



2025-2027 strategic implementation PLAN

Rose Jones, Executive Director
as approved January 14, 2025



Our work is anchored in multiple global sustainable development goals

A thriving local food system supports healthier people, places and economies

-  zero hunger
-  good health + well-being
-  decent work + economic growth
-  reduced inequalities
-  sustainable cities + communities
-  Responsible consumption + production
-  climate action
-  life below water
-  life on land
-  partnerships for the goals

the strategy

— in brief —



ACT will be the leader in the local food movement on Aquidneck Island by focusing relentlessly on connecting islanders to local foods, promoting our food economy, and advocating for public policies and investments that strengthen the Island's resilience and self sufficiency. We'll be the 'go-to' resource for local, culturally reflective foods and help more growers, fishers, and makers thrive by diversifying our program, event, and market offerings. Our goal is to support healthier people, places, and economies. And we'll accomplish this through every touch point: one garden, one classroom, one market, one happy team member at a time.

vision

We envision a strong, fair and resilient food system for Aquidneck Island achieved by meaningfully connecting all islanders to healthy, local food and supporting our growers, fishers, and makers to thrive.

purpose

We connect people to local food, growers, fishers, and makers through our public markets and garden programs. We create economic opportunities for local food and farming businesses and advocate for policies and investments that promote a healthier island and populace.

pillars



connect: create valuable opportunities for people to access local food, gardens, and related learning.



grow: strengthen market and land access for local growers, fishers, and makers.



engage: promote policies and investments that support a strong and fair food system.

external

internal



uplift: confront root causes of inequities and engage groups historically excluded.



perform: responsibly steward resources and implement an operational model to achieve goals.

impact

summary

pillars

rationale

work + progress

logic model

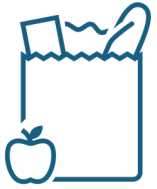
objectives + goals

measures

chart

tools

rationalle for our focus



A growing number of our neighbors are hungry and/or lack regular access to fresh, local foods that are relevant to them.

- Less than **3%** of food consumed in the state is locally sourced. Residents spend ~\$214 per person annually on local foods.
- **2 in 5** (38%) Rhode Island households face food insecurity, with BIPOC households disproportionately impacted. This is a higher rate than at any time during the pandemic.
- The number of families participating in food assistance programs in Newport increased **8%** since 2020. The North End is among the hardest hit by hunger; over **40%** of North End residents are BIPOC.
- Nearly **20%** of school-aged children in Newport participate in a school breakfast program (vs. 16% in RI). Recipes served in schools are not created by people who work at local schools. The ingredients used, in most cases, do not reflect local tastes.

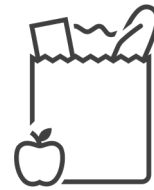


Economic inequities persist across the island and access to farming land continues to dwindle.

- Since 1940, over **80%** of productive farmland in the state has been lost. It is estimated that an additional 14% of farmland may be lost by 2040 – in favor of more profitable uses (i.e., commercial development).
- Small businesses comprise **~98%** of all businesses in RI. Food businesses make up a greater share of total RI small businesses than in other New England states.
- The state's BIPOC business participation is lower than the national average, with only **7%** of RI businesses BIPOC owned (vs. 18% nationally).
- While the state grows, raises, harvests, and lands many food products, the largest share of total agriculture, seafood, and aquaculture sales is of inedible greenhouse or nursery products.



our work in the community



Operate public markets, gardens, harvest sharing, and learning programs that connect people to local foods and businesses.



Offer local growers, fishers, and makers valuable direct-to-consumer sales opportunities, farm incubation space, and industry connections.



Support a strong and fair food system in Rhode Island through policy action and community discussion and activation.

progress



connect

- Welcome **30,000+ shoppers** across over 75 public markets each year
- Share hundreds of pounds of food harvested from our gardens each season with local hunger-relief agencies
- Collaborate with The Elisha Project on the island's only "share" market. In its first year, 900+ bags of fresh, culturally reflective produce and shelf-stable products were distributed to families with need
- Educate **800+ children** annually on growing fresh foods through our school-based and community garden programs

grow

- Support the livelihood of **50+ local growers and makers** at our markets
- Incubate new farming businesses at our Island Community Farm (ICF)
- Operate a network of 7 community gardens with 80+ individual plots

engage

- Leading a stakeholder network (**100+**) focused on local food advocacy
- Supporting development of Rhode Island's new statewide food strategy

logic model





connect



objectives +
SMART goals

create valuable opportunities for people to access local food, gardens, and related learning.

