

WASHINGTON STATE FOOD POLICY FORUM

Washington State Food Policy Forum

DECEMBER 4, 2025



Agenda

Welcome & Get Settled (15 min)

Policy & Funding Landscape: 2026 Outlook (45 min)

- Updates from state agencies on decision packages
- Round robin updates from Forum members

End of Year Celebration & Network Building (20 min)

- Highlights of food system accomplishments from around the state
- Breakout group conversations to connect across food system sectors (3-4 participants per group)

Break (10 min)

Team Working Sessions (20 min)

- Participants join topical team breakout groups to advance ongoing work

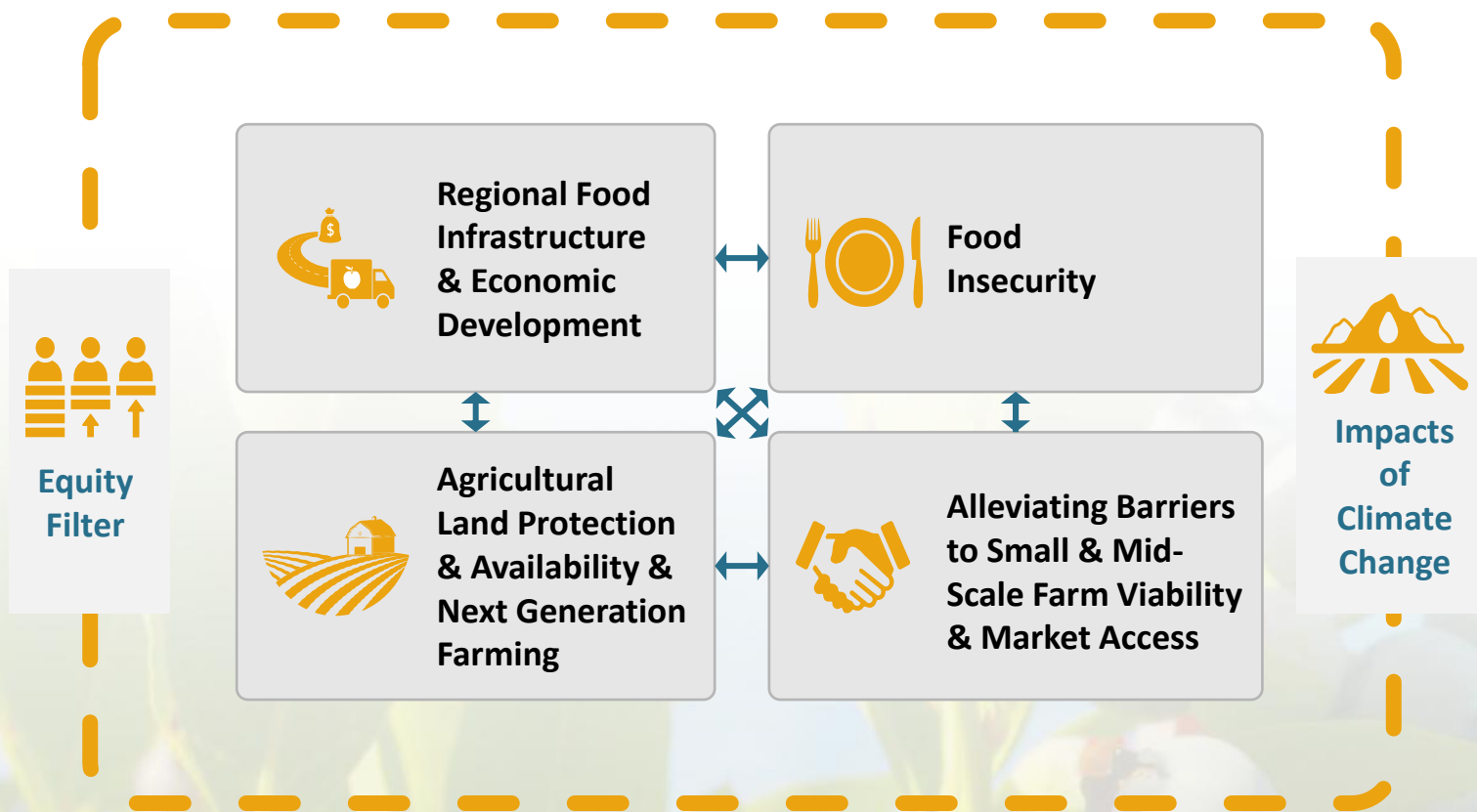
Team Report Outs (60 min)

Closing Reflections & Adjourn (10 min)

Purpose & Objectives

- October report to the Legislature has been submitted, which outlines the Forum's 2025–27 topical priorities
- Understand and discuss the policy landscape and intersections with the Forum's work
- Celebrate food system accomplishments from around the state and strengthen connections across food system
- Discuss how the Forum anticipates advancing its 2025-27 topical priorities

Which sectors are represented in the room today?



