



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE REGIONAL MEMBER (FARM) POLICY COMMITTEE

2023 TO 2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

Approved April 14, 2023

FARM's Mission

To support development of long-term regional direction and collaboration toward a more resilient, secure, equitable, connected food and farm economy (food system) across Metropolitan Washington's urban, suburban and rural communities to provide more of the region's food needs.

To further this mission, FARM prioritizes:

- Improving food security in the region
- Supporting Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and small farmers
- Focusing FARM's work on farmland preservation *and* access, land use regulations, environmental sustainability, regional food system infrastructure, and resilience
- Leveraging procurement to support equity and the region's food and farm economy
- Improving and communicating regional food system data and leading practices.

We deliver on our mission when:

- Local governments, policymakers, and communities are informed about leading practices, trends, and legislation to improve food system resilience and equity.
- We are communicating with state and federal staff and policymakers about the policies and investments needed to achieve FARM's mission and priorities.
- FARM's priorities are widely embraced as regional priorities and strategic connections to schools and education are highlighted and further developed.

Our Actions

To deliver on our mission in 2023 and 2024, we will:

- Reflect on the pandemic to understand what government did during COVID-19 to successfully support food security and food system resilience, by:
 - Evaluating select policies, programs, and initiatives need to be made permanent or brought back to "put food first."^{1,2}

¹ FARM includes in this evaluation schools, gardening and food education, food as medicine, innovative production methods, Zoning and regulatory changes, regional food system infrastructure, farmers markets, investments in healthy food access, and other priorities raised in the Strategic Planning meeting.

² Future programming on FARM priorities and these issues should be prioritized by the FARM Policy Committee and in its Work Groups as member and staff time and capacity allow.

- Identifying where local governments hold all decision-making authority and opportunities for greater impact with regional action.
- Continuing to work with state-level officials, policymakers, and other collaborators on priorities.
- Providing education on Farm Bill Reauthorization and reaching out to Congress as a voice for Metropolitan Washington.
- Strengthening the region’s relationship with the U.S. Department of Agriculture
 - Updating and communicating the [Healthy Food Access Policy Compendium for Metropolitan Washington](#) to assist with this effort.
- Maximizing the work and investment of FARM’s Work Groups by providing occasional learning opportunities, including ways to act on any research recommendations.
- Facilitating member tours to build regional expertise, identity, and commitment to investments in FARM’s priorities.
- Providing open networking opportunities and celebrating our region’s food system.
- Leveraging external funding to complement COG member investment in FARM to increase capacity and accelerate action.
- Continuing to share learnings from the Food and Water Resilience Project (planning for food security in disasters).
- Strategically collaborating across COG Committees and with other partners (i.e. the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council) to elevate, recognize, and participate in events like Hunger Action Month, Farmers Market Week, and Chesapeake Bay Awareness Month, etc.
- Sharing FARM’s mission and progress with regional and national audiences on select occasions.

Work Groups

FARM’s Work Groups will conduct their own planning to determine a set of actions and milestones to advance FARM’s mission, priorities, and strategic plan objectives.

Staff Actions

In support of FARM’s mission, priorities, and strategic plan priorities in 2023 and 2024, we will:

- Support coordination and implementation of this strategic plan.
- Support the implementation of the regional Food and Water Resilience Project in partnership with DC’s Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, RESF-5, and RESF-6/11
- Work with a range of local and regional partners to support the next phase of improvements and maintenance to the NCR GDX emergency food resources GIS layer.
- Complete, thoroughly vet, and support the release of an Emergency Preparedness Guide for Food Pantries; building off of the 2022 *DMV Food Security Emergency Playbook* from Capital Area Food Bank and Connected DMV

More Information

Please access FARM’s webpage: <https://www.mwcog.org/committees/food-and-agriculture-regional-member-policy-committee-farm-/>