



# **COMMUNITY FOOD CENTER PLANNING GUIDE**

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# INTRODUCTION

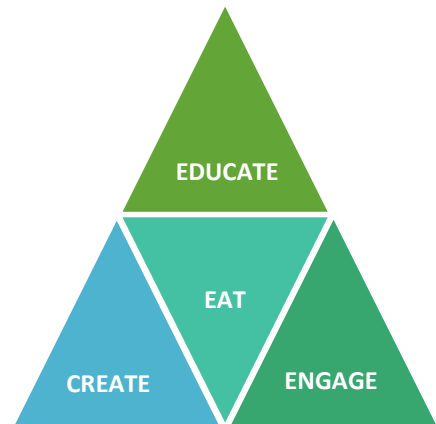
Many communities are working to address and solve the challenges of accessing healthy foods – those that nourish our bodies, communities, and environment. Food insecurity, associated chronic diseases, and lowered quality of life compel us to develop programs, practices, and services that ensure a healthy choice and a healthy environment. Increasingly, communities across the nation are utilizing food hubs, community gardens, small retail outlets, and shared commercial kitchens to serve these needs. Combined with education and skill-building, this infrastructure can result in increased access, awareness, and consumption of healthy foods.

Groups across the nation are working to integrate infrastructure, programming, and resources under one roof to foster resource sharing, collaboration between organizations and businesses, and to share services.

## A **COMMUNITY FOOD CENTER (CFC)**

is a neighborhood-based space designed to

- increase access to healthy foods,
- connect providers and consumers to knowledge, resources, and skills;
- grow and support emerging food-based community and economic development;
- and engage both providers and consumers in the co-creation of their food and food supply chain.



To support and sustain the development of spaces such as these, all stakeholders, including community members, consumers and producers, end users of the space, community food advocates and experts, researchers and policy-makers, and funders must work together.

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## USER'S GUIDE

This guide is intended for communities interested in a comprehensive plan for increasing access to healthy foods. It is designed to be used as a conversation starter, thought stimulator, and planning and engagement tool. Best used with a team of planning partners such as those outlined in the paragraph above, it can spark creativity, organize ideas, and assist with the initial development stage. Use the worksheets section (p. 27-32) to record your ideas and thoughts as you move through the guide.



# GUIDING FRAMEWORK

## elements of access

### ELEMENTS of ACCESS

AVAILABLE

ACCESSIBLE

AFFORDABLE

ACCOMMODATE

ACCEPTABLE

AWARENESS

ABILITY

ATTITUDE

The guiding framework for a community food center comes from an understanding that increasing “access” to healthy foods is more than just making it available, accessible and affordable.

