

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025 - 2030



**CHARLES
KOINER
CONSERVANCY**
for Urban Farming





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for Urban Farming

The Charles Koiner Conservancy for Urban Farming (CKC) is an independent nonprofit land trust dedicated to sustaining food-producing greenspaces in the high-density neighborhoods of Montgomery County, MD. Our work aims to make urban greenspaces more engaging, cooperative and productive.

We believe that when land is treated as a shared resource, rather than an owned asset, it can be leveraged for greater social benefit.

WHY A STRATEGIC PLAN NOW?

PROVIDE BIG PICTURE FOR CLARITY & COHESION



Provide strategic direction and a shared vision, so that our broad community of board, staff, volunteers, interns, donors, partners, customers and neighbors can better understand and appreciate how their unique role contributes to the big picture and makes a difference in the work we are doing.

LAY FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH



Given the organization's recent adoption of the REACH Hub Urban Farm project at Loiederman Middle School and other opportunities for expansion, the board and staff desire to establish a strategic plan that will foster sustainable nonprofit growth, create a healthy and supportive workplace, and ensure long-term land stewardship.



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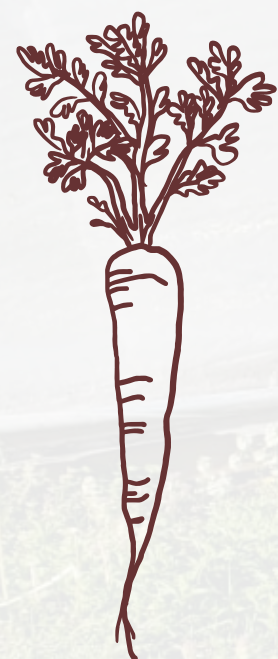
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Charles Koiner Conservancy for Urban Farming (CKC) was founded in 2018 to preserve an iconic urban farm in downtown Silver Spring, Maryland - Koiner Farm.

The protection of Koiner Farm, followed by the roll-out of unique and desirable on-farm programs, helped foster an urban farming movement in Montgomery County. As a result of CKC's success at Koiner Farm, the organization was selected by Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) to create and manage the school district's first urban farm on school property, known as the pilot REACH Hub and Farm at A. Mario Loiederman Middle School in Wheaton.

CKC's leadership in the County's urban agriculture space has spurred the creation of other neighborhood-based farm, like the Montgomery College Food Forest, Kemp Mill Micro-Farm and Shepherd's Table Kitchen Garden. CKC has also fostered local food system ingenuity by supporting a closed-loop micro food systems in East Silver Spring, and now Wheaton.

Two founding principles of CKC's nonprofit structure are (1) advocacy for long-term land-use agreements on food producing greenspaces, and (2) a commitment to community-directed programs. This Strategic Plan will take a deeper look at these founding principles and provide a broad analysis of the opportunities for sustainable growth and expansion of our work here in Montgomery County.



**“Farms should be like
parks - one in every
neighborhood and
open to all.”**



Kate Medina, co-founder of the
Charles Koiner Conservancy

MISSION & VISION



MISSION

To create and sustain a network of neighborhood farms that promote healthy living, inspire food system innovation and build community resilience.



VISION

Thriving communities that cooperatively steward the land and provide healthy food and engaging outdoor activities.



CORE VALUES

Access to ***healthy land and food*** should be ***a fundamental right*** of all people, especially children

The threats to our ***global*** food system can be reduced through ***local*** actions

Communities are stronger when they celebrate and embrace their differences, such as through ***the unifying act of growing & sharing food***

LOGIC MODEL

If we treat **LAND** as a **SHARED RESOURCE**, then we can leverage it for **SOCIAL BENEFIT**, which can have a positive effect on several key social determinants of **HEALTH AND LEARNING**.



