



A good mind. A good heart. A strong fire.

# Oneida Nation Food Sovereignty Strategic Plan

*Creating a sustainable, self-sufficient food system as a comprehensive approach to enhancing our community's health and wellness*



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## Welcome

Dear Reader:

Welcome to the Strategic Plan document of the Food Sovereignty Initiative of the Oneida Nation. Within this document, you will find the dedication and passion regarding the long-term goals of the food systems of our Nation. The Food Sovereignty Strategic Planning Leadership Team developed this document with the goal of using this as an overall guide in the Nation's effort in developing and sustaining a strong self-sufficient interconnected food system capable of nourishing our community and enhancing the overall health of our Oneida people.

This document outlines the strategic approach the Nation will take in our continual quest for sustainable food sovereignty. From this document will arise detailed action plans, operational plans, and business plans of the various departments and programs of the Nation, as these key stakeholders will use this document to develop and implement specific activities and targets they deem necessary to reach the objectives and goals outlined here.

Our aspiration is to provide a model that may also be used by other tribal nations in their own food sovereignty and wellness journeys, recognizing that while we are all connected by our indigenous strengths, we also have unique needs that must be addressed by our own specific approaches. We hope this document may serve as a flexible and malleable roadmap for these efforts.

Yaw^ko,

Oneida Nation Food Sovereignty Strategic Planning Team

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# Oneida Nation Food Sovereignty Strategic Plan