1 Rebranding + Promotion:

Rebrand ACT; implement a marketing program to promote + expand reach/impact.

- By Q2 2025, launch a new brand identity for ACT, supported by a robust media program with implementation through 2026.
- By Q4 2025, launch a new, modernized website.
- By Q4 2025, deploy promotional campaign for public markets, with goal to increase annual visitation by 10% in 2026.

2 Access + Consumption:

Increase access to, consumption, and community production of local food on Aquidneck Island.

- By Q4 2025, identify an interim (if not permanent) location for a year-round weekend market.
- By Q4 2025, forge strategic partnership with Hope & Main to increase maker participation at markets by 10 percent/season.
- By Q1 2026, increase total garden plot usage by 25 percent.
- By Q1 2026, make a go/no-go decision on an ICF CSA program, with sales at ACT markets.
- By Q3 2026, pilot a resident-choice garden plan in communities of disadvantage in Newport, with free harvest distribution to local residents.
- By Q4 2025, make go/no-go decision to partner with local non-profit(s) to streamline/expand garden programs at area schools.
- By Q4 2025, make a go/no-go decision on a garden and local-food consultancy program for the public, schools, and corporate entities.



grow



objectives +
SMART goals

strengthen market and land
access for local growers,
fishers, and makers.

1 Farm Incubation:

Support new farming businesses by providing access to land at Island Community Farm (ICF).

- By Q2 2025, execute lease(s) for the three micro-farming plots at ICF.

2 Making Connections:

Provide meaningful opportunities for local growers, fishers, and makers to engage with other industry professionals.

- By Q4 2025, host a summit, in partnership with local groups, to explore timely food-system topics and to promote strategic collaborations.
- By Q4 2025, explore synergies and potential consolidation of Newport's Health Equity Zone food access group and ACT's Aquidneck Food Action Network (AFAN) group.

3 Sales Opportunities:

Expand direct-to-consumer sales opportunities for local growers and makers.

- By Q4 2025, explore market “pop-up” opportunities across the island to provide additional sales outlets for local growers, fishers, and makers. Prioritize collaborations with popular eateries and/or community groups.
- By Q4 2026, explore partnerships and/or event opportunities with local eateries to promote local food procurement and utility.



engage



objectives +
SMART goals

promote policies and investments that support a strong and fair food system.

1 Network Growth:

Grow the AFAN/food access group into the leading voice for food system work on the Island.

- By Q2 2026, create a strategic plan to guide work of the group through 2030. Ensure plan is informed by the State's new food strategies and initiatives.
- During legislative seasons, participate actively in policy discussion and actions affecting the resilience, sustainability, and fairness of the island's food system.

2 Local + Statewide Advocacy:

Inform policy decisions that affect access to, consumption, and production of healthful foods.

- By Q4 2025, support the launch of the state's new food strategy and lead efforts to socialize relevant priorities locally.
- Into Q1 2025, meet with local and state officials to introduce them to ACT and learn about their policy priorities.

3 Strategic Partnerships:

Foster relationships with diverse groups/entities that promote community and support our work.

- By Q2 2026, forge at least three new strategic partnerships with organizations that tie our work to broader social-impact efforts locally and regionally.



uplift



objectives +
SMART goals

confront the root causes of
inequities and engage groups
historically excluded.

1 Participant Diversity:

Ensure program participants reflect the greater communities in which they live and serve.

- By Q4 2025, forge a strategic partnership with Hope & Main's Spanish-language incubator program to drive market participation and growth.
- By Q2 2026, grow partnership with The Elisha Project to expand public 'share' market from 6 to 12 weeks.
- By Q1 2026, hire (or pool resource with partner organization) a multilingual educator for school- and community learning programs.

2 North End (Re)development:

Support efforts to strengthen opportunities in communities of concentrated disadvantage.

- Collaborate with the City of Newport and other partners on the redevelopment of the North End.
- If suitable, by Q1 2027, identify a land parcel for the development of a social impact food hub as part of the City's Master North End Redevelopment Plan.
- By Q4 2025, host the Island's first 'Share Market + Culture Fest,' in partnership with community collaborators.

3 Courageous Conversations:

Have a plan and engage in learning that promotes a strong foundation for equity and inclusion.

- By Q4 2025, develop a robust DEI strategic plan to guide our Uplift work through 2030.
- Host at least two Courageous Conversations annually with ACT staff, board, and partnering organizations. These equity discussions promote a shared understanding and meaningful dialogue on causes, effects, systems, and solutions.



perform



objectives +
SMART goals

responsibly steward resources
and implement an operational
model to achieve goals.