**Nutritious
Food**

+

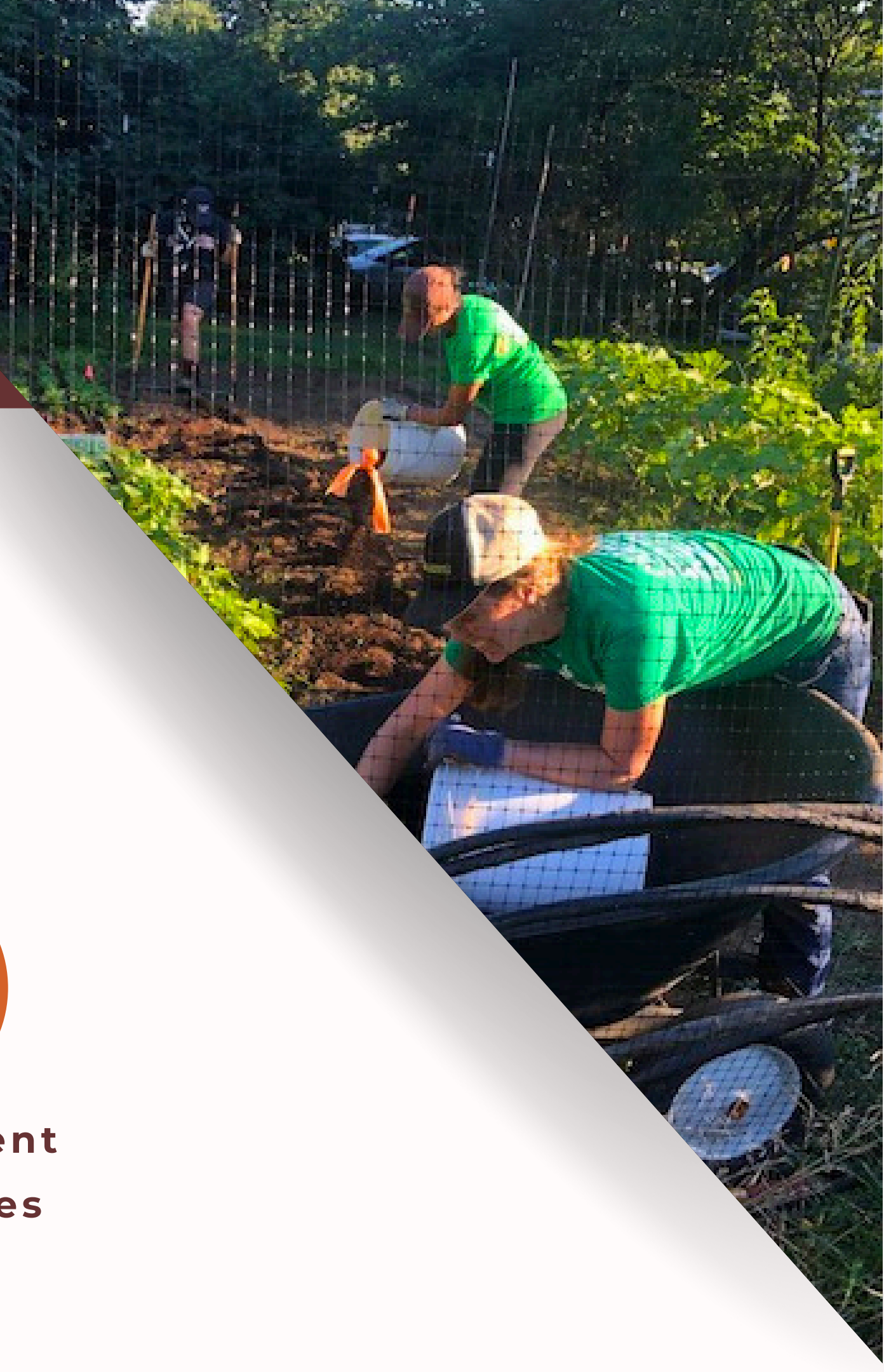


**Social-Emotional
Connections**

=



**More Resilient
Communities**



AREAS OF WORK

LAND CONSERVATION

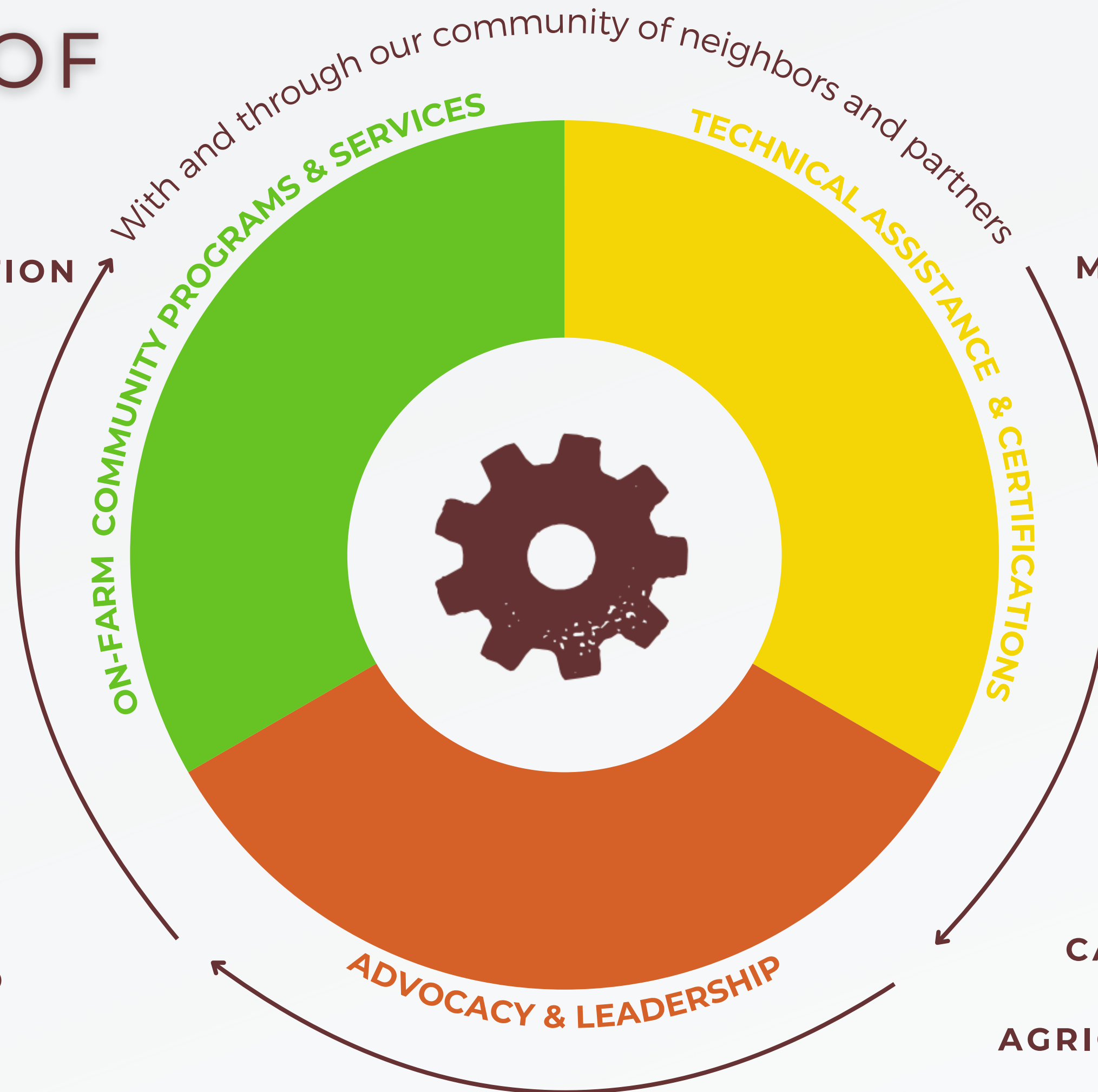
COMMUNITY
RESILIENCE

SOIL AND
PLANT CARE

FOOD
DISTRIBUTION

FIELD TRIPS AND
CARE FARMING

INTERNSHIPS AND
VOLUNTEERSHIPS



DESIRED IMPACT

MORE EQUITABLE ACCESS
TO GREENSPACES

COMMUNITY BUILDING
AND PLACE-MAKING

SUSTAINABLE CLOSED
LOOP FOOD SYSTEMS

HEALTHY DIETS AND
ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

GREATER DIVERSITY OF
CAREERS IN AGRICULTURE

AGRICULTURAL INNOVATIONS

PROGRAM AREAS



FARM MANAGEMENT

SOIL & PLANT CARE

Infrastructure & Equipment,
Seed Starting, Crop Rotation,
Integrated Pest Management,
Soil Nutrient Management,
Harvesting, Composting

FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Weekly Markets, FMNP/SNAP/WIC*,
Food Assistance and Donations,
Restaurants, Buy-In Partners



URBAN AG EDUCATION

FIELD TRIPS & CARE FARMING

Schools, Troops and Camps
Excel Beyond the Bell*
Care Farmer Employment*
MAEOE Green School Center*

