

# SONOMA COUNTY FOOD SYSTEM ALLIANCE

101 Morris Street | Sebastopol, California 95472



Dear ally,

The last decade has seen the rise of the “food movement” in the United States, particularly in California. While we all may be more aware of what we eat or where it comes from, we may not be aware of an important coalition of organizations working in our own backyard to leverage the power of food system change as a vehicle for building community, improving public health and individual wellbeing, stimulating our local economy, stewarding natural resources, and promoting social equity. That coalition is the [Sonoma County Food System Alliance \(SCFSA\)](#), and we would like to introduce you to our work and invite your financial support.

The SCFSA is a group of diverse community stakeholders including food producers and distributors, food security organizations, public health advocates, and other community leaders working to improve our food system through community engagement and collective action. Convened through a partnership between [Ag Innovations](#) and the [County of Sonoma](#) in 2009, the Alliance is a powerful tool to bring our community together to target food system issues with collective wisdom leading to effective solutions.

In building their strategy for action, the SCFSA convened the Sonoma County [Food Forum](#) in early 2011. Over 300 experts, farmers, food producers and retailers, activists, residents, and elected officials gathered to share their challenges and their dreams for improving our local food system. The Food Forum Report led to the subsequent [Community Food Assessment](#) and development of the [Healthy and Sustainable Food Action Plan \(FAP\)](#) – a comprehensive blueprint with a shared vision and goals for our local food system. The FAP has been adopted by the County, and 7 city governments as its formal vision for the future of the local food system.

Since the release of the FAP, the Alliance has been hard at work leveraging the endorsements and involvement from local government and business to build programs, policies and strategies for enhancing our agricultural and natural resources, stimulating the economic vitality of our food sector, encouraging healthier eating (particularly among our most vulnerable populations), and addressing social equity issues that cause hunger and food insecurity in our community.

The staff support to enable this work has been provided by Ag Innovations, a Sebastopol-based nonprofit facilitation firm that has been working throughout California since 2000 to convene community leaders to improve regional food systems and tackle the biggest issues facing California’s ag and food systems (e.g., food safety, water, farmworker housing, ag land loss, etc.).

**Historically, funding for this work has come from the County of Sonoma and the US Department of Agriculture, although current funding is due to expire later this year – hence, this appeal to you now.**

The SCFSA is the only group of its kind in Sonoma County. Members volunteer their time for this important and necessary work. Ongoing expenses are for facilitation and staffing to support productive meetings, coordinated action, and fluid communications. A modest annual budget of \$25,000 enables this support to continue and allows the Alliance to continue to build upon the great work done to date in improving our local food system.

The SCFSA has leveraged more than \$400,000 in past grants, contracts, and community support – a testament to the tremendous benefit that a coalition of this nature offers a community. These funds have enabled the creation of the Food Action Plan, production of public forums to connect farmers and consumers, and much more.

**We are asking local businesses for sponsorships of up to \$5,000 for the Food System Alliance. Your support will enable the group to continue its important collaborative work in fulfilling the vision and aspirations of our community for a healthier and more sustainable food system.**

We thank you in advance for your consideration of this request and we look forward to hearing your hopes and dreams for our local food system. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions, concerns, suggestions, or need for further information about this vitally important community endeavor.

With gratitude and appreciation for your consideration,

Members of the Sonoma County Food System Alliance

# Sonoma County Food System Alliance

## INITIATIVES & ACTIVITIES



### PUBLICATIONS

[Healthy & Sustainable Food Action Plan](#)  
[Sonoma County Community Food Assessment](#)  
[Food Forum Report to the Community](#)  
[Food Action Plan Webinar](#)  
[Healthy Eating Forum Report](#)  
Farm to Institution, [School Gardens Survey](#)  
Farm to Institution, [Local Produce Survey](#)

### COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

[A Portrait of Sonoma County](#) (leadership team)  
[Health Action Economic Wellness Operations Team](#)  
[Sonoma County Hunger Index](#) (forum, committee)  
[California Food Policy Council](#), Roots of Change  
[Our Food System](#), KRCB  
[Sustainable North Bay](#) Festival Foods Working Group  
Sonoma County Farmer Needs Assessment, [Small Business Development Center \(SBDC\)](#)

### INITIATIVES & RESULTS

Developed in 2012, the Food Action Plan is a road map with a shared community vision for our local food system. The Food Action Plan (FAP) calls out 11 broad goals for food system improvement in 4 action areas (Pillars).

#### FOOD ACTION PLAN INITIATIVES & FORUMS

##### Agriculture & Natural Resources

- [Growing our Farms Summit](#) to explore ag land preservation, connecting emerging farmers with agricultural leaders in April 2015 (~100 select leaders)
- Supported 4 proposals - AB 551 Urban Ag Zones, affirmative easements, ag advisory group, farmer needs assessment

##### Economic Vitality

- Created the "10 in 10" framework; shifting 10% of purchasing to local products in 10 years
- Event: Food system workshop at the [Invest Local Conference](#)
- Event: FAP action phase at the [2013 Sustainable Enterprise Conference](#) and Sessions in 2014, [Session 1](#) | [Session 2](#)

##### Healthy Eating

- Event: [Healthy Eating Forum](#) in September 2013 (~100 select leaders)
- Project: Healthy retail pilot program

##### Social Equity

- Co-hosted [Sonoma County Hunger Index Forum](#) with the collaborative team to co-lead process design, event planning and execution (~250 select leaders)

#### FOOD ACTION PLAN ENDORSEMENT STRATEGY

- Leveraged [~400 endorsements](#) from local organizations, businesses, individuals, and city governments
- FAP adopted as countywide vision for our local food system by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
- Resolutions adopted by the cities of Healdsburg, Petaluma, Sebastopol, Sonoma, Cloverdale, Windsor, Rohnert Park

#### ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS

- Established website with mechanism for [Food Action Plan endorsement](#) and [community engagement](#)
- Produced newsletter in partnership with Sonoma County Go Local • [Newsletter #1](#) • [Newsletter #2](#)
- Grew stakeholder network from 50 to 900+