Instructions for non-Forum members:

Please update your Zoom name with one of the five food system components below that best represents the area you work in:

1. Food Insecurity
2. Climate
3. Ag Land
4. Market Access
5. Infrastructure

Policy and Funding Landscape: 2026 Outlook

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Forum Members Representing State Agencies

- **Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction** – *Leanne Eko*
- **WA State Conservation Commission** – *Dani Madrone*
- **WA State Department of Agriculture** – *Katie Rains*
- **WA State Department of Social and Health Services** – *Brice Montgomery*
- **WA State Department of Health** – *Kyle Unland*
- **Washington State University** – *Chad Kruger*

Forum members representing state agencies are invited to raise their hand, come off mute, and share policy or budget updates related to the Forum's goals

Round Robin Legislative Updates

Share updates relevant to the Forum's goals:

- Increase the availability of Washington-grown foods throughout the state, including by increasing direct marketing and other regional supply chains sales and consumption of Washington-grown foods.
- Expand and promote programs that bring healthy and nutritious Washington-grown foods to Washington residents, including increased public and private purchasing of Washington food products for schools, adult care programs, and other publicly funded food programs.
- Identify ways to improve coordination and communication among city, county, regional, and state food policy entities and communication between these entities and state agencies.
- Reduce food insecurity and hunger in the state.
- Identify current rules and regulations impeding the viability of small and mid-scale agriculture.
- Identify new policies that would improve the viability of small and mid-scale agriculture.
- Examine ways to encourage retention of an adequate number of farmers for small and mid-scale farms, meet the educational needs for the next generation of farmers, and provide for the continued economic viability of Washington food production, processing, and distribution in the state.

Directions:

If you have a legislative update relevant to the Forum's work around food and/or farm issues, we ask that:

- **Forum members**, please raise your hand to share verbally or share your update in the chat
- **Non-Forum members**, please provide your update in the chat

End of Year Celebration & Network Building

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Celebrating WA Food System Accomplishments from 2025

Looking back on this year, what moment or aspect of your work created the greatest positive impact on people, communities, or systems and what made it meaningful for you?

These could include:

- Forum-related contributions
- Contributions from your organization that made a positive impact on WA's food system

Instructions:

1. Open the Padlet link provided in the chat
2. Add accomplishments you are proud of from this year
3. React to others' contributions that you found to be impactful this year



Food System Cross-Sector Breakout Groups

Participants will be placed in breakout groups (3-4 participants per group) for about 10 minutes.

In your breakout group, please:

- 1. Share your name and affiliation**
- 2. Choose prompt to answer while introducing yourself to the group:**
 - Share a favorite memory from visiting a Washington farm, farmers market, or local food business—what made it special?
 - Think back to a time you visited a Washington farm, farmers market, or food business—what stands out most from that experience?

Team Working Sessions + Report Outs

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2025-27 Topical Priorities

Team Name	2025-27 Topical Priorities
Impacts of Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Supply for Agriculture and Food Production • Climate Resilience for Agriculture and Food Production
Agricultural Land Protection & Availability & Next Generation Farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succession Planning and Incentives
Alleviating Barriers to Small & Mid-Scale Farm Viability & Market Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Technical Expertise and Knowledge Transfer
Regional Food Infrastructure & Institutional Procurement for Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public-Private Partnership Models for Infrastructure Finance • Strategic Infrastructure Planning and Coordination
Food Insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food System Coordination for Food Security • Eligibility and Access for Food Assistance Programs

Topical Breakout Groups

Today's purpose: Build on team conversations from Oct/Nov and get clear on next steps for advancing work

Teams will have about 20 minutes for discussion, followed by team report outs to the full Forum

In your breakout groups:

- Facilitator will bring the group up to speed on the team's priority topic and proposed ideas for action
- Participant silent reflection in Google Slides
- Group discussion: Clarify actions and next steps

Regional Food Infrastructure & Institutional Procurement for Economic Development Team

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Potential Next Steps for Regional Food Infrastructure Team