INTERNSHIPS & VOLUNTEERSHIPS

Teen Works*
MD Dept of Labor (apprenticeships)*



LAND STEWARDSHIP

LAND CONSERVATION

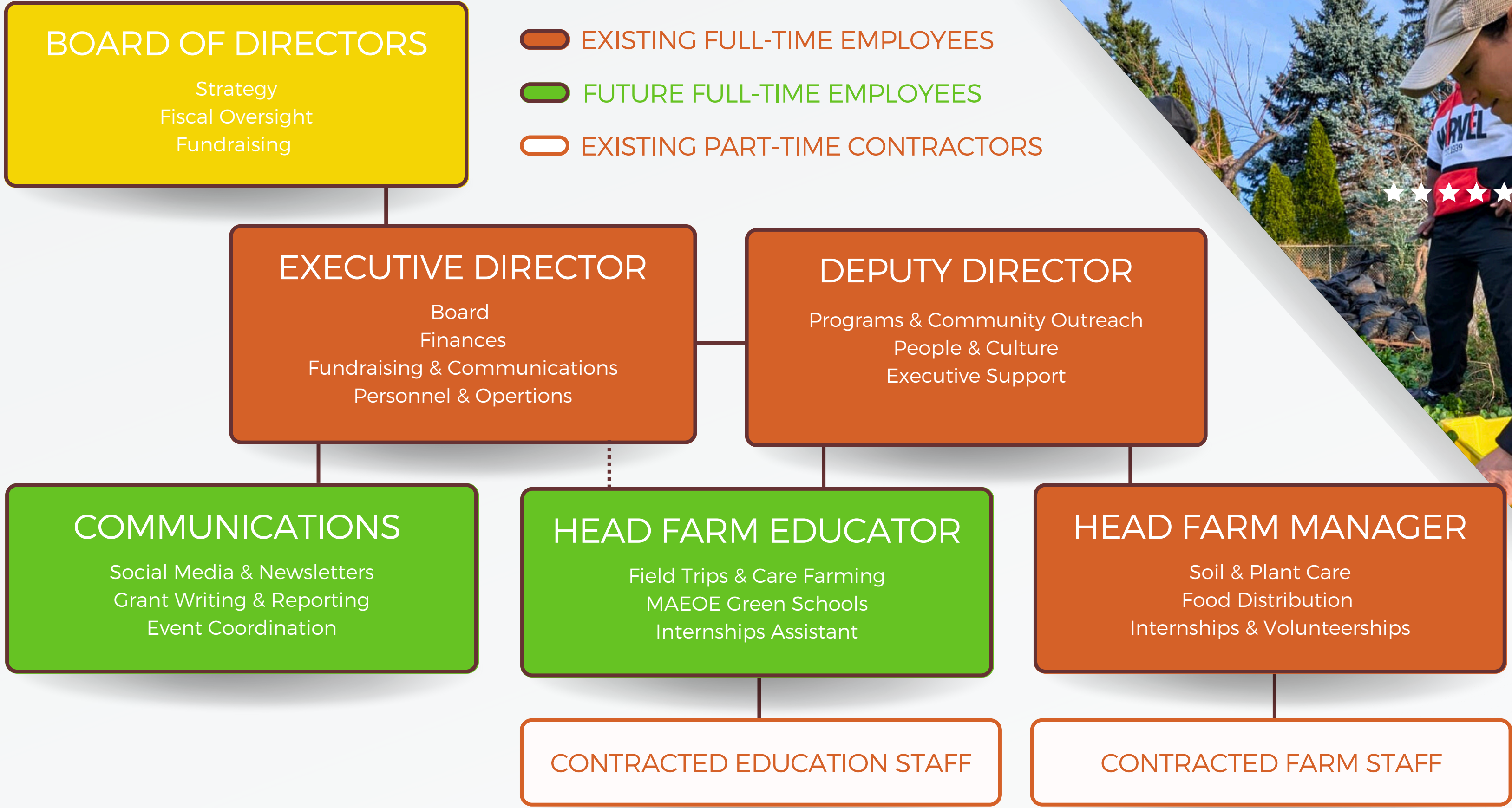
Land Assessment and Acquisition,
Land Use Agreements,
Easement Monitoring

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

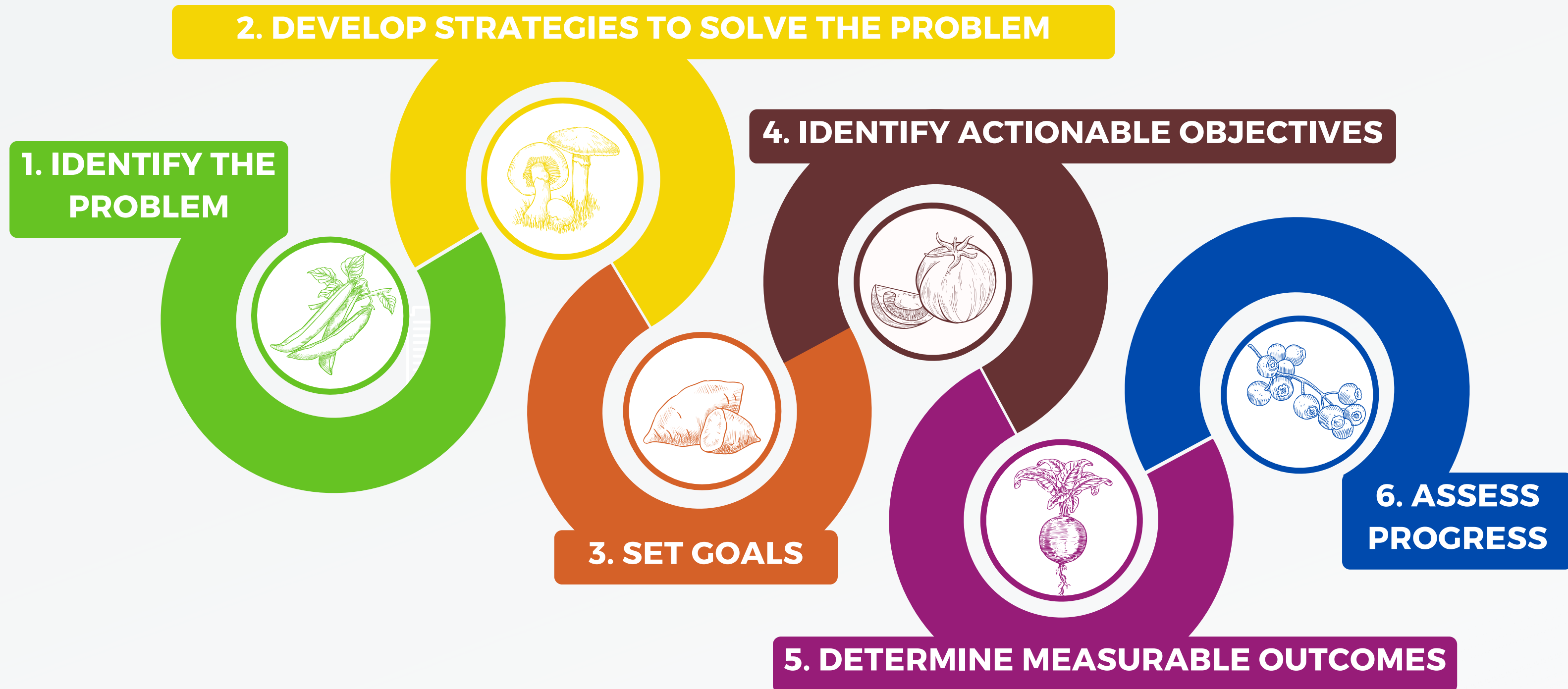
Liaisons, Vendors & Workshops
Technical Assistance*
Resilience Hub & OEMHS C.O.A.D.*