## Food Sovereignty Strategic Plan

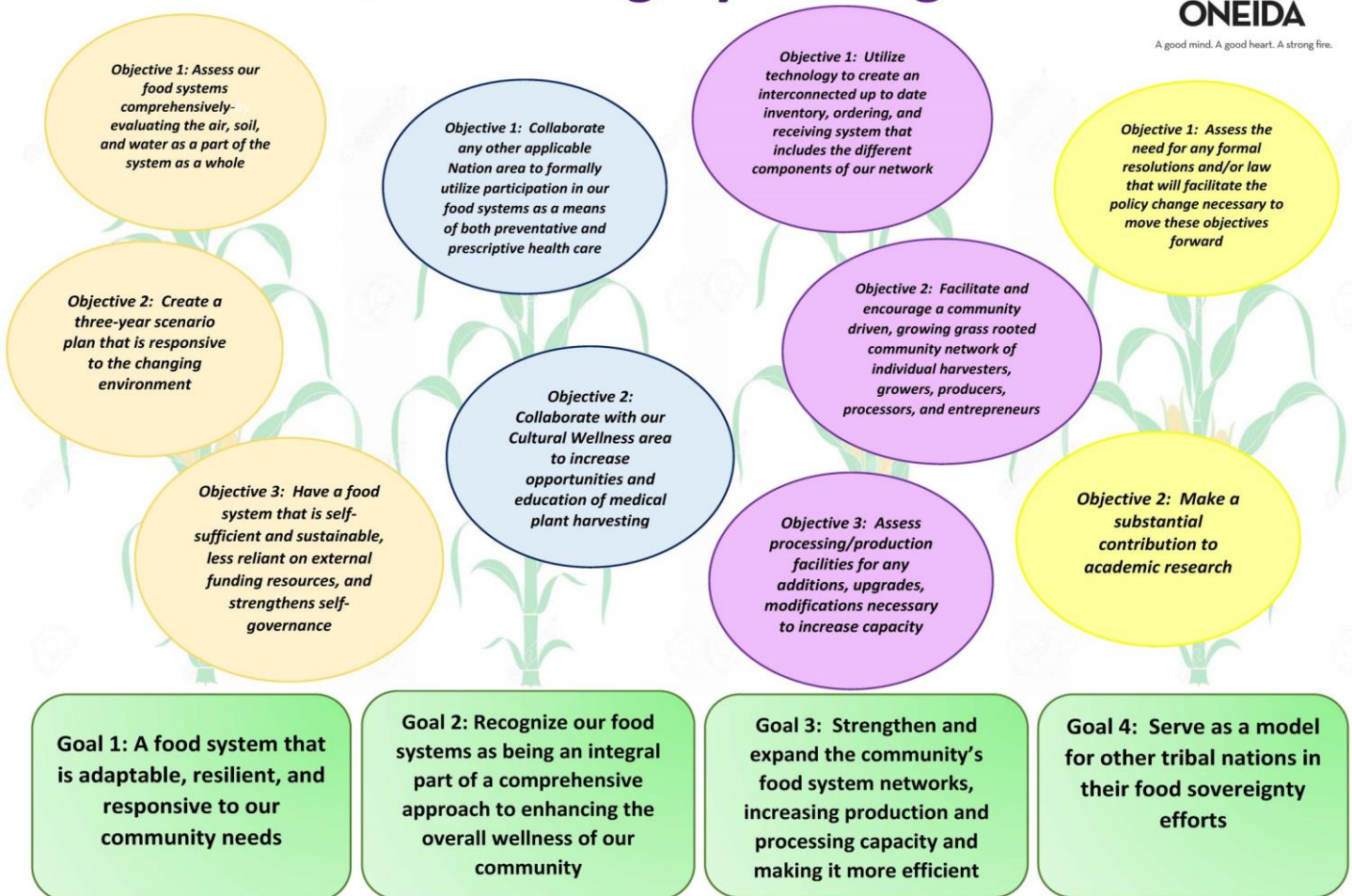
### Framework of Goals and Objectives

The Food Sovereignty Strategic Leadership Team developed four foundational goals of our food sovereignty efforts. These goals are focused on strengthening and connecting the various components in our Nation's food systems to help in creating an efficient system aimed at enhancing the community's overall health and wellness.

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# Oneida Nation Food Sovereignty Strategic Plan

## Goals, Objectives, and Strategic Outcomes

### Goal 1: A food system that is adaptable, resilient, and responsive to our community needs.


Generational trauma continues to rear its ugly head in our communities. Our people suffer various health and socioeconomic disparities across the board at a disproportionately higher rate. However, while we are simultaneously attempting to heal these lasting effects, we are still operating and living in a world where we also feel the excessive impacts of current public health crisis. This includes epidemics, pandemics, and climate change. It is critical that our food systems can withstand the impacts these challenges to be able to operate efficiently and successfully in the name of meeting the needs of our Oneida community.

*Objective 1: Assess our food systems comprehensively by evaluating the air, soil, and water as a part of the system as a whole. Strategic outcomes include:*

- A. Objectively evaluate the impacts of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), pesticides, herbicides, and insecticides on our foods and community health*
- B. Create a long-term agricultural and soil health plan that prioritizes and embraces Tsi niyukwaliho t<sup>^</sup>, our identity as Ukwehuwe, the long-term health of our community, food chain, and wildlife, and connects in alignment with the “Rights of Nature” strategy and goals*
- C. Develop a base-line study on any risk factors in our systems that bioaccumulates and may impact our community members*
- D. Reduce the carbon footprint of our operations*

*Objective 2: Create a three-year scenario plan that is responsive to the changing environment we live in. This includes:*

- A. Complete scenario planning exercises to develop measures and benchmarks of the system, signaling for any needed change in strategy if needed*
- B. Outline specific action steps for identified short, term, and long-term benchmarks to accomplish each objective, providing direction for applicable Food Sovereignty Initiative Team departments to action step plan with identified timelines and responsible departments/employees for each step*
- C. Be responsive to federal program and grant opportunities, actively seeking out opportunities to less tribal contribution in our areas*



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*Objective 3: Have a food system that is self-sufficient and sustainable, less reliant on external funding resources, and strengthens our self-governance. Outcomes include:*

- A. Utilizing OCIFS as a sounding board for decision making*
- B. Increase internal capacity of trained staff able to conduct safety assessments and inspections of our system components*
- C. Launch a pilot program that inserts more indigenous vendors and traditional foods into our federally funded programs and services, using the pilot to advocate for policy change at a federal level if applicable*
- D. Create and implement an “indigenously grown” certification process in which we create and regulate our own determined standards for our agriculture, which will at least meet and/or exceed federal standards for soil, water, animal, plant, and public health*
- E. Assess our community readiness for a food systems comprehensive approach, identifying gaps in our system that need to be addressed in order to best meet the needs of our community*

## **Goal 2: Recognize our food systems as being an integral part of a comprehensive approach to enhancing the overall wellness of our community.**

Formal food sovereignty efforts are not only appropriate to address the residual health effects inherited from generations of trauma, but in fact may be quite necessary. Our indigenous knowledge and ways inform us that our food systems are our medicines. The researched literature upholds the benefits food sovereignty can have to a community’s physical, mental, and spiritual health, making it a vital component to a comprehensive health plan response.