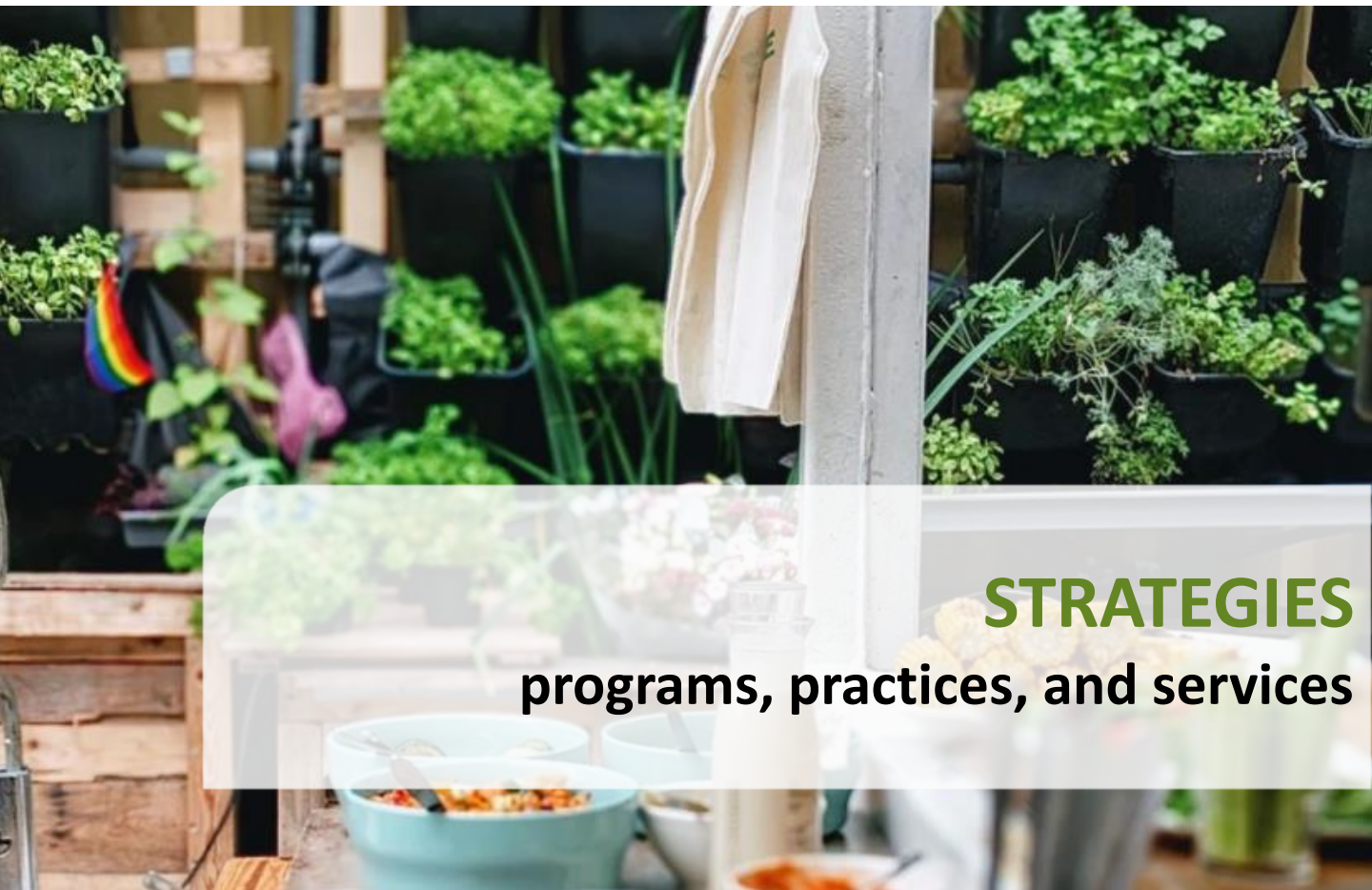
Individuals with varying cultural preferences, abilities, attitudes, and awareness are involved in both the production and consumption of our food. A sustainable solution is one that finds the best fit between both the provider of healthy food and the consumer of healthy food, neither being more or less important than the other.

Use these comprehensive elements of access to guide the selection, design, and implementation of strategies you employ in your community food center.