Priority Topic: Public-Private Partnership Models for Infrastructure Finance

- **In November, the team discussed two ideas for action:**
 - Document and analyze successful partnership models to identify replicable elements (e.g., Port of Skagit County, Tenino Agriculture Innovation Park, Port of Chehalis Grain Infrastructure, Blue Mountain Station).
 - Identify existing public financing pathways used for energy and transportation infrastructure that could apply to food system projects.
- **Potential next steps:**
 - Refine scope of the documentation effort:
 - Define what “replicable elements” include (financing, partnerships, governance)
 - Decide how to capture success metrics and co-benefits
 - Consider lessons from other sectors (energy, transportation) to expand financing options for food system projects
 - Plan a learning session:
 - Identify speakers (Forum members + external experts)

Breakout Group Notes

- Document and analyze successful partnership models; Predominantly tied to ports
 - Develop list of projects: To start, ask members and other stakeholders like NABC to share their sense of which projects or initiatives to consider models.
 - Interested in things that worked and things that didn't
 - Develop questions to guide conversations
- Related, perhaps opportunities to use documentation and learning:
 - Could consider developing a road map for other ports.
 - Look beyond food investors, look to more traditional infrastructure investors, like those that invest in energy. Match the need with type of financing.
- Understand more about the gaps in the systems
- Learn more about the waste side, see new resource from Commerce

Food Insecurity Team

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Topic: Food System Coordination for Food Security

Ideas for Actions

- Create a **nimble action network to convene regularly to address** priority topics. Secure legislative support to assign and task authority and coordination roles to relevant agencies.
 - HB 1987 would create the authorizing environment for WSDA to convene state agencies and develop a Statewide Food Security Strategy with goals to end hunger, reduce environmental health disparities, and increase agricultural sustainability and resilience.
 - If the forum wants to be coming forward as a voice to have sustained influence on policymakers outside of the individual agencies that co-convene, now is an opportunity to think about what this group wants to say about the current circumstance at the forum level including state agencies, nonprofits, and industry partners.
- Call for data standardization and use of **real-time dashboards to better understand who is experiencing hunger and where**, as well as understanding where anti-hunger programs are responding effectively to local communities and specific populations, enabling data-driven decision-making and targeted interventions. Map the role and responsibilities of state agencies and programs involved in the **hunger safety net** to increase transparency, identify gaps and improve coordination and impact.
 - Discussed addressing data needs next session; options include legislation, funding, and coordination—likely all three, with funding essential and possible legislative intent language to set outcomes, framework, and partner roles.
 - We do not have that data capability within the state, and that's okay to aspire to. There is a near-term dashboard step based on most recent available data vs. real-time.
- Leverage **public-private partnerships for food systems resilience**: Engage farmers, nonprofits, and private-sector partners to enhance food system capacity and emergency food access and leverage local knowledge and infrastructure.
 - Forum is in a unique position for public/private collaboration.

Connection to Existing Recommendations

2019 Food Insecurity Recommendation 2: *Explore the use of state resources to maximize participation and access to nutrition assistance programs.*

Potential Next Steps for Food Insecurity Team from Facilitator Perspective

Actions to Consider:

- **Distribute a Letter** to demonstrate support for HB 1987 by naming consensus recommendations regarding the hunger safety net and food security more broadly.
- **Convene and/or communicate with policymakers** about the numerous consensus recommendations the Forum has produced regarding the hunger safety net and food security more broadly. *Package these in a streamlined format summarizing what the Forum has produced to date.*
- **Leverage public-private partnerships** to bridge sectors (farms, food providers, agencies, nonprofits, academic institutions, etc.) by facilitating coordination and convening entities to discuss hunger safety needs and opportunities. Promote cross-sector collaboration through a learning session focused on the current hunger crisis to share state efforts and highlight the Forum's role.
 - Interesting opportunities around data analysis

Questions to consider:

Which potential actions would this small team like to pursue?

Are these the right actions?

What are the next steps?

What unique position does each member on this team hold to contribute to and further these actions?

Breakout Group Notes

- WA DOH & DSHS has to abstain from first two
- “Throwing a stone at a tidal wave”
- 1987 will be a priority for Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition
 - What happens when the bill passes? What will the process and engagement look like?
 - WSDA is in passenger seat to the Legislator - intention is to focus on developing communication channels and have preliminary convos w/ agency partners. The state adjustment related to issuance of SNAP benefits is an indication of the state’s ability to be agile. Focusing on internal communication and building off of existing data to support enterprise coordination.
 - WSDA is a cabinet agency and is communicating regularly with the Governor’s office - may be opportunities for the Governor’s office can provide support
 - Assessing the people sides of the food system -
- Spokane Food Policy Council is writing letters to representatives in support of HB 1987

Impacts of Climate Change Team

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Topic: Water Supply for Agriculture and Food Production

Prioritized idea for action:

- Advance the Forum's *Managing Water to Ensure Food Security in a Changing Climate Recommendations*
 - Coordinate efforts on long-term water availability for food production across Washington, with targeted strategies for Western Washington, where no equivalent framework exists to the Office of Columbia River.
 - Propose and prepare a policy work session focused on agricultural water supply.
 - Engage the Joint Legislative Task Force on Drought and other key stakeholders (e.g., farmers, Tribes, environmental groups, local governments) to ensure regional specificity and inclusivity.

