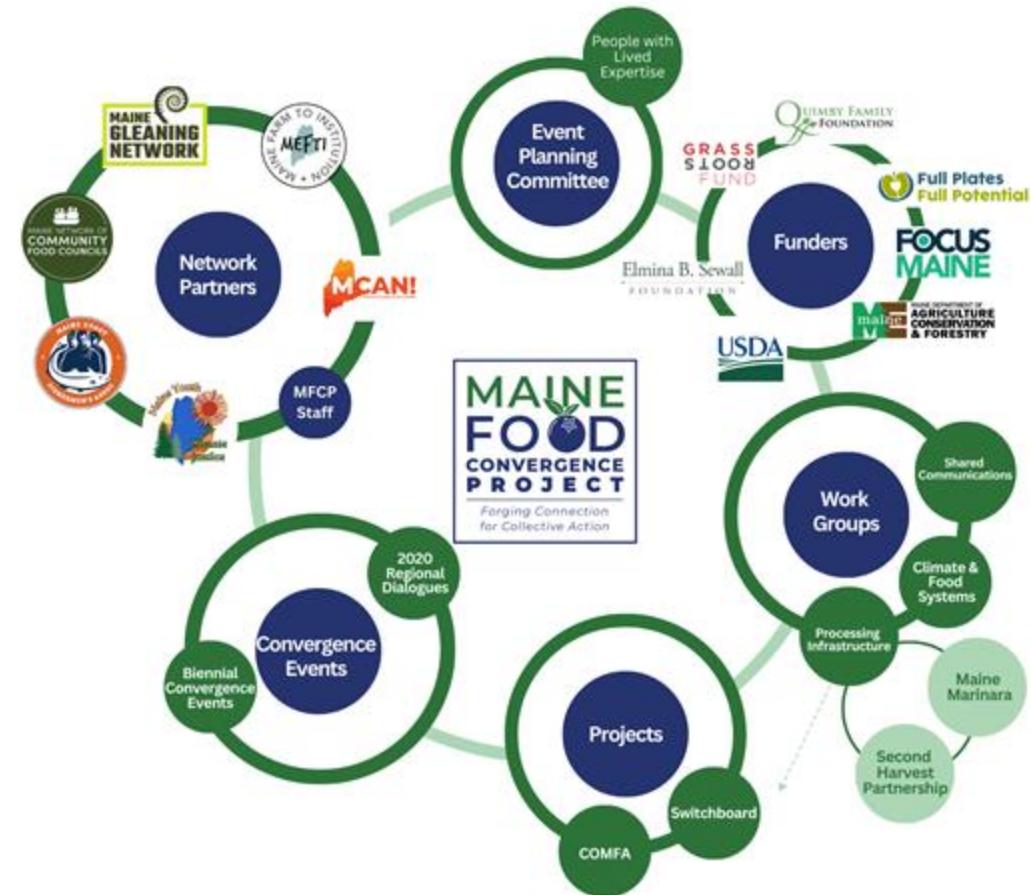


Local Food Switchboard



Streamlining local food procurement
and connecting Maine's food system.

Switchboard Origins



What role does the Local Food Switchboard play?

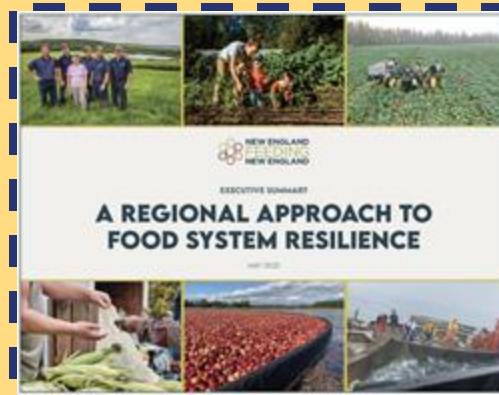
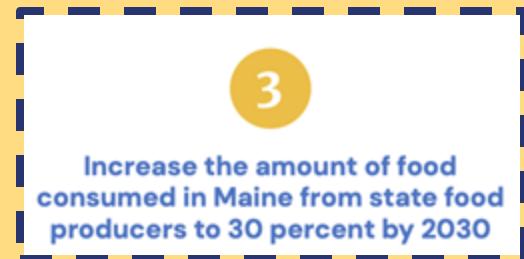