# ELEMENTS OF ACCESS

ELEMENTS	PROVIDER CHARACTERISTICS	CONSUMER CHARACTERISTICS
<b>AVAILABILITY</b> (physical presence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of food stores available</li> <li>• amount of healthy food in store</li> <li>• enough quantity available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enough quality, nutritionally dense food and beverages to enable healthy, active lives</li> </ul>
<b>ACCESSIBILITY</b> (getting to and from the space)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• distance from food retailer to individual</li> <li>• transportation to and from venue</li> <li>• proper signage, parking, entry/exit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• resources available to consumer for physically getting to/from food (e.g. vehicle, public transport)</li> <li>• physical capability to access food</li> </ul>
<b>AFFORDABILITY</b> (financially feasible and responsible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cost to the provider of space, processing, delivery of programs and services</li> <li>• working conditions afford employees a living wage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consumer's capability to pay for products</li> <li>• purchasing incentives or services (e.g. SNAP, coupons, etc.)</li> <li>• relative cost to another food store</li> </ul>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b> (infrastructure and structure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hours of operation of retailer</li> <li>• accommodating of various reading levels, varying physical abilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• capability to get to retailer during hours of operation</li> <li>• capability to utilize the space</li> </ul>
<b>ACCEPTABILITY</b> (needs and preferences)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cultural appropriateness of products and display of items</li> <li>• quality of products</li> <li>• sufficient variety needed to meet consumer's nutritional and dietary needs and preferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consumer's cultural food needs (actual products or delivery of them)</li> <li>• foods that meet the quality and nutrition standards of the consumer</li> </ul>
<b>AWARENESS</b> (knowledge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• venue's knowledge of procuring, preparing and delivering, healthy food to consumer</li> <li>• knowledge of consumer's subjective preference/desires</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge necessary for finding, buying, and cooking healthy food</li> <li>• perception that a food retailer will have what they need/want and that it is affordable</li> </ul>
<b>ABILITY</b> (skills)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• skills and tools necessary for producing, preparing and delivering healthy food to consumer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• skills to find and acquire food</li> <li>• skills to prepare and consume food once it is procured</li> </ul>
<b>ATTITUDE</b> (beliefs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• confidence in ability to provide</li> <li>• trust in the consumer to participate</li> <li>• belief that it's worth it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• confidence in one's own ability</li> <li>• trust in the provider</li> <li>• perception that influences action</li> <li>• belief that it's worth it</li> </ul>





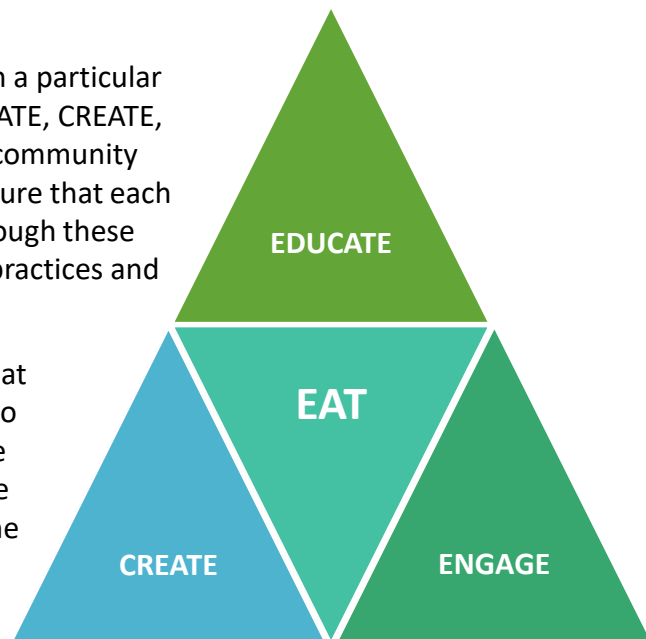
# STRATEGIES

## programs, practices, and services

### COMMUNITY FOOD CENTER STRATEGIES

Strategies for increasing access to healthy food within a particular community fall into four broad categories: EAT, EDUCATE, CREATE, and ENGAGE. Each provides a vital function within a community food center and there are many different ways to ensure that each is being met. The next section of this guide walks through these categories and suggests specific ideas for programs, practices and services within them.

As you read through each approach, note the ones that could work for your community and neighborhood. Do any of these ideas feel particularly doable to you? Are any of them a good place to start while others may be ones you could work towards? Do you know of anyone or any organization already doing that work? Use the blank lines and white space on the pages to jot down your own ideas and suggestions.



