



THE FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE VISION BOARD TOOLKIT



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MARY ANN SWETLAND
CENTER FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

INTRODUCTION

OUR STORY

The Food Systems Change Vision Board tool was developed by the [Modeling the Future of Food in Your Neighborhood Study](#) (henceforth referred to as foodNEST 2.0), a project of the Mary Ann Swetland Center for Environmental Health at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. foodNEST 2.0 brings together researchers and community leaders working to unpack the complexity and deeply rooted forces structuring our local food system. Greater Cleveland has been at the forefront of food systems innovation through local efforts to advance urban farming, community gardening, fruit and vegetable incentive programming, and food retail development. These efforts, however, have not shifted inequitable trends related to economic opportunity, food security, affordable food access, and community health. We came together as a collaborative with a belief that shifting the status quo will require a new way of both *thinking* and *doing* for system transformation.

In November 2020, the collaborative released the [Menu of Actions](#) toolkit, which was developed for residents, food retailers, community leaders, and elected officials working to mobilize toward community food security through efforts that advance fair access to fresh and healthy foods as well as financial strength within households. It was designed for people living and working in historically redlined urban neighborhoods. Like the process used to form the Menu of Actions, it is intended to be used by people coming together to co-create a vision for the future and build the trust needed to realize change.

The Food Systems Change Vision Board builds on the commonly used “**Business Model Canvas**,” a tool for developing and testing entrepreneurial innovations. We looked to the field of entrepreneurship to guide the fellowship because of its focus on disrupting the status quo, which aligned with our focus on disruptive strategies for shifting food system dynamics. Users can learn more about these concepts and strategies by reviewing our [Menu of Actions for Community Driven Food Systems Change](#), which is a collection of insights and proposed actions intended to be used together to create a larger impact on systems that influence local food systems.

One approach to realize the actions identified in the Menu of Actions was the launch of the Food Systems Change Fellowship in February 2021. The intent of the six-month fellowship is to provide support for local leaders to develop and validate their ideas for community-driven food systems change. The fellowship connects local leaders with key partners and provides a “test kitchen” for incubating visions for changed related to leverage points identified in the Menu of Actions.

A key qualification to participate in the fellowship is passion and creativity for food systems change combined with openness to trial new ideas while getting feedback from others. The process of trial and feedback occurs during a series of workshops and meetings with mentors. The fellowship is structured around the Food Systems Change Vision Board that serves as a decision support tool to build out a transformation proposition to advance **nutrition equity**. This tool is used in conjunction with other training and support throughout the fellowship and is seen as a platform that will evolve throughout the course of refining the fellows’ transformation proposition.

Nutrition equity is a state of having freedom, agency, and dignity in food traditions resulting in people and communities healthy in body, mind, and spirit. Expected outcomes of nutrition equity include economic opportunity, food security, and fair access to fresh and healthy food.

The **Business Model Canvas** was developed by Alexander Osterwalder, a Swiss business theorist and entrepreneur as a part of his PhD research. This strategic management template uses a building block concept to help businesses to describe, design and analyze their business models.

WHO WE ARE

INVESTIGATORS

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FUNDERS

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RESEARCH TEAM

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WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE VISION BOARD?

The Food Systems Change Vision Board serves multiple purposes that, as a whole, provide insights that inform the **transformation proposition**, which represents the change being offered to the community and the unique skills and talents of the implementing team.

The Vision Board is intended to be used as part of an iterative process in which the user is consistently reflecting, adapting, and evolving the concepts behind their vision and identifying the resources needed to support implementation of their vision for food systems change. It should be revised regularly to document the evolution of ideas, resources, connections, and impact related to their vision. This process builds confidence in the user when communicating their vision of food systems change and when planning next steps that will lead to lasting impact on nutrition equity in their community.

IDEA GENERATION

This vision board walks users through a series of questions to promote critical thinking about their vision for change. By focusing on key components of a successful idea, the user develops a more articulated description of the nutrition equity change they intend to create.