*green asterisk indicates opportunity for new/expanded programming

ORG STRUCTURE



STRATEGIC PLANNING MAP



STRATEGIC PLANNING ACTIONS

STRATEGIES: Improve land access and food system transparency, integrate our programs with partner orgs, and provide technical assistance and advocacy for a stronger network of urban farmers

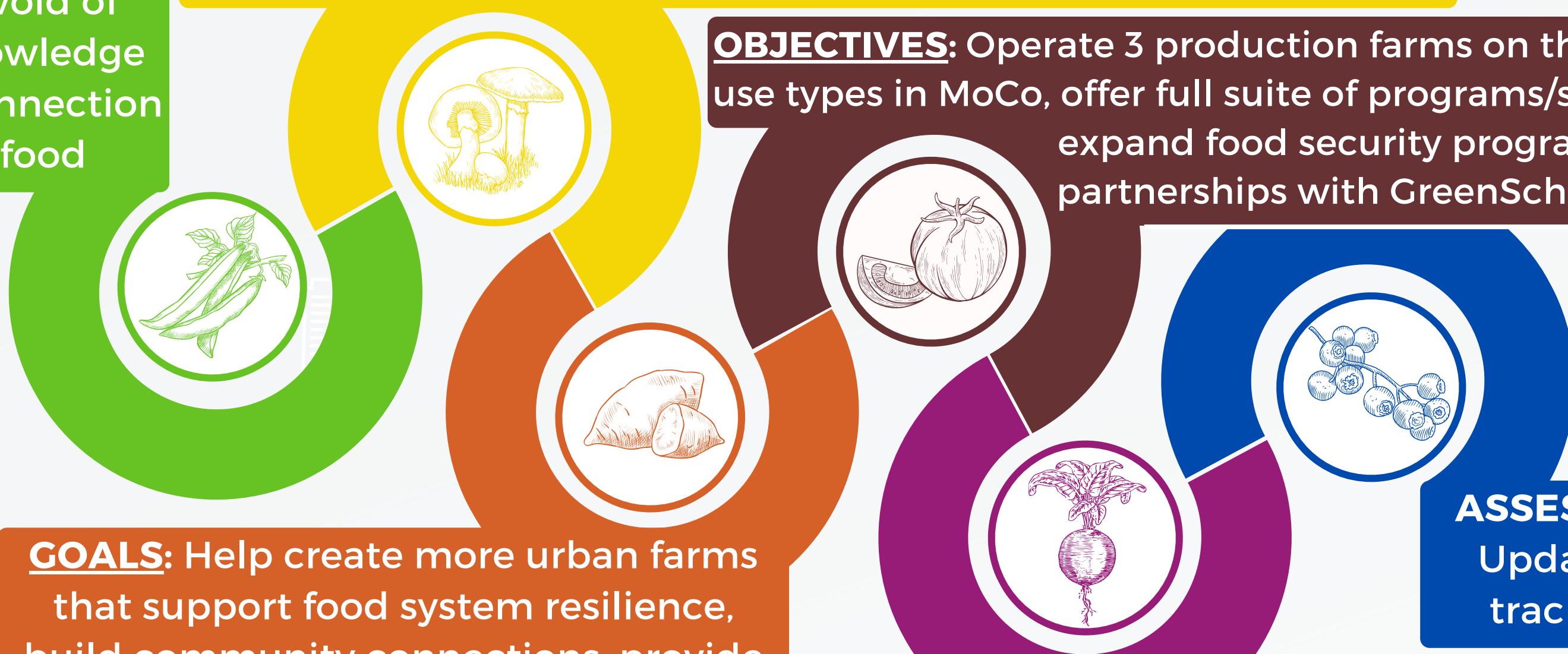
PROBLEM: A void of agricultural knowledge and a lack of connection to land and food

OBJECTIVES: Operate 3 production farms on the 3 primary land use types in MoCo, offer full suite of programs/services at farms, expand food security program, and establish partnerships with GreenSchools and C.O.A.D.