# GUIDE TO STRATEGIES

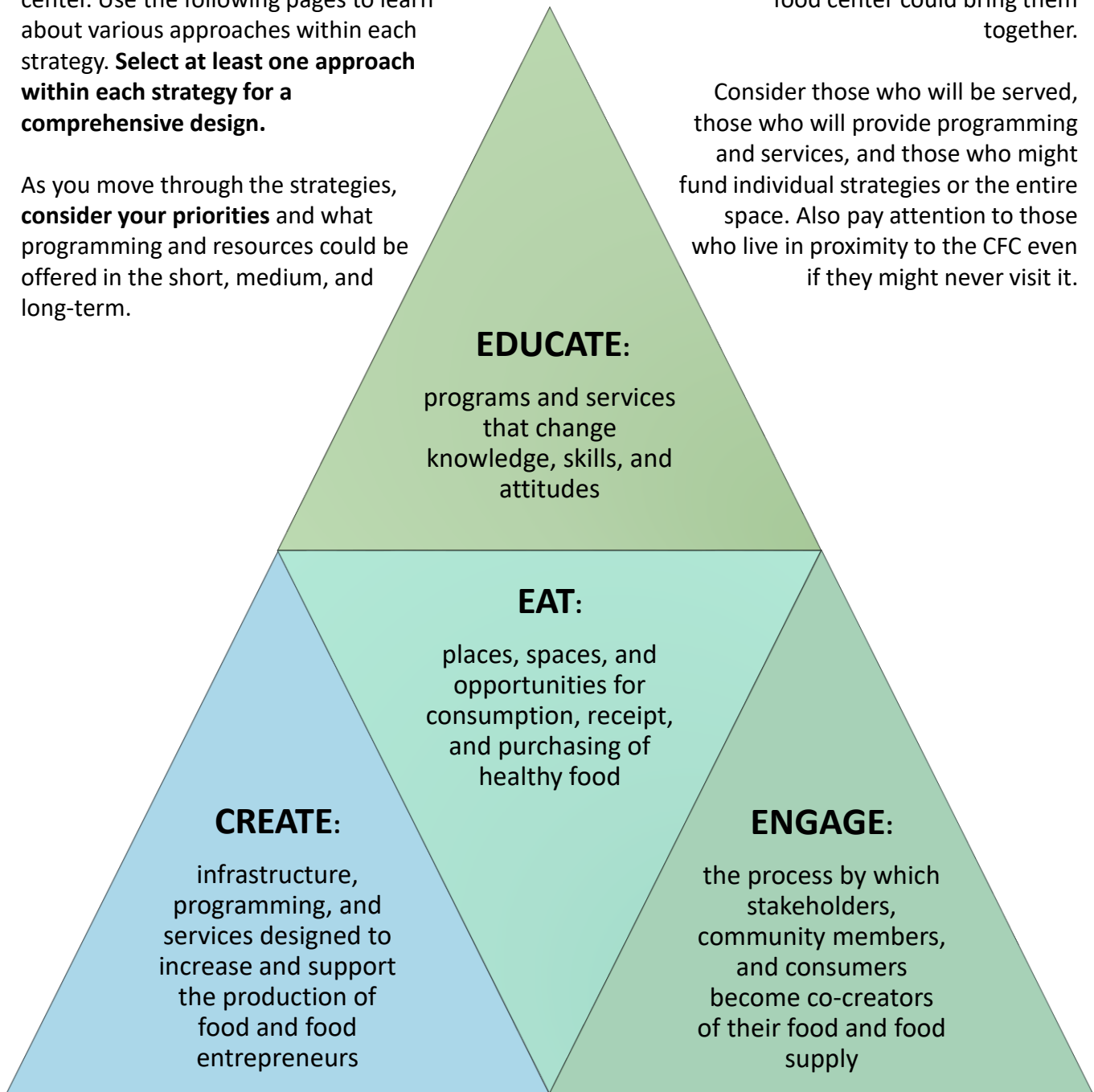
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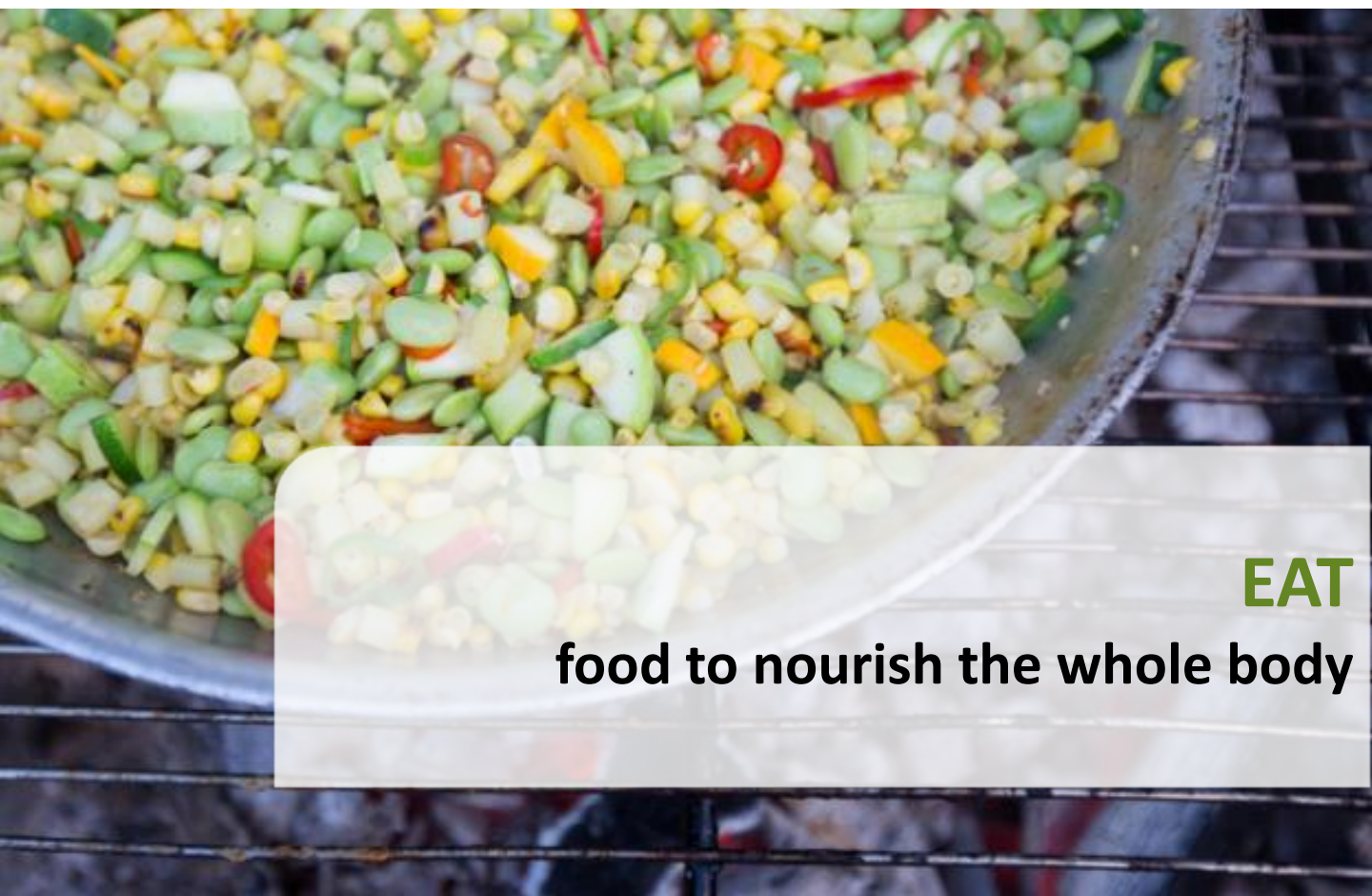
Use these strategy categories to build and organize your community food center. Use the following pages to learn about various approaches within each strategy. **Select at least one approach within each strategy for a comprehensive design.**