IDENTIFICATION OF KEY AUDIENCES FOR PARTNERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

Authentic partnerships and community engagement is needed to create change and disrupt the status quo. This vision board helps users consider who or what entities may serve as collaborators, competition, and the best channels for engaging others in their vision.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM AND PROPOSED SOLUTION

In the vision board, problem identification is again framed through intentional questions designed to explore the relationship between the proposed vision and how it can solve a problem that is experienced by the stakeholders the user intends to serve. The solution should aim to advance nutrition equity within a community.

BUILD CONNECTIONS TO OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE SYSTEM

The vision board lays out the components necessary to ignite change towards nutrition equity in a community. By visualizing these components in a holistic way, the user is able to take a high-level look at how each piece interacts with one another and can balance or counterbalance the goals and intentions of the user's vision.

WHO SHOULD USE THE FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE VISION BOARD?

The Food Systems Change Vision Board was uniquely designed for leaders with an idea or vision centered on advancing nutrition equity. When utilized within the Food Systems Change Fellowship, users were resident leaders who played many roles in their community such as activist, chef, urban farmer, teacher, community organizer, and business owner. The common thread that tied these individuals together was their commitment to advancing nutrition equity in their communities.

Some examples of individuals or entities that may benefit from utilizing this tool in their planning of food systems change may include (but are not limited to)...



Community Members/
Collectives



Youth/Youth Groups



Social Entrepreneurs



Sustainability Offices



Non-Profit Leaders/Organizations



Urban gardeners



Religious Organizations



Changemakers



Policy Makers



Grassroots Organizations



Educational Institutions

HOW WILL YOUR VISION ADVANCE NUTRITION EQUITY?

As you develop and refine your vision, it is important to consider how your vision will tip the food system to fairness through community-driven change. Our research shows there are three broad areas structuring the aspirational goal of nutrition equity in local food systems.

THESE INCLUDE DYNAMICS RELATED TO:



Meeting basic food needs with dignity.



Balancing supply and demand of fresh and healthy foods in neighborhoods.



Advancing community empowerment and food sovereignty.

Take time to identify the extent to which your vision for food systems change will address the structures influencing nutrition equity. We encourage you to select 1-2 boxes below that reflect priorities guiding your vision for food systems change

1. HELP PEOPLE MEET BASIC FOOD NEEDS WITH DIGNITY.

- Does your vision create opportunities to earn extra income through a side hustle or remove the need for this form of income?
- Does your vision make it easier to access and use government benefits such as SNAP, WIC, or subsidized meals for people of all ages?
- Does your vision reduce stigma related to using emergency food assistance or government benefits and/or promote freedom and choice when using these resources?

2. BALANCE SUPPLY AND DEMAND FOR FRESH AND HEALTHY FOODS.

- Does your vision increase affordable, fresh, and healthy food options in your neighborhood?
- Does your vision increase opportunities to realize living wage jobs and promote job security so people can pay for the foods they want?
- Does your vision tap into culture, traditions, norms, and preferences for fresh and healthy foods for people across the generations?

3. ADVANCE COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY.

- Does your vision build community power to ignite and sustain community-driven food systems change through policies, practices, and/or community building?
- Does your vision remove barriers to or amplify engagement in urban agriculture?
- Does your vision address the risk of gentrification spurred by food systems change?

HOW WILL YOUR VISION ADVANCE NUTRITION EQUITY?

Because the food system is an interconnected web, it is important to consider how efforts in one area may pull on another. These interconnections are excellent opportunities for considering partnerships as you seek to enact your vision for change.

Consider identifying synergistic partners when completing your Vision Board

(Example partners listed below)

MEETING BASIC FOOD NEEDS WITH DIGNITY	BALANCING SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF FRESH AND HEALTHY FOODS	ADVANCING COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY
School, after school, or child care meal programs	Local grocery stores or corner stores	Food producers, processors, or community kitchens
Food pantries or food banks	Local chefs or culinary programs	School gardens or community gardens
Meals on Wheels or other meal programs for seniors	Workforce development or job training programs	Grassroots community organizations or block clubs
SNAP and WIC programs	Farmers markets or mobile markets	Local Cooperative Extension
Nutrition incentives or produce prescriptions programs	Community development corporations	Food Policy Coalition

USING THE VISION BOARD

This step-by-step guide will provide guidance on how to complete the Food Systems Change Vision Board.