Potential Next Steps for Impacts of Climate Change Team

Primary emphasis on state-level legislative education and amplification of the issue; building awareness and leveraging the collective voices of Forum members and partner organizations

Legislative educational visits:

- Mobilize teams (pair food insecurity advocates with ag reps) to meet legislators, especially urban and Western WA legislators unfamiliar with ag/water issues, to help them understand both the immediate and long-term implications on Washington's food systems.
- Develop and distribute talking points to Forum members and partner organizations (e.g., grower associations, non-profits) so they can integrate them into their own legislative visits/outreach. This approach would create multiple touchpoints with legislators.

Engage legislative allies about the funding context. Explore existing funding streams for long-term planning (rather than asking for new funding).

City and county-level engagement: There are also opportunities to encourage counties and cities to include water supply priorities in their legislative agendas.

Breakout Group Notes

- Want to **continue with implementation to seize moment** as we come out of drought, despite budget restrictions
- Biggest challenge going forward- various members of the Forum are not able to do direct advocacy; not everyone is able to actively engage in that
 - Must consider to what extent is this an effort coordinated by the Forum vs. preparing materials to hand-off to members doing Hill visits
- Not making specific ask for anything associated with recommendations, but important to elevate them as we are going to have to address issues
 - Unofficial ask is initiation of planning process - Who will lead and participate?
- Western WA concern about water is rarely discussed; Need for state to take different approach
 - Discuss adjudication and further education
- **Legislature can direct agency to develop a decision-package- could develop a request to ask Ecology to begin drafting to get a sense of numbers, reflecting the specific goals in recommendation and plan for viability of water/western ag production**
 - Push decision frame up from program level to agency level
 - Done in collaboration with Food Policy Forum, WSDA, Conservation Commission, etc. to provide guidance

Agricultural Land Protection & Availability & Next Generation Farming Team

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Topic: Succession Planning & Incentives

Ideas for Action:

- Elevate existing recommendations on funding for land access/transition programs, funding for voluntary conservation easements, and developing incentives for transition.
- Explore employee-owned farm transition models and explore tax incentives or policy tools to support locally rooted farmland transition and promote succession planning resources.

Potential Next Steps:

- Begin conducting research:
 - Research different components (e.g., various financing mechanisms, different transition models)
- Plan a shared learning session:
 - Identify the incentives the team is interested in learning about (e.g., property tax reductions, incentives for lenders to participate in farmland transition programs).
 - Identify speakers, including Forum members & external experts (e.g., lenders, farmers)
- Identify product and who the audience is for the product

Breakout Group Notes

- How does it look like to meaningfully engage in research? Who has capacity?
- Might it be helpful to do an inventory of what already exists to support succession planning, answer may be not much, do some education within the forum with what is needed and the gap between what is needed and what is available
- What are innovative pathways to funding work? How do we help the conservation community which control the purse strings?
- Research ongoing from OFP perspective, 75 presentations across OR and talked with how they built that out, but we don't have the same expertise to match that for like financial planning, roadmap to get to that implementation
- Is there a way for this team to gather and disseminate research rather than tackling a new project?
 - King County report has to go to council in February and then we can talk about it
- Benchmarking what other states are doing that have been successful
- OFP can facilitate people who want to work on this with Kelly (grad student)
- Who is the audience? The group? The legislature?

Alleviating Barriers to Small and Mid- Scale Farm Viability & Market Access Team

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Potential Next Steps

Topic: Technical Assistance (TA) & Capacity Building

- **Identify and communicate gaps in technical assistance (TA):** Use existing and forthcoming studies to collate and synthesize what's already known about gaps, then communicate this knowledge clearly to the Forum and stakeholders as a foundation for action.
 - Information to collate includes understanding who is providing TA, what types of farms are underserved, where services are/are not offered, and gaps in regulatory compliance support (e.g., food safety).
- **Understand from current TA providers what they need to advance greater impact (address/fill the gaps)**
 - Explore how resources could be directed to build on existing systems (avoid reinventing the wheel).
- **Address short-term viability concerns:** Consider how the Forum should amplify urgent issues and/or develop recommendations for action to mitigate impacts (e.g., highlight the value of now-canceled programs).
 - Short-term concerns include immediate threats from recent cuts to federal/state programs (e.g., farm-to-food bank, farm-to-school, etc.), field staffing changes at critical agencies (NRCS, FSA, etc.), riparian buffer regulations, and tax and regulatory burdens.

