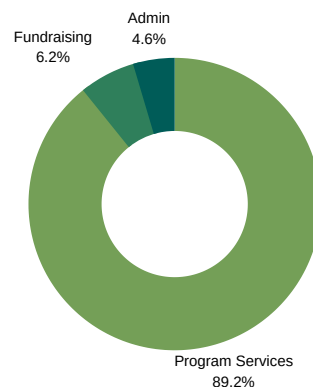
## Revenue Growth (FY2015-FY2019)



## 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

FOOD & COOKING

Tuna Harbor fish market celebrates city's fishing heritage, local catch



## San Diego Food System Alliance and Ralphs teaming up on food waste

Posted: September 4, 2019

Updated: 7:20 PM by KUSI Newsroom

By GREG MORAN  
MAY 18, 2019 | 4:03 PM

DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO -- It's not sustainable food activists: find a way to reduce food waste, create and the local commercial fishing industry.



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

## 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

## ENVIRONMENT

### **Tyla Montgomery**

Inika Small Earth

## EDUCATION

### **Mim Michelove**

Healthy Day Partners

### **Claire Groebner**

Olivewood Gardens & Learning  
Center

## PROCESSING

### **André Nantkes**

A.B. Jones & Co.

### **Adam Hiner**

Boochcraft

## HEALTH

### **Nora Stewart**

Community Health Improvement  
Partners

### **Adrienne Markworth**

Leah's Pantry

### **Elle Mari**

UCSD Center for Community Health

### **Sadie Clements**

UC San Diego Health Nutrition  
Services

## GOVERNMENT

### **Domingo Vigil**

County of San Diego, Land Use &  
Environment Group

### **Naomi Billups**

County of San Diego, Health &  
Human Services Agency

## 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!







[WWW.SDFSA.ORG](http://WWW.SDFSA.ORG)  
[@SDFOODSYS](https://www.instagram.com/sdfoodsfs)