STEP 1 BEFORE YOU START

The Food Systems Change Vision Board is best completed with another person. Gather mentors, experts in your community, potential collaborators, or team members before getting started. They can help cultivate new ideas and challenge you with questions that you may not have thought of to clarify your food systems idea. As a group you can discuss the problem you are trying to fix, your vision for change, potential barriers, resources needed, and key components for your food systems idea. This collective can be used to flesh out ideas before highlighting the most important content on the vision board itself.

- Grab mentors, partners, or other team members (2 to 5 people)
- Download, print, or draw Food Systems Change Vision Board
- Reserve at least 60 or 90 minutes for completion with team
- Share the board with mentors or trusted partners
- Commit to revising the vision board as you learn more

STEP 2 VISION FOR CHANGE

- **VISION:**
What change do you wish to see in the food system to advance nutrition equity?
- **PROBLEM:**
What is preventing economic opportunity, food security, and fair access to fresh and healthy food? What is the root of the problem or unmet needs in the community? What is keeping your vision from happening?
- **CORE VALUES:**
What is important to you as you move this vision for change forward? How does your vision further freedom, agency, and dignity in food traditions?
- **TRANSFORMATION PROPOSITION:**
What change are you offering the community to advance nutrition equity? What is unique to your solution? How does this disrupt the status quo?

MY VISION FOR FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE

HELPS _____

WHO NEED _____

BY (ACTION) _____

AND (ACTION) _____

**See example of completed transformation proposition in the Appendix.*

STEP 3 ENGAGEMENT WITH TARGET POPULATION

- **ENGAGEMENT:**
Who will be reached by your vision for change? What are your target audiences? What will motivate each group to engage?
- **COLLABORATORS:**
Who will partner with you on this work? Who are the 3-5 people you need to help you? What will be their roles?
- **CHANNELS:**
How will you reach your target population and get buy in?

STEP 4 IMPACT AND LOGISTICS

- **ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN:**
What is already being done in your community? Are there organizations that create competition or collaboration? How does your vision best fit the community?
- **RESOURCES:**
What resources are needed to grow your vision (e.g., people, time, materials, or finances)?
- **IMPACT FOR NUTRITION EQUITY:**
What difference will your vision make in 6 months, 12 months, and 5 years? How does your vision advance the body, mind, and spirit of people in your community?

STEP 5 STRENGTHS AND KEY ACTIVITIES

- **YOUR STRENGTHS:**
What assets do you bring to this work? What is the “secret sauce” of you and your team?
- **KEY ACTIVITIES:**
What activities are the key ingredients for your recipe for change? What will accelerate change? What may delay change? What are the potential unintended consequences of these actions?

STEP 6 REVIEW

Now that you have completed each section, have a short break. Then, take a step back and review. Make sure that the transformation proposition for your vision is tailored to best fit the needs and interests of your target population. Confirm that the identified channels will effectively reach your target population. Work with your team to address the questions below as you review your vision board:

- How will you know when you have changed the food system?
- How sustainable is your vision for change?
- Can you spot any weaknesses or barriers to success?
- What do we need to assume is true for your vision to manifest?
- What external factors might affect your vision?
- What have you learned recently that affects this vision?
- What conflicts came up that you did not expect?
- What more do you need to know?

STEP 7 NEXT STEPS

Create a list of action steps based on the key activities section to work towards your vision for change. Here are a few tips!

- Identify the “low-hanging fruit” and tackle these first.
- Separate your tasks based on your identified strengths.
- For any tasks that you are not as comfortable completing, identify other team members or partners to help.
- Revisit your timeline regularly to ensure accountability of action steps.

