



with gratitude for your support of the
2024 NH FOOD SYSTEM STATEWIDE GATHERING
Connect. Celebrate. Collaborate.

NH Food Alliance | May 17, 2024 | The Barn on the Pemi | Plymouth, New Hampshire



184 participants
6 breakout sessions
89 organizations represented
21 event sponsors
Every region of New Hampshire represented
100% of attendees agreed the Gathering was
valuable to their work

The NH Food System Statewide Gathering is an annual event hosted by the NH Food Alliance that brings together individuals, businesses, and organizations from across sectors who are dedicated to a strong, resilient, and equitable local food system in the Granite State.

This year's gathering was defined by a new level of energy, engagement, and diversity in its participants; nearly half of participants were attending the gathering for the first time, a sign of growth throughout the network. There were joyful reunions, new connections made, thoughtful questions and discussions during breakout sessions, and by the end of the day, a heightened awareness about the incredible food systems change happening in every corner of New Hampshire.



"It is so inspiring to connect with so many people doing amazing work towards creating a viable and sustainable food system in New Hampshire." — Kali Lucey, Operations Coordinator and NH Field Agent, Land for Good

In between connecting with food system friends and colleagues, old and new, these were some of the highlights of the gathering:

- Assistant Commissioner of Agriculture, Josh Marshall, announced the recipients of the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure grant program, many of whom were in attendance.
- Participants enjoyed a tortilla-making demonstration and storytelling session led by Chef David Vargas of Vida Cantina and New England BIPOC Fest. He told the story of how he connected to his Mexican heritage here in New Hampshire through maize, partnering with local farms, such as Tuckaway Farm in Lee, to grow Indigenous maize varieties to use for tortillas at his restaurant. Chef David shared how this connection to his culture and local food inspired him to focus on collective action and community building, galvanizing efforts to raise awareness for BIPOC businesses, nonprofits, and other organizations through New England BIPOC Fest, the Heritage Harvest Project, and Cultivate NH.
- Two groups of researchers from the University of New Hampshire shared about their innovative food systems research during the morning breakout session.
 - Dr. Analena Bruce and her graduate assistants took our attendees on an exploration of two studies, spanning both consumer values and behaviors when shopping for local food and the development of collaborative models for aggregating and marketing local food.
 - Rawan AlSarraf, Dr. Sherman Bigornia, and Dr. Noereem Z. Mena spoke about their individual food systems and nutrition research labs, two of which focus on food-based nutritional health outcomes and the relationship to food access and one focused on supporting the adoption of farm to early childhood education across New Hampshire.
- Chris Jones, the Senior Director for the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, led an informative and engaging session about the USDA-funded Northeast Regional Food Business Center and the forthcoming funding opportunities available through the center. He provided a succinct timeline for the funding opportunities, answered questions from attendees on requirements for applicants, and more.



“These [gatherings] are so important to my work. And to connecting and reconnecting with others. It's always energizing!”

— 2024 NH Food System Statewide Gathering Participant

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- The team from New Futures guided attendees through a strategic advocacy training, sharing strategies for breaking down complex policy into digestible content, catering content to different audiences, and how to be compelling in messaging and communications.
 - Kali Lucey of Land for Good and Cara Cargill of the NH Agricultural Mediation Program held a session on farm succession planning in New Hampshire. They provided an overview of the issue and led a discussion to understand what gaps and opportunities exist for this issue and how the food system can work together in support of more farm succession planning in the state. Farmers who were part of this session were able to share their experiences and thoughts on farm succession planning, providing valuable insight to the speakers and attendees alike.
 - Nine food system professionals came together for a fast-paced Lightning Round, sharing about the organizations, programs, and initiatives they are working on. Topics included Revision Energy's Community Solar Program, American Farmland Trust's focus on providing support for urban agriculture and small farms, the new, culturally-connected NH Harvest of the Month program, and more. Each presenter had four minutes to share about their work and provide "an offer or an ask" to attendees.
 - The day came to a close with an afternoon celebration featuring a raffle of 22 prizes donated by local organizations and businesses, refreshments, lawn games, music from the Manchester High School Jazz Trio, and a display of the new NH Harvest of the Month program materials.

Want to know more? You can see the full schedule of the day through the event program [here](#).



“As someone new to the industry, I really enjoyed deepening my understanding of the New Hampshire food system and meeting all of the people who work to strengthen it.”

— Catie Cohen, Farm Share & Wholesale Manager, Fresh Start Farms
