

FOOD ACCESS AND SECURITY COALITION



CHARTER ADOPTED: JUNE 26, 2023

PREAMBLE

We, the undersigned individuals, and organizations recognizing the urgent need to address regional food security, sustainability, and nutrition challenges, hereby establish the Food Access and Security Coalition as a collaborative platform dedicated to promoting a sustainable, equitable, and resilient food system from production to use. By fostering partnerships, sharing knowledge and resources, and advocating for effective initiatives and policies, we aim to create positive and lasting change in the way our counties produce, distribute, and consume food.

The name of this coalition shall be the Food Access and Security Coalition, hereinafter referred to as the FASC.

OVERVIEW

Food insecurity arises from a complex web of factors, intertwining to create a challenging reality for many individuals in our communities. At its core, poverty stands as a prominent cause, casting a shadow over countless lives. Insufficient financial resources often force individuals to make agonizing choices, deciding between putting food on the table or fulfilling other basic needs.

Unemployment and underemployment, high cost of living, geographical limitations and inequities, a lack of education and skills, health issues, medical expenses, and access to affordable healthcare also play significant roles in perpetuating food insecurity.

Food insecurity can have far-reaching effects that extend beyond an individual's access to food. Impacts of food insecurity may include but are not limited to:

- **Health:** Poor health, malnutrition, and increased risk of chronic diseases, etc.
- **Economy:** Reduced productivity, higher healthcare costs, reinforcing cycles of poverty.
- **Development:** Impaired child growth and learning difficulties.
- **Emotional and Mental Health:** Higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression.

The Opportunity

The 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and 2023 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) identified food access and security as a need within the broad priority area of Access to Health in Benton and Franklin Counties. A focused coalition will aim to improve food and nutrition quality, access, and security through partnerships with community organizations from a variety of sectors. Addressing food insecurity requires comprehensive efforts that go beyond providing immediate food assistance. Long-term solutions should focus on improving access to affordable, nutritious food, promoting education and skill development, and addressing systemic issues related to poverty, income inequality, and social inequalities through collective action in our region.

VISION

Our vision is that everyone in Benton and Franklin counties has consistent access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to support an active, healthy life.

MISSION

Increase access to nutritious foods for all Benton and Franklin County residents and make local food systems environmentally sustainable and equitable by identifying, proposing, and partnering to implement innovative solutions.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Coalition is to integrate local public and private agencies and a diverse group of stakeholders in a collaborative effort to:

- Support research, innovation, and knowledge-sharing to drive positive, actionable change.
- Foster collaboration among diverse stakeholders in the food system.
- Enhance food security and nutrition for all, particularly vulnerable populations.
- Promote sustainable agricultural practices that protect the environment and natural resources.
- Advocate for policies and programs that address food system challenges.
- Raise public awareness about the importance of a sustainable and equitable food system.

2023 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

This coalition will align with the following components of the 2023 Benton and Franklin County CHIP:

Priority Area: Access to Health

Goal 2: Individuals and families in our communities have access to the support they need to work, learn, and live sustainably.

Objective 2.2: Improve food security and increase access to safe and nutritious food.

- **Strategy 2.2.1:** Promote the concept of food as medicine.
- **Strategy 2.2.2:** Promote nutritious food policies at the community and organizational levels.
- **Strategy 2.2.3:** Improve transportation connections to food resources.
- **Strategy 2.2.4:** Promote the provision and distribution of nutritious foods for low-income community members.

MEMBERSHIP

All residents of Benton and Franklin Counties, Washington are eligible for coalition membership, which is comprised of individuals and organizations, both public and private, working to improve the lives of residents of Benton and Franklin Counties.

The steering committee members include representatives selected from the following:

Benton-Franklin Health District Coalition Coordinator
Up to four At-Large Members

At-large members may be nominated by the membership or self-nominated.

The FASC will actively seek representation from the following groups, but not limited to:

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Municipalities | • School Districts, post-secondary institutions |
| • First Nations communities | • Immigrants and refugees |
| • Non-profit organizations | • LGBTQ+ |
| • Health Authorities | • Community garden groups |
| • Other Government Organizations | • Property developers |
| • Community and neighborhood associations | • Seniors |
| • Food producers, processors, and distributors | • Youth |
| • Chefs, restaurateurs, retailers | • Students, young professionals |
| | • Educators, researchers |

GOVERNANCE

The Membership will actively serve to accept BF FASC vision to improve food access and security in our community by supporting the Coalition's mission, efforts, and activities.

Duties of the Membership:

1. The Membership is responsible to approve and revise the strategic plan and any amendments.
2. The Membership is responsible to approve and revise the coalition charter and any amendments.
3. The Membership is responsible for supporting and carrying out the activities outlined in the action plan.
4. To conduct business, a minimum of five members need to be present.

The Steering Committee will serve until they are no longer willing/able to serve or are asked to step down for conducting business that is counter to the Coalition's mission, purpose, goals, objectives, or guiding principles.

Duties of the Steering Committee:

1. The Steering Committee is responsible for setting the agenda for all meetings, assuring the maintenance of minutes and other paperwork, coordinating with the fiscal sponsor, and managing the business of the Coalition.
2. To conduct business, at least three (3) members of the Steering Committee must be present.
3. Steering Committee meetings may be conducted by in-person, telephone, virtual meeting, or email.
4. The Steering Committee can form other workgroups on an as-needed basis.

FISCAL AUTHORITY

Benton-Franklin Health District is the current fiscal agent for any funds that may be obtained to support the functioning of the Benton-Franklin Food Access and Security Coalition.

As a governmental agency, the Benton-Franklin Health District does not hold 501(c)(3) status to fund coalition activities or initiatives. Therefore, our coalition emphasizes the vital need for partnerships to ensure resources for collective efforts toward the FASC mission.

Mailing address for funds:

Benton Franklin Health District
7102 W Okanogan PI
Kennewick, WA 99336

OPERATING PROCEDURES

Meetings: The Coalition shall strive to meet a minimum of six (6) times per year. Meetings will focus on information sharing, training in issues specific to food access and security, building connections with state and local stakeholders and furthering the goals of the Coalition. Meetings will be on the 3rd

Monday of the month at 12:30-2:00 p.m. unless otherwise communicated. Monthly BFFASC meetings are open to the public. Meetings may be held virtually or in person.

Agenda: The agenda will be prepared in advance by the coalition coordinator or designee. Requests for agenda items must be submitted in advance to the chairperson.

Decision Making: To the degree possible, consensus decision-making will guide the Coalition. The majority vote shall govern the implementation of policies, programs and changes of the Coalition and its Leadership, except as otherwise provided by the policies and procedures.

CHARTER AMENDMENTS

Changes to the Charter may be proposed by the members and approved by the Steering Committee at any regular meeting.