1 Operational Planning:

Drive progress against goals through implementation of sound policies, processes, and systems.

- By Q1 2025, launch operational tools, such as trackers and charters, to clarify staff roles and program operations + chart progress.
- By Q3 2025, complete process mapping and solutioning for all major ACT workstreams.

2 Financing + Fundraising:

Advance sound financial models and fundraising strategies that accelerate organizational growth.

- By Q1 2025, build and implement a financial model that clarifies budget needs and accelerates organizational growth based on set goals through 2027.
- By Q2 2025, execute a comprehensive fundraising strategy to guide development activities through 2027.

3 Board + Team Development:

Cultivate a strong and diverse board and staff team committed to organizational excellence.

- By Q2 2025, develop a diverse list of job/opportunity community boards for posting open staff and board positions.
- Offer staff at least one professional development opportunity each calendar year.
- By Q2 2025, finalize 'steady-state' staffing model and the path to achieve it.

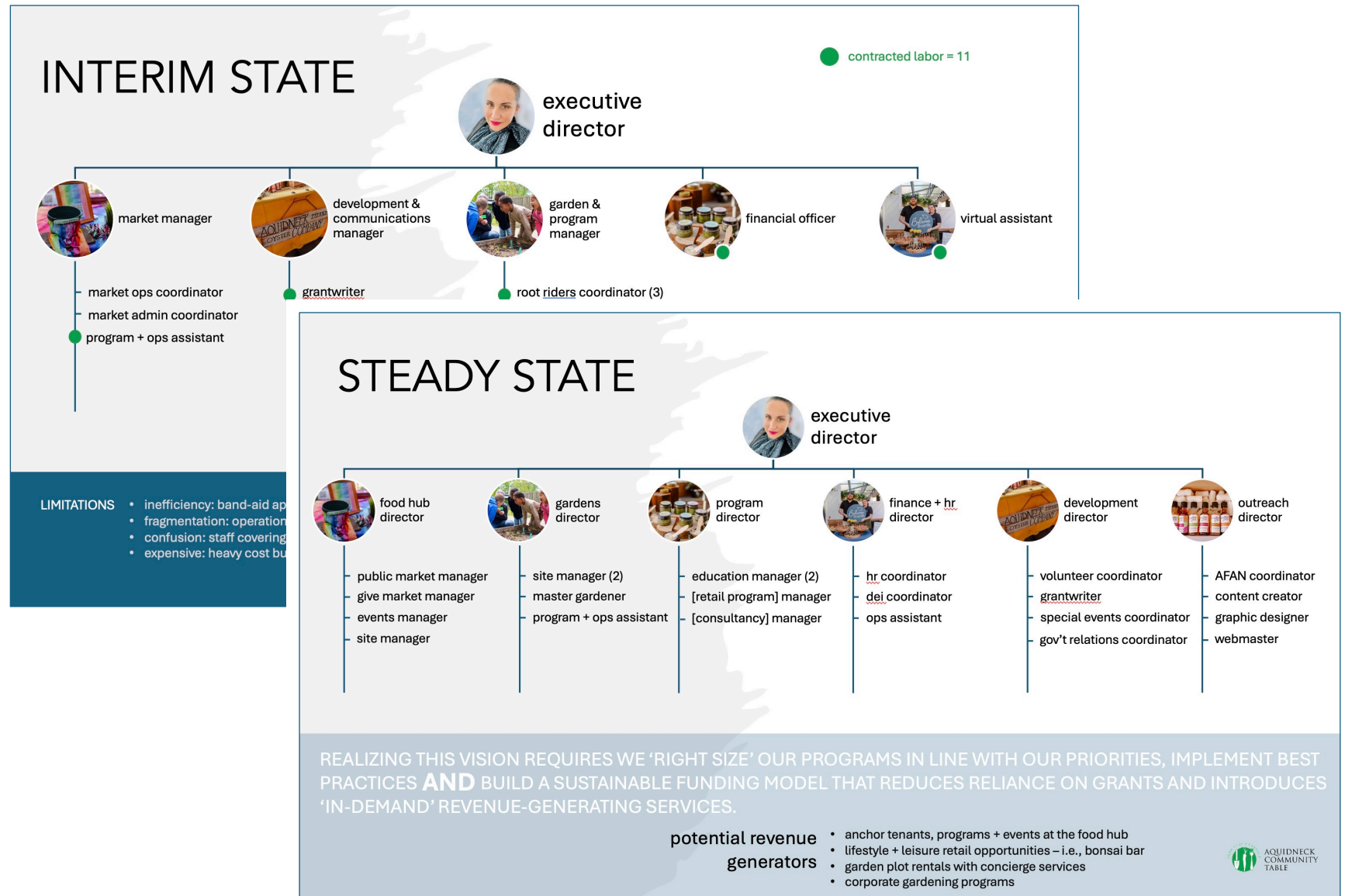
success measures

We believe connecting local people to local food and cultivating thriving local food and farming businesses are central to building a stronger and fair food system. Success in this work requires collective action, smart investments, equitable systems, and responsibly stewarding available resources.

Strategic Pillar	Desired Outcome(s)	Measures
Connect people to local food	People are well connected to local foods: they know how to source and/or grow healthful foods and are satisfied with the quality of their food and our services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market visitation trends Garden plot usage Learning program trends
Grow economic opportunities	Local growers, fishers, and makers have valuable production and sales opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vendor participation rates Farm incubation trends
Engage in discussion and action	Islanders are engaged in the local movement to build a just, sustainable and resilient food system on the Island.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event participation rates Network membership
Uplift disconnected island communities	Communities of historical disadvantage feel included and have their needs met. ACT investments are aligned with social needs and preferences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity trends across initiatives Participation rates for programs targeting diverse populations
Inspire a performance culture	ACT team and partners feel supported, successful and part of a healthy organization. Shared goals are clearly established and achieved. Our work is coordinated with broader State efforts affecting our constituencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee/partner satisfaction scores Professional development participation Volunteerism and feedback rates Food insecurity rates in Newport County Financial targets






















chart