GOALS: Help create more urban farms that support food system resilience, build community connections, provide outdoor learning experiences and support urban ag innovation

OUTCOMES: Number of individuals engaging with and benefiting from our farms, pounds of produce grown and distributed, and pounds of food scraps composted

ASSESS PROGRESS:
Update outcomes tracker quarterly



STRATEGIC PLANNING TERMS DEFINED

01

PROBLEM: A situation that is harmful and threatening; a matter that needs to be dealt with and overcome

02

STRATEGY: A plan to address a problem by eliminative or reducing the causes of the problem and/or the primary threats

03

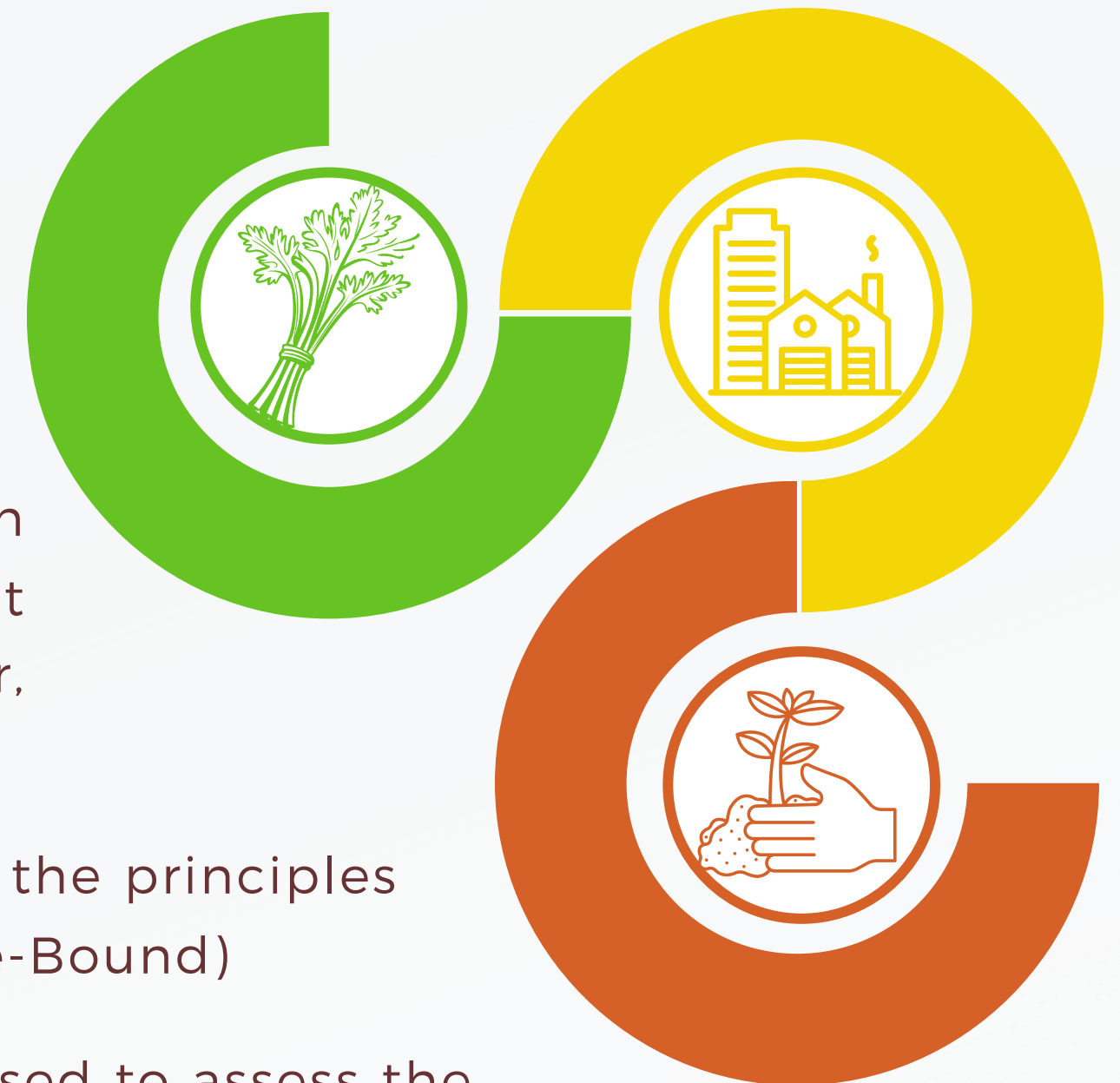
GOAL: A broad and overarching accomplishment; can seem intangible or abstract; usually the final impact or creation that we are seeking; uses generalized words like improve, foster, develop and establish

04

OBJECTIVE: A specific action that can be measured; rooted in the principles of S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-Bound)

05

OUTCOME: The quantity, degree, or number of units that are used to assess the success of an objective



PROBLEM

“The problem is that it’s like the bottom of the ag industry has dropped out - not only have we lost farmland, we’ve lost a basic understanding of what it takes to grow food.”