WHEN AND WHERE TO USE THE FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE VISION BOARD

PROJECT PLANNING

The Food Systems Change Vision Board can be used for project planning in the following ways:

- Establish project transparency and solid communications among those working on the project
- Ground all project members in a shared vision for the project
- Analyze or update the existing model in order to adjust for feasibility, fit, or buy-in from stakeholders
- Project Development
- Set measurable goals of vision or project

WORKING WITH MENTORS, COLLABORATORS, AND TEAM MEMBERS

The Food Systems Change Vision Board can be used with the project team. Users can provide updates prior to meetings with advisors to document the evolution of the vision for change. Use this time to provide progress updates, seek constructive feedback, generate new ideas and strategies to overcome barriers.

SECURING SUPPORT

The Food Systems Change Vision Board can be used to secure support by:

- Serving as a conversation tool when working with business developers or incubators
- Forging partnerships
- Creating alliances to optimize vision, reduce risk, and acquire resources
- Spearheading the development of new visions or ideas
- Distinguishing between types of partnership needs

APPENDIX

FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE VISION BOARD

FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE VISION BOARD – PAGE 1

NAME: _____

VERSION: _____

DATE: _____

VISION

What change do you wish to see in the food system to advance nutrition equity?

Nutrition equity is a state of having freedom, agency, and dignity in food traditions resulting in people and communities healthy in body, mind, and spirit. Expected outcomes of nutrition equity include economic opportunity, food security, and fair access to fresh and healthy food.

PROBLEM

What is preventing economic opportunity, food security, and fair access to fresh and healthy food? What is the root of the problem or the unmet needs in the community? What is keeping your vision from happening?

CORE VALUES

What is important to you as you move this vision for change forward? How does your vision further freedom, agency, and dignity in food traditions?

TRANSFORMATION PROPOSITION

What change are you offering the community to advance nutrition equity? What is unique to your solution? How does this disrupt the status quo?

MY VISION FOR FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE

HELPS _____

WHO NEED _____

BY (ACTION) _____

AND (ACTION) _____

ENGAGEMENT

Who will be reached by your vision for change? What are your target audiences? What will motivate each group to engage?

Who?	Motivation

COLLABORATORS

Who will partner with you on this work? Who are the 3-5 people you need to help you? What will be their roles?

Who?	Role

CHANNELS

How will you reach your target population and get buy in?

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APPENDIX

FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE VISION BOARD

FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE VISION BOARD – PAGE 2

NAME:

VERSION:

DATE:



ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

What is already being done in your community? Are there organizations that create competition or collaboration? How does your vision best fit the community?



RESOURCES

What resources are needed to grow your vision (e.g., people, time, materials, or finances)?



IMPACT FOR NUTRITION EQUITY

What difference will your vision make in 6 months, 12 months, and 5 years? How does your vision advance the health of body, mind, and spirit of people in your community?

6 months

12 months

5 years



YOUR STRENGTHS

What assets do you bring to this work? What is the “secret sauce” of you and your team?



KEY ACTIVITIES

What activities are the key ingredients for your recipe for change? What will accelerate change? What may delay change? What are the potential unintended consequences of these actions?

Activities

Accelerate

Delay

Unintended Consequence

Activities	Accelerate	Delay	Unintended Consequence

Boswell, L., Burns, M., Clark, J., Donley, G., Etheridge, K., Freedman, D., Fryerson, S., Gill, I., Harris, A., Hovmand, P., Jackson, M. B., Kahl, B., Lounsbury, D., Sommer, R. (November 2021). The Food Systems Change Vision Board Toolkit. Mary Ann Swetland Center for Environmental Health, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH.

APPENDIX

FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE VISION BOARD /SAMPLE

FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE VISION BOARD – PAGE 1

NAME: Brenda Johnson

VERSION: 1

DATE: 7/14/2021

VISION

What change do you wish to see in the food system to advance nutrition equity?