- More local Maine foods in institutional, retail, and food service markets, focusing first on K-12 schools
- Increase access to market opportunities and infrastructure – especially for small- and medium-scale, marginalized producers.
- Build connections between Maine food supply chain actors.
- Support the sharing of infrastructure, equipment and transportation.
- Transparently share information.
- Support state and regional efforts.



Switchboard & 30% Local Food by 2030

- Get more local food into Maine's institutional, retail, and food service markets
- Increase access to processing and storage infrastructure to help produce and keep more local food
- Connect food supply chain actors across Maine and across New England, adding variety in local food options



Switchboard & Reducing Food Loss & Waste

4

Reduce food loss and waste by 50 percent by 2030



- Identify sources of seconds, misfits and surplus in real time
- Identify and match-make markets and uses for seconds, misfits and surplus in value-added products, institutional meals, etc. – while ensuring farmers/harvesters/producers get paid
- Highlight processing and cold storage infrastructure so more food can be properly preserved and stored

Switchboard & Climate Resiliency

- A well-connected, local-to-regional food supply chain is nimble and able to respond to disruptions in the larger food supply chain caused by climate-related disasters and other events



“When everything collapses, the life-saving infrastructure is our knowledge of one another’s skills, our trust of one another, our capacity to forgive our neighbor, work with our neighbor, and mobilize.” -Community is Our Best Chance, Christine E. Nieves Rodriguez

Local Food Switchboard



- Online platform / map / inventory / live listings: a central hub for information, supply chain coordination and connection across Maine's food web.
- Operators: long-term staff to maintain data and platform, support users, and help coordinate supply chain logistics, with an initial focus on public schools.
- Technology as a tool to support relationships.

Info Mapped & Hosted on the Switchboard

PRODUCT

Food businesses that produce and/or purchase raw or value-added goods, including product information.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Food infrastructure, such as processing facilities and equipment, storage facilities, and distribution businesses.

SUPPORT

Food industry-adjacent businesses and orgs that provide technical, financial, grant writing, and workforce development assistance.

Tools, Templates, Resources & Reference Materials

Templates and technical assistance for forward contracting & other agreements

Info on how to sell to schools & other publicly-funded institutions

Information on certifications (GAP, Halal, organic, etc.)

Reference list for tools and resources hosted by partner organizations

Recipes that meet USDA requirements and use local ingredients



Cold Storage

- Cold storage landscape assessment
- Strategic placement, coordination with other initiatives, business planning for sustainability
- Goal: Install 4 cold units over 2 years



EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

- **Rural Access.**
- **Structural barriers.**
- **Language access.**
- **Cultural foodways.**
- **Digital literacy and tech equity.**





Timeline

Year 1: R&D

Convene Advisory Team to guide R&D
Hire R&D Consultants, including someone with a focus on equitable process & design
Coordinate with state & regional food system mappers to align projects
With partners, develop & execute research plan that will also support broader local food efforts
Determine: data & functionality priorities, storage infrastructure needs, Switchboard operations

Year 2: Pilot

Hire the Switchboard Operator(s)
Hire Web Development & Marketing consultants
Build, test & pilot the platform, guided by research & user feedback, in collaboration with partners
Outreach to increase engagement, data points & usage
Develop marketing and long-term sustainability plans

Year 3: Full Launch

Fully launch project - mostly servicing schools & Processing Work Group, with ongoing improvements
Increase membership
Continue outreach to increase data points & usage
Install first storage units

Year 4: Sustain

Review operations & organizational structure, determine best method to sustain the project long-term
Install more storage units
Publish analysis on major supply chain gaps to influence policy & investments



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