



March 10 –13, 2020 | New Orleans, LA

NEW OFFERING: SOLUTIONS EXCHANGE

Attending the National Good Food Network Conference and looking for new ideas to address a challenge you're working through? Consider participating in a **Solutions Exchange** to tap into the expertise of your peers and crowdsource ideas, examples, and solutions to advance your work.

The Wallace Center's [2020 National Good Food Network Conference](#) is excited to partner with [Kitchen Table Consulting, LLC](#) to feature a new approach to problem solving that leverages the expertise of this community: the **Solutions Exchange**.

Adapted from the Village Square Model, the Solutions Exchange will offer attendees the opportunity to exchange ideas, share knowledge, and gain solutions via a facilitated peer learning process. Through small group discussions, "solutions seekers" will have the opportunity to share a challenge that they are currently working through with a sounding board of peers. Using the wisdom of the NGFN community, you'll dig deep into the challenge presented, ask key questions that explore different opportunities, and share experiences and ideas. This is a fantastic opportunity to tap into the knowledge within this community, exchange resources, and build a support network of peers from across the country.

To submit your project for a Solutions Exchange, please read through the following information carefully, and when you're ready [apply here](#) by Sunday, February 16, 2020. Decisions will be made by February 18, 2020 and there will be a 60-minute prep call for selected projects on Monday, February 24 at 2pm Eastern.

This session will be facilitated by Jen Dalton and Miles Gordon of [Kitchen Table Consulting, LLC](#).

Session Details

We are looking for 6 projects that align with the central focus of this year's Conference: local and regional food systems as a driver of community economic development, equity, and ecological improvement.

The best candidates for a Solutions Exchange are current projects that you want to take to the next level. The projects will serve as both an anchor for the conversations together and a catalyst for learning through collaborative problem solving. As you think about your project, questions to consider may be: What are your key challenges? What are your burning questions? Where are you feeling stuck?

Rather than a “best practice” symposium, this will be a space to tap into the knowledge of your peers and gain insight into new ways of seeing and thinking about the opportunity ahead.

90 minutes total

- 4 minutes for facilitators to describe how the session will work
- 6 minutes for 3 Solutions Exchange pitches to the whole room (each person/group gets 2 minutes)
- 5 minutes for audience to self-select projects for providing feedback and to form into groups
- 10 minutes for your poster presentation
- 45 minutes for peer feedback and conversation
- 20 minutes to highlight learnings and actionable solutions with the whole group

A project poster will act as your presentation material. Presenters will spend approximately 20% of the session telling the story of their challenge, using the poster as a visual aide, and 80% of the time in a facilitated discussion with participants around your burning questions. More details about the session format, including a sample presentation poster, will be provided during the prep calls and available on-site if desired.

Project Prep

Prep for projects will include the following and should take about 5-10 hours in total:
(1) Attend the following 60-minute prep call: Thursday, February 27 @ 11 AM PT
(2) Optional in-person prep meetings on-site at the Conference on Wed, March 10
(3) Completion of a large format project poster which you will draft in advance and prepare on-site. This poster will be used to present your session.

SESSION AUDIENCE

To help guide you, please consider the audience. The primary attendees of the conference are diverse but focused on food value chain development, such as: food hub staff, staff from community-based food organizations, local food entrepreneurs, value chain coordinators, technical assistance providers, nonprofits and government agencies, funders, and value chain and food hub advocates.

SELECTION CRITERIA EVALUATION

Your challenge should be related to something you or your organization are actively working on. Solutions Exchange applications will be evaluated based on how well they meet the following criteria:

- How you describe the learning edge/newness of your challenge
- How the themes of the conference are represented in your challenge
- The extent to which this is an organizational or systems level challenge
- How the challenge provide opportunities for peer support and crowdsourcing

We will prioritize projects that address the 10 Conference themes, which were chosen based on what was most alive across the NGFN in the past year.

- Food Hub Operations and Innovations
- Financing and Finances
- Racial Equity and Inclusion
- Learning from Failures and Missteps
- Market Channels
- Macro Trends' Impact on Your Work
- Processing and Value-Added Businesses
- Place-Based Economic Development
- Leadership and Collaboration
- Marketing, Storytelling and Education

Conference Theme Descriptions

The 2020 NGFN Conference is a chance to reflect on the gains and missteps of past decades of food systems work, examine models and practices that are working now, and co-create new strategies for food systems change, as we invite and amplify the voices of frontline communities who have previously been excluded from the conversation. [Visit the NGFN Conference website to learn more.](#)

Food Hub Operations and Innovations: Food hub networks, food hub longevity, technological and operational solutions.

Financing and Finances: Creative approaches to lending, investment and finance for small food businesses, business planning, increasing capital availability to underserved communities.

Racial Equity and Inclusion: How to implement racial equity in your organization and your community, how to define, measure and improve accountability for equity work.

Learning from Failures and Missteps: Share a project/approach/partnership that didn't go as planned. Reflect on what went wrong, what you learned, and how it ended up!

Market Channels: Creative approaches to institutional sales, examples of institutional investment beyond procurement, innovations in retail operations, managing diverse revenue streams.

Macro Trends' Impact on Your Work: Adapting to climate change, consumer trends, international trade, corporate co-option of local food language, plant-based proteins, food delivery etc.

Processing and Value-Added Businesses: Incubators, shared used kitchens, processing, meat and protein supply chains.

Place-Based Economic Development: Community-owned businesses and social enterprises, supporting entrepreneurs, cooperatives, tourism as economic development.

Leadership and Collaboration: Collective impact, systems leadership, value chain coordination, partnership, personal leadership development, tools for leading teams, networks or organizations.

Marketing, Storytelling and Education: Sharing what you do with your community and your customers, engaging new partners, creative approaches to adult education on technical topics (food safety, business skills etc.)

Please read through the following information carefully, and when you're ready [apply here](#) by Friday, Sunday, February 16, 2020.

Please reach out to Annalina with any questions: annalina.kazickas@winrock.org