Lorien MacAuley, PhD, Founder of Fresh Mama Farms
and Agriculture & Sustainability Specialist for
the Montgomery County Food Council

According to U.S. News and World Report, the United States has lost 4 million of its 6 million family farms over the last half century and the average age of America's farmers is now 58.3.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), obesity in children has more than tripled since 1970's and 1 in 3 adults are now overweight or obese.

PROBLEM

“The problem is that we have a food system in America that is fundamentally broken - or, more accurately, working exactly as designed, which involves allowing for and rewarding externalities. Our planet is (quite literally) on fire, threatening our food production, processing, and distribution systems. Those systems have been built upon a model that too often is extractive and oppressive, benefiting the few at the expense of the many.”

Tom McDougall, Founder of 4P Foods, a benefit corporation

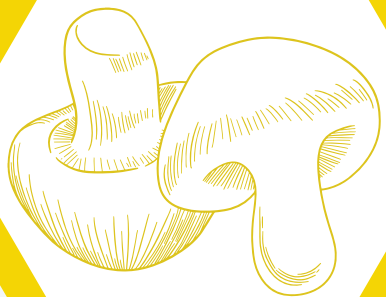
The global food systems is responsible a third of the total human-caused greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. According to the World Resources Institute, the agriculture industry alone contributes 15% of climate changing gasses - making it the second largest emitter of GHGs, second only to the energy sector, which includes both power generation and transportation.

STRATEGIES

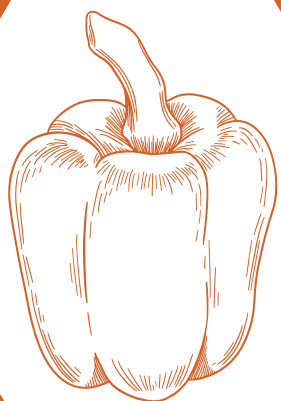
OVERVIEW



IMPROVE ACCESS TO FARMS AND PROVIDE GREATER TRANSPARENCY AROUND HOW FOOD IS GROWN AND DISTRIBUTED



INTEGRATE KEY PROGRAMS INTO EXISTING SYSTEMS, LIKE TEENWORKS & GREENSCHOOLS; COLLABORATE WITH PARTNERS TO IMPROVE THE CONSISTENCY AND REPLICABILITY OF OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES



ESTABLISH THE NAME “KOINER” AS THE REGIONAL LEADER ON URBAN AGRICULTURE INITIATIVES BY PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND ADVOCACY TO URBAN FARMERS, URBAN PLANNERS, AND URBAN PROPERTY OWNERS



STRATEGIES

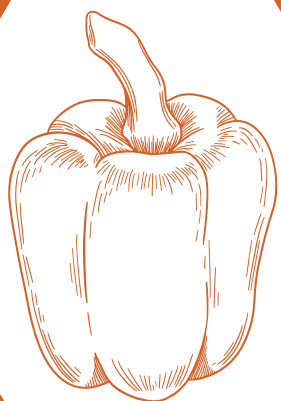
DETAILED



ACCESS & TRANSPARENCY: Manage urban farms within equity-focused high-density neighborhoods of Montgomery County, MD that grow food at-scale according to the highest possible standards of organic farming and in the most visible, inclusive and cooperative manner feasible.



INTEGRATE & COLLABORATE: Integrate our programs and services within existing and long-standing networks/structures of government and business. Examples include, contracting with the Housing Opportunities Commission for CSA distribution or partnering with the Department of Rec to become a TeenWorks certified site for internships and an Excel Beyond the Bell site for field trips.



