

FOOTHILLS FOOD ACTION PLAN

2025–2030

Foothills Community Food Partnership



Every five years, the FCFP Steering Committee hosts the Foothills Food Summit, to assess current conditions and identify local food systems needs and goals. This plan has been formed from feedback received from those events.



Our Purpose

The “Foothills” refers to the rural area of eastern Whatcom County, home to roughly 15,000 people in a geographic region spanning approximately 620 square miles. This region is the ancestral and current homeland of the Nooksack Indian Tribe. Our communities include Acme, Kendall, Maple Falls, Glacier, Deming, Van Zandt, Welcome, Rutzatz, Five Cedars, and Glenhaven.

The Foothills comprises the largest unincorporated area of Whatcom County and is served by the Mount Baker School District, where **56.4% of children and youth qualified for free and reduced lunch and breakfast programs in the 2024-2025** school year (OSPI). However, the percentage of low-income students climbs as high as **73.8% at Kendall Elementary**, the furthest school from services and the largest elementary school in the district.

Food access is a significant concern in our region. In 2012, we joined forces with our schools, food bank, community action agency, health department, universities, farmers, and others to form the Foothills Community Food Partnership.



Our shared vision:

All Foothills residents are fed, nourished, and have the resources to access the food they need.

Goals & Actions

1

Increase community awareness of and engagement with food insecurity in the Foothills and amplify our voices to ensure we have adequate resources to fight hunger.

- **Advocate** at the state and local level for increased and equitable funding for food system initiatives.
- **Increase local knowledge** and educational opportunities to strengthen community food resiliency – how to grow, cook, and share food with neighbors.
- **Regularly assess** potential vulnerabilities in the Foothills food system. Coordinate and respond to urgent food access needs as they arise.

2

Support our producers and fishers so that they can provide food for our community now and in the future.

- **Share and support** grant opportunities to strengthen our local food infrastructure (distribution, aggregation, storage, season extension, retail pathway development).
- **Support the development** and use of the commissary kitchen at the EWRRC for farmers and community use.
- **Facilitate relationship-building** between purchasers and food providers to develop more resilient local food supply chains.

3

Strengthen and expand food distribution systems of all kinds (retail grocery, mobile food pantries, home delivery, community meals, etc.)

- **Evaluate, enhance, and expand** the Foothills Food Bank home delivery program for program recipients.
- **Collaborate** with existing initiatives and organizations to develop shared goals, actions, and funding strategies.
- **Conduct feasibility studies** and put action into building local food storage and retail infrastructure.

Foothills Community Food Partnership Steering Committee

Cheryl Thompson: Foothills Food Bank Board of Directors, **Aly Robinson:** Whatcom County Health and Community Services, **Noelle Beecroft:** WSU Extension, **Holly O'Neil:** Crossroads Consulting & Evergreen Land Trust, **Henry Fisher:** Foothills Food Bank Executive Director, **Kelly Vogel:** East Whatcom County Regional Resource Center, **Jake Fowler:** Northwest Agriculture and Business Center, **Eliza Steele:** Empyrean Farm, **Emily Hie:** Common Threads Farm



Neighbors don't let neighbors go hungry.

You can volunteer, donate to the food bank, host a dinner, share your garden produce, and more!

Learn more about the Partnership by visiting: <https://www.foothillsfoodbank.org/fcfp>.

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