



**MLFC Strategic Plan  
January 2024 – January 2029**

**Vision:** Creating a vibrant community through local food and family farms in central South Carolina.

**Mission:** to cultivate a sustainable local food system, foster land stewardship, and encourage equitable food access in the Midlands by sharing information and supporting collaborative efforts.

**Guiding Principles:**

1. Engage and educate the community about food system issues
2. Strengthen the local food economy through infrastructure developments in coordination with regional and state efforts
3. Advance policies in support of local food systems and organizing stakeholders around these issues
4. Increase access to healthy food while creating small farmer opportunity
5. Increase sustainable food production through education and technical and financial assistance

**Goals and Objectives:** MLFC will pursue its vision, mission, and guiding principles through the following goals and objectives:

**Goal 1: Host quarterly meetings for networking, information sharing, and collaboration.**

1. Host hybrid meetings with in-person and virtual participation options.
2. Seek members' input on the agenda design.
3. Create space in the agenda for "mix and mingle" and one-to-one conversations.
4. Reduce the time spent on round robin announcements.
5. Consider highlighting one member organization during each meeting.

**Goal 2: Maintain a member-run listserv to facilitate information sharing and collaboration.**

1. Add the "how to share information over the listserv" information and the listserv policy to the listserv email signature.
2. Expand the listserv by recruiting new members on social media and through existing subscriber connections.

**Goal 3: Develop an engaging social media presence to raise awareness about the work of MLFC and its members.**

1. Assign someone (Miranda Chastain in spring 2024) to serve as MLFC's social media manager.
2. Ask members to submit a short bio and 5-10 photos to the MLFC social media manager to generate "Member Spotlights."
3. Regularly remind members to send their news, events, and highlights to the MLFC social media manager to share.
4. Create themed, scheduled content and make consistent posts each week.
5. Share content from MLFC members' pages.

6. Launch an Instagram.

**Goal 4: Create a professional website to tell the story of MLFC and help people connect with the local food community.**

1. Create a Wix website based on content from the old site and point the existing domains (MidlandsLocalFood.org and MidlandsLocalFood.com) to the new site.

**Goal 5: Expand participation and membership in the MLFC.**

1. Revise Terms and Understandings document to align with strategic plan and current realities.

**Goal 6: Develop financial resources to support the work of MLFC.**

**Goal 7: When resources allow, host or support mission-relevant events.**

1. Before agreeing to host an event, consider whether MLFC or a member organization is the most appropriate lead entity.
2. Re-invest any event profits in the work of MLFC and its member organizations.

**Goal 8: When resources allow, provide financial support to the efforts of member organizations.**

**Goal 9: Identify a short-term “Area of Focus” to focus energy and resources in 2024. Once an “Area of Focus” has been selected, develop additional objectives/action steps to guide progress.**

The following initiatives were discussed as potential areas of focus for 2024. At future meetings, MLFC members will identify which of these initiative(s) to pursue, and how MLFC and its member organizations can be involved.

1. Develop a plan to increase Fresh on the Menu participation in the Midlands through targeted Farm to Table initiatives and collaboration with SCDA’s Fresh on the Menu marketing program
2. Support outreach and publicity RE: local farm/food guides in order to raise awareness about these resources and to encourage updates (SCDA’s Certified SC and Fresh on the Menu databases, and/or MarketMaker)
3. Develop a Columbia Food Hub
4. Identify ways to participate in local climate initiatives