To achieve optimal success, our focus is on building capacity and growing from our current 'interim state' organizational model to a 'steady state' model.



management tools

We leverage tactical-level tools, such as work trackers and role charters, to align our efforts to, and chart progress against, our strategic plan.

ACT Tracker (Last updated: 10/21/24)		Problem Statement:	Team [PMO: R. Jones]:	Task Status Legend:	
Vision: we envision a strong, fair and resilient food system achieved by meaningfully connecting all islanders to healthy, local food and supporting our growers and makers to thrive.		ACT needs to build and implement operational and financial models to accelerate growth and impact of ACT.	MK, AT, TG, RA, GC, TC, VE, DR, AG	Past deadline, stalled or not started	
				In process but requiring attention	
				On track or complete	
10/21 IN-WEEK PRIORITIES	FINANCE: XX ADMIN: XX PROGRAM: XX MARKETING: XX TEAM: XX	NOTES: XXX		Small Wins ✓ Initiating a tracker!	
Workstream/Pillar	Key Objectives	Tasks + Status	Deadline	Lead	Status
CONNECT Health: 	• Rebranding + Promotion • Access + Consumption	XXX	10/21/24	RJ	
		XXX	10/22/24	RA	
		XXX	10/22/24	AT	
		XXX	10/23/24	TC	
GROW	• Farm Incubation	XXX			
		XXX			
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charter
role
team
project

development + communications manager

ROLE CHARTER

ACT connects Aquidneck Islanders to local foods and food businesses to support a stronger island. We do this through our public markets, gardens, harvest sharing, and educational programs. We offer local growers and makers valuable direct-to-consumer sales opportunities, farm incubation space, and industry connections to promote their economic prosperity. And we advocate for a resilient and fair food system through policy action and community discussion and activation.

INDIVIDUAL ROLE

DEVELOPMENT: with the executive director, develop and manage a comprehensive fundraising strategy for ACT. Illustrative examples of work include:

- Research and cultivate new individual and corporate donors, as well as pursue opportunities to grow existing donor relationships
- Manage donor databases and acknowledge contributions; communicate the impact of donations to stakeholders
- Develop and implement fundraising campaigns, events, and sponsorships; manage a volunteer program that serves as a donor pipe line
- Research and support application for private/public grant opportunities

COMMUNICATIONS: develop and manage ACT's communications portfolio to raise our brand visibility statewide and to engage the public in conversation on the local food system. Illustrative examples of work include:

- Developing and executing marketing plans and supporting ACT's rebranding effort
- Preparing correspondence, press and promotional materials and presentations
- Managing ACT's digital media platforms, including its website and social media handles
- Coordinate special events and represent ACT at partner meetings and events

INNOVATION: assist the executive director in identifying and implementing strategic initiatives, such as planning for a social impact food hub on the island.