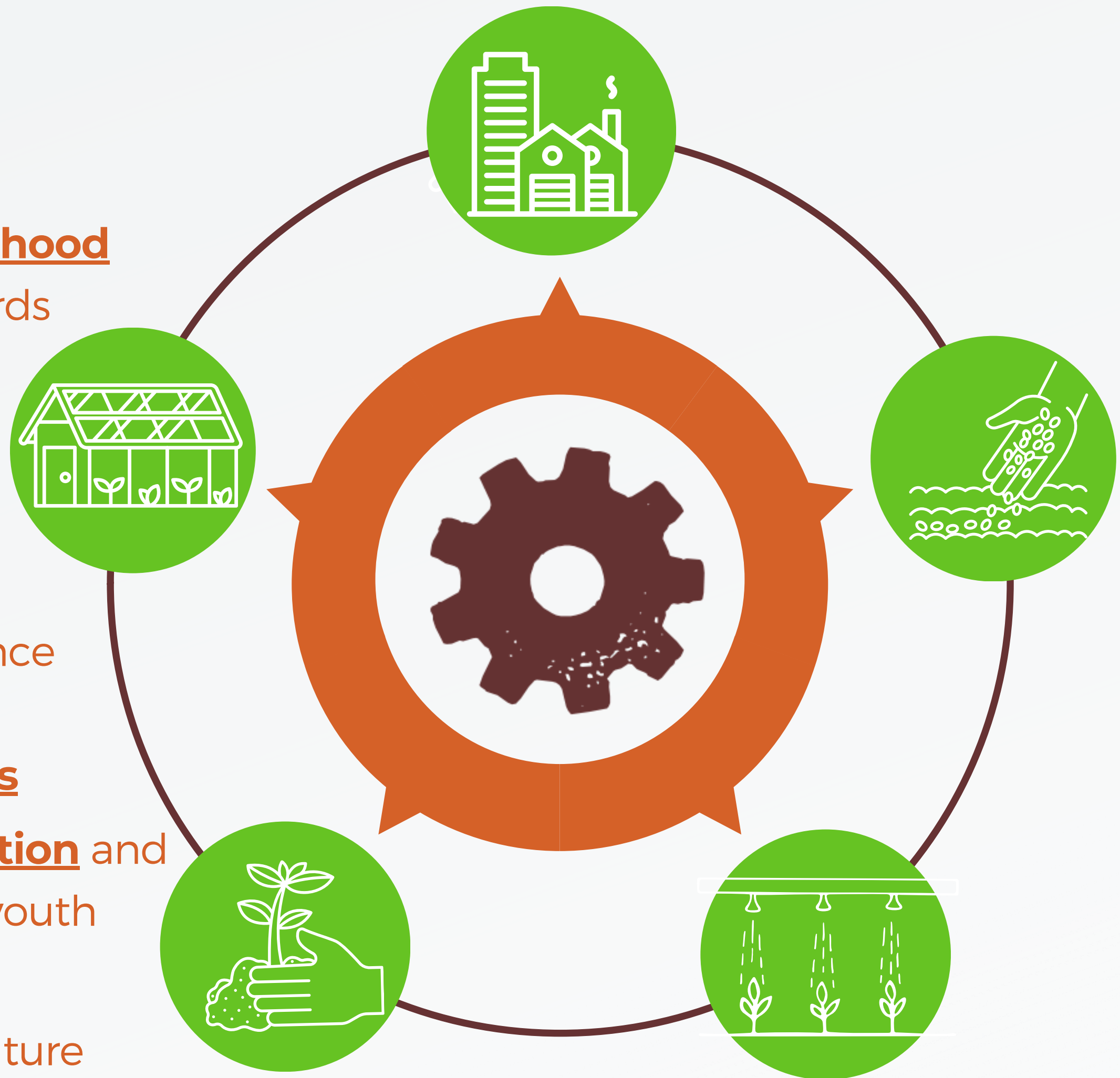
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & ADVOCACY: Establish a significant foundation of urban farms and skilled farm workers that sets CKC on track to become a leader for urban farming initiatives within the region. Explore and foster projects with the **Montgomery County Greenbank's Ag Study**, the potential **Ag Innovation Tech Hub in Paint Branch**, and the **Community Food Forest Collective's work with Montgomery College**.



GOALS

OVERVIEW

- 01** Create a **farm in every neighborhood** supported by a network of stewards
- 02** Establish **more resilient communities** where people feel connected to their **land**, their **food** and their **neighbors**
- 03** Support a sustainable and resilience food system by operating local **closed-loop micro-food systems**
- 04** Encourage more **outdoor education** and **land stewardship activities** for youth
- 05** Inspire more viable **green career options** within the field of agriculture



SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES

2025-2030

1 Operate **three production farms** in equity focus neighborhoods that grow food at-scale according to the highest possible standards of organic farming and offer our **full suite of community programs**:

PRODUCTION FARMS:

- Koiner Farm (on private land)
- Loiederman Farm (on school district land)
- TBD Farm (on park land)

SUITE OF COMMUNITY PROGRAMS:

- Soil & Plant Care
- Food Distribution
- Field Trips & Care Farming
- Internships & Volunteerships
- Community Conservation

2 Run on-farm farmers markets that provide **double SNAP, WIC, and FMNP** benefits to customers

3 Become a certified **Green Center** with the MD Association for Environmental & Outdoor Education (MAEOE)

4 Become a **Community Org Active in Disaster (COAD)** with the Montgomery County Office of Emergency Mng't & Homeland Security (OEMHS)

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES

BEYOND 2030

1 Maintain three production farms on the leading property ownership types in Montgomery County:

LEADING PROPERTY OWNERSHIP TYPES IN MOCO:

- private property
- MCPS property
- M-NCPPC property

2 Leverage our relationships and experience to provide technical assistance, fiscal sponsorship and/or other support services for new and emerging urban farms, community gardens, food forests and other food producing greenspaces in Montgomery County

3 With partners, consider forming a beginner farmers program and/or farm incubator program in Montgomery County