As you move through the strategies, **consider your priorities** and what programming and resources could be offered in the short, medium, and long-term.

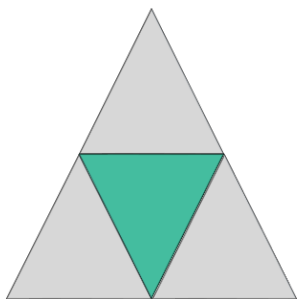
Consider who your **potential partners** might be and how this community food center could bring them together.

Consider those who will be served, those who will provide programming and services, and those who might fund individual strategies or the entire space. Also pay attention to those who live in proximity to the CFC even if they might never visit it.





## **EAT** food to nourish the whole body

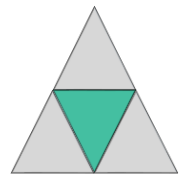


### **EAT**

Starting simply, this is the strategy that addresses the fact that people need food to feed their bodies. It needs to be healthy, quality, culturally and geographically appropriate and it needs to be provided in a way that meets the needs and preferences of those it is trying to feed.

- **WHY:** To provide healthy, quality, culturally and geographically appropriate food for the people you're serving
- **WHAT:** Provide places, spaces, and opportunities for consumption, purchasing, and/or receiving food

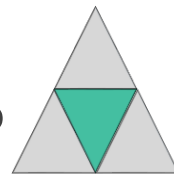
# ➤ HOW can the CFC provide food to eat?



APPROACHES + IDEAS	INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS	TIPS + CONSIDERATIONS
<u>Retail Grocery Store:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full-service grocery store or market</li> <li>• Corner store or convenience store offering healthy items</li> <li>• Retail stand inside prepared foods or non-food store</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cold storage</li> <li>• Dry storage</li> <li>• Cold and dry food display shelving</li> <li>• Delivery access</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tip:</b> Cold storage refers to refrigerator and/or freezer space; dry storage refers to warehouse or pantry space.</p>
<u>Farmer's Market:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional farmer's market model</li> <li>• Produce stand</li> <li>• Farmer-consignment model</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Space for convening</li> <li>• Display area accessible for produce delivery</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tip:</b> Seek out unused buildings in your neighborhood that are already designed for food service or could be easily renovated for your needs.</p>
<u>Grow Onsite:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garden/farm combined with market stand, pick-your-own or serve yourself model</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open, sunny space with water</li> <li>• Space to grow – beds, greenhouse, inside with lights</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Consideration:</b> If considering a farmers market, explore other options such as an online market, special event markets, or retail options that may have less barriers for both farmers and consumers. Engage providers and customers in decision-making about final approach.</p>
<u>Restaurant:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full-service, fast casual</li> <li>• Pop-up restaurant (special events)</li> <li>• Cafeteria, serve yourself line</li> <li>• Drive-through pick-up</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial kitchen (inspected, licensed, and safe for preparing commercially-available foods)</li> <li>• Eating space for consumers</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	



# ➤ HOW can the CFC provide food to eat?

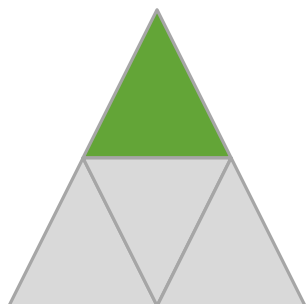


APPROACHES + IDEAS	INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS	TIPS + CONSIDERATIONS
<u>Food Pick-Up:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community supported agriculture or online buying club pick-up</li> <li>Food bank/pantry</li> <li>_____</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Space for delivery, cold and/or dry storage of food</li> <li>Space for pick-up</li> <li>_____</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Consideration:</b> Where will the food and its raw ingredients come from? Consider prioritizing local food supply to support community and economic vitality. Contact local county extension and state department of agriculture resources for information about local producers.</p>
<u>Mobile Food Unit Stop:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food truck/cart stop</li> <li>Mobile food pantry stop</li> <li>_____</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Space for vehicles to park</li> <li>Outside power supply</li> <li>If desired, space for consumption onsite</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	
<u>Food Delivery Service:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepared meals delivery service</li> <li>Grocery delivery service</li> <li>_____</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial kitchen if preparing meals onsite</li> <li>Cold/dry storage + packing</li> <li>Delivery mechanism</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Consideration:</b> What will it cost to the consumer - Fee or free? Full price for all or sliding scale for some?</p>
<u>Vending Machine/Self-Serve:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healthy packaged snacks</li> <li>Cold machine offering fresh and/or prepared foods</li> <li>24/7 accessible refrigerator or pantry stocked with produce and products</li> <li>_____</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Display “machine”</li> <li>“Serve Yourself” payment structure</li> <li>Ability to stock regularly</li