SKILLS NEEDED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS ROLE

- Ability to develop and manage relationships that result in support and funding
- Ability to think/plan strategically and take projects from ideation to completion
- Ability to translate technical data and information into accessible language
- Ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously and ensure progress against goals
- Savviness in content creation; knowledge of current events/trends
- Ability to work independently and within a team
- Maintain confidentiality and demonstrate sound judgment

NEAR-TERM PROJECTS (over next 3 Months)

- Develop and execute ACT's fall/end-of-year appeal
- Develop and execute ACT's Giving Tuesday campaign
- Support ACT's 2025 strategic planning effort
- Support 2025 operating budget and development strategy creation
- Support planning for ACT's rebranding and strategic communications planning
- Conduct an audit of ACT's digital assets, including website

Updated 10/16/24

tracker
strategic
initiative

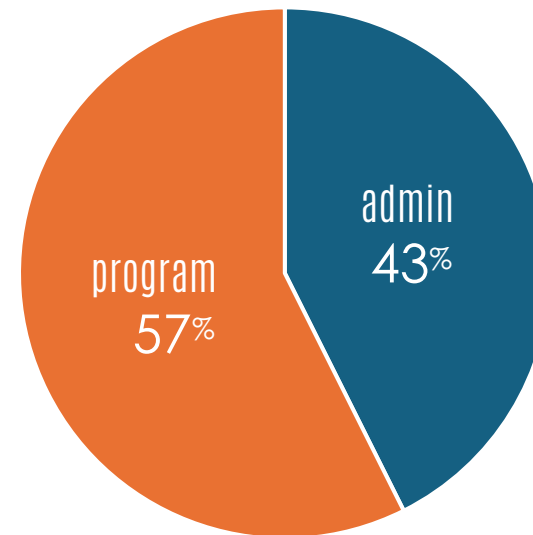
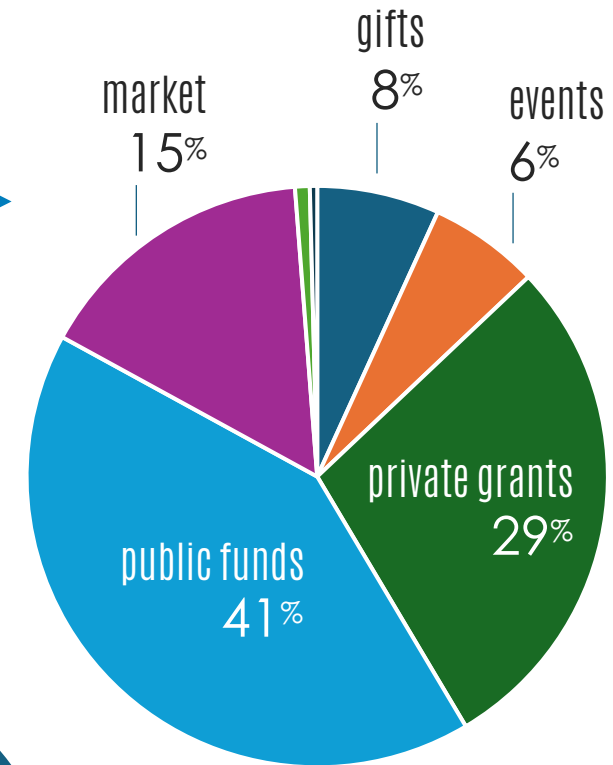


budget dashboard

2025 ^{\$}737,877
all funds

The 2025 budget represents a 39% year-over-year increase in revenue to strengthen existing programming and to create new capacity for compost education and services.

revenue
sources



expense
type

join the food movement



Together, we can build a strong and fair food system on Aquidneck Island in which all people have access to healthful foods and growing opportunities that honor their cultural traditions. And local food and farming businesses are thriving and contributing to the resiliency of our families, communities, and economy.



volunteer

growing food inspires joy, promotes health, and strengthens our resilience as a community. join us in the garden.



buy local

investing in our vibrant food scene and rich agricultural heritage supports our economic vitality. shop local at our markets.



donate

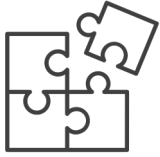
no one should go hungry. And everyone should have regular access to fresh, healthy foods. share the harvest by donating.



ACTivate

building a strong and fair food system requires our collective action. Follow us and/or sign up for our e-news to get involved today!





connect with us



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Subscribe to our e-news @
www.aquidneckcommunitytable.org/subscribe

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