Nutritious, affordable meals provided to youth and caregivers in low-income communities during the summer

Nutrition equity is a state of having freedom, agency, and dignity in food traditions resulting in people and communities healthy in body, mind, and spirit. Expected outcomes of nutrition equity include economic opportunity, food security, and fair access to fresh and healthy food.

PROBLEM

What is preventing economic opportunity, food security, and fair access to fresh and healthy food? What is the root of the problem or the unmet needs in the community? What is keeping your vision from happening?

There is a lack of made to order breakfast and lunch options that incorporate fresh and healthy food during the summer.

CORE VALUES

What is important to you as you move this vision for change forward? How does your vision further freedom, agency, and dignity in food traditions?

Every child should have access to fresh and healthy food options during the summer. They should not be limited to fast food restaurants or missing meals when local schools are closed.

TRANSFORMATION PROPOSITION

What change are you offering the community to advance nutrition equity? What is unique to your solution? How does this disrupt the status quo?

MY VISION FOR FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE

HELPS youth and caregivers in low-income communities

WHO NEED healthy affordable meals during the summer

BY (ACTION) providing convenient delivery

AND (ACTION) pick up options

ENGAGEMENT

Who will be reached by your vision for change? What are your target audiences? What will motivate each group to engage?

Who?	Motivation
K-12 children	Provide better food options
Caregivers of school aged children	Reduce stress & barriers

COLLABORATORS

Who will partner with you on this work? Who are the 3-5 people you need to help you? What will be their roles?

Who?	Role
Food Service Directors	identify federal revenue streams to support current & new summer meal programs
Meals On Wheels	Support Delivery Options
Local Gardeners	Support Delivery Options

CHANNELS

How will you reach your target population and get buy in?

(1) Online support community groups, (2) Next Door phone app, (3) social media platforms (e.g, Instagram and Facebook), (4) community and recreational centers, (5) robo call service

Boswell, L, Burns, M, Clark, J, Donley, G, Etheridge, K, Freedman, D, Fryerson, S, Gill, I, Harris, A, Hovmand, P, Jackson, M.B, Kahl, B, Lounsbury, D, Sommer, R. (November 2021). The Food Systems Change Vision Board Toolkit. Mary Ann Swetland Center for Environmental Health, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH.

APPENDIX

FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE VISION BOARD /SAMPLE

FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE VISION BOARD – PAGE 2

NAME: Brenda Johnson

VERSION: 2

DATE: 7/14/2021



ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

What is already being done in your community? Are there organizations that create competition or collaboration? How does your vision best fit the community?

We have affordable fast food restaurants, but they don't provide fresh and healthy meals.

We can collaborate with local churches, libraries, community centers, and schools who already provide summer meals.



RESOURCES

What resources are needed to grow your vision (e.g., people, time, materials, or finances)?

(1) Finances, (2) logistical coordinator for food delivery and pickup, (3) dietitians, (4) food donations from local community gardeners, (5) transportation (e.g., vans and other vehicles), (6) marketing campaigns.



IMPACT FOR NUTRITION EQUITY

What difference will your vision make in 6 months, 12 months, and 5 years? How does your vision advance the health of body, mind, and spirit of people in your community?

6 months

Increase access to summer meals & improve energy intake.

12 months

Assess ability to scale-up to brick and mortar establishment.

5 years

Increase demand & turnover to supply better meals during the school year & reduce childhood obesity.



YOUR STRENGTHS

What assets do you bring to this work? What is the "secret sauce" of you and your team?

As parents we have lived experiences understanding how stressful it is to provide summer meals for our families. We have inhabited these communities for decades and know the needs of our fellow community members. We already formed relationships with other parents through school support groups.



KEY ACTIVITIES

What activities are the key ingredients for your recipe for change? What will accelerate change? What may delay change? What are the potential unintended consequences of these actions?

Activities

Establishing a relationship with an existing funding stream to provide discounted meals, identifying a delivery mechanism and food vendors,

Accelerate

Delay

Unintended Consequence

The potential for our vision to take away from other discounted food services.

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