*Objective 1: Collaborate with Comprehensive Health Division, EHSLA Division, Governmental Services Division, Self-Governance Office, Oneida Retail Organization, and any other applicable Nation area to formally utilize participation in our food systems as a means of both preventative and prescriptive health care. Strategic outcomes include:*

- A. Inserting our food sovereignty programs and services into more self-governance agreements (i.e. IHSFunding Agreement or USDA contract agreements)*
- B. Create a referral process with medical and behavioral health departments*

*Objective 2: Collaborate with our cultural leaders to increase opportunities and education of medical plant harvesting. Outcomes include:*

- A. Assessing landscaping around organizational buildings*
- B. Working with our Conservation Department to increase opportunities to harvest cultural and medicinal plants for community members*



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## **Goal 3: Strengthen and expand the community's food system networks, increasing production and processing capacity and making it more efficient.**

Our organization's programs have long championed our food sovereignty efforts for years and provide transferrable knowledge to community members to empower them in their own growing, processing, and harvesting efforts. Cultivating that knowledge so that this community driven grassroots movement in food sovereignty is deeply rooted and our membership is invested and capable enough to become a vital part of our systems is imperative in expanding our network's abilities and efforts. This reciprocal partnership between membership and the organizational programs will address the interconnection of these different inputs and outputs of the systems, making sure they are operating proficiently. This not only reduces process waste, but also increases availability of products and knowledge.

*Objective 1: Utilize technology to create a unified and interconnected up to date inventory, ordering, and receiving system that includes the different components of our network. Outcomes include:*

- A. Create an application for production inventory that prevents shortages*
- B. Create an application for ordering of production items that customers and buyers may use*

*Objective 2: Facilitate and encourage a community driven, growing grass rooted community network of individual harvesters, growers, producers, processors, and entrepreneurs that become integrated into our Nation's food system networks. Outcomes include:*

- A. Develop a network directory of all available products and where they can be obtained, including both Oneida Nation programs and community members*
- B. Develop a network directory of where technical assistance and services can be sought, including both Oneida Nation Programs and community members*
- C. Investigate existing and new co-op opportunities for individual growers and vendors as a means to address interaction with Oneida Retail*
- D. Continue to create and facilitate opportunities for community members to grow their own foods for themselves and others*
- E. Obtain direct input from community growers and OCIFS of this strategic plan-developing a two way communication funnel for any input, questions, or concerns so as to gain community investment into this strategic plan and its objectives and actions*

*Objective 3: Assess the Nation's processing and production facilities for any necessary additions, upgrades, modifications, etc. necessary to increase capacity. Outcomes include:*

- A. Additional commercial kitchen spaces for community vendors and/or Nation program needs*



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- B. Pursue a facility for the Cannery via the construction of the Food Innovation Center*
- C. Assess the demand/feasibility of Nation owned meat processing facility or certified mobile processing unit for community use*

**Goal 4: Serve as a model for other tribal nations in their food sovereignty efforts.**

Formal policies, resolutions, and processes help to serve as usable resources for other nation's in their effort to strengthen their food sovereignty capabilities. Realizing that every tribe carries its own unique set of needs, and should be met with accordingly with self-determined responses and actions, our formal response and research may help facilitate the use of indigenous research and data by other communities, lessening the dependence on non-indigenous research and resources.

*Objective 1: Assess the need for any formal resolutions and/or law that will facilitate the policy change necessary to move these objectives forward and make our components responsible to each other and the Nation's standards. Outcomes include:*

- A. A formal Food Sovereignty Resolution*
- B. Assess the need for a Traditional Food Code or amendments to the current code to include Traditional Foods*
- C. An Agricultural Law that references our agricultural and soil health plan*

*Objective 2: Make a substantial contribution to academic research. Outcomes include:*

- A. Utilizing our projects and pilot projects to gather Oneida driven data for use by other nations*
- B. Publish a referenceable and usable piece of academic literature that cites indigenous knowledge and data*

## **Impact Outcome**

This long-term strategic plan serves as roadmap in providing direction to our food sovereignty efforts in realizing the aforementioned overall goals of the Nation. Ultimately, as we move to prioritize the long-term overall health of our community and uphold our responsibilities to our environment and identity as Ukwehuwe, our goal is to facilitate a deep rooted and interconnected food system that is capable of both meeting any immediate food needs of the community as well as fulfilling the long term vision of being a fully self-sustaining system for our next generations, being utilized as a valuable tool in addressing long-term health and wellness.