What role should the Forum play? **How can the Forum stimulate action** once the gaps are identified/understood, and what is the mechanism (e.g., funding, partnerships, policy advocacy)?

What is the right balance of focusing between **immediate viability concerns and long-term system improvements?**

Discuss and **clarify terms we are using** (e.g., what we mean by "small," "mid-scale," and "maturing" farms differs across different sectors)

Breakout Group Notes

- The priorities for action are still very high-level. More thought is needed about a meaningful role can the Forum is positioned to take.
 - Actions may be refined by the opportunities for action that emerge. Being prepared to engage.
- The Forum could play a role in calling attention to gaps left by federal changes and connecting them to local impacts
- Agreement that short-term farm viability issues are pressing.
 - Rather than trying to solve viability challenges directly, the Forum could inform, flag, and amplify existing efforts already underway; could catalogue current concerns and priorities and who and how to amplify
- Potential opportunity to tie into Rep Reeves' efforts
 - Ensure small and mid-scale producer perspectives are included (and others - BIPOC, minority etc.)
- Longer-term effort could be the idea of mapping TA providers and interviewing them to understand systemic gaps.
 - There is a baseline of work here. How to build upon or utilize that baseline need more consideration.

Closing Reflections & Adjourn

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Looking Ahead

- **Next small team calls will be held in January**
 - Please look out for an email with Doodle polls from the Ross team
 - Team's will begin applying the Forum's Equity Filter
- **Next Forum meeting is on February 5, 2026**

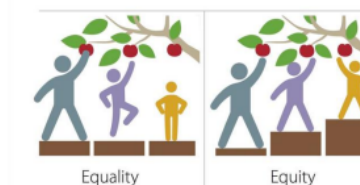
June 2021

Identifying How Actions and Recommendations of the Forum Impact Equitable Outcomes for Washingtonians

In the Summer of 2020, the [Washington State Food Policy Forum](#) (Forum) committed in its [Early Implementation Action Report](#) to identify how actions and recommendations of the Forum impact equitable outcomes for Washingtonians (page 10). Based on this commitment, in Spring 2021, the Forum developed and tested this equity filter.² The following questions will be used to understand how the Forum's actions and recommendations have different impacts on the diversity of geographic and demographic communities in Washington. The intention of this filter is to help guide the Forum in its work to develop and take action on recommendations so that the Forum contributes to the development of a food system that benefits all people in Washington. This is considered a living document in that the Forum intends to align its work on equity with guidance provided by Washington State agencies, such as the newly funded Office of Equity.

Definitions

Equity: The act of developing, strengthening, and supporting procedural and outcome fairness in systems, procedures, and resource distribution mechanisms to create equitable (not equal) opportunity for all people. Equity is distinct from equality which refers to everyone having the same treatment without accounting for differing needs or circumstances. Equity has a focus on eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of historically and currently oppressed groups.¹



Source: <https://bos.smcgov.org/equity>

Populations to consider: Inequities are not inherent to an individual's identity, rather they are influenced by social determinants that systematically marginalize groups due to their identity. Inequities can be exacerbated or alleviated by intersecting identities. When determining who is likely to be burdened by a proposal, the Forum considers not only historical systemic inequities, but present-day systemic inequities and present-day vulnerability. The Forum begins by thinking expansively about who is likely to be burdened by a proposal. To get started, consider the list of populations [on slide 9 in this State Board of Health presentation](#).

Proposal: A policy, program, practice, action, or budget decision that has been identified by the Forum.

¹ Draft OFM glossary of foundational DEI terms to create a shared language.

² The filter was developed by the Forum's Equity Subcommittee, members include: Amy Ellings (DOH), Brian Estes (LINC Foods), Christina Wong (Northwest Harvest), Claire Lane (WA State Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition), Evan Sheffels (WSDA), Kate Delavan (SCC), Laura Raymond (WSDA), Laura Lewis (WSU), Representative Mary Dye, Mary Embleton (King Conservation District), Melissa Spear (Tilth Alliance), Nancy Warner (Initiative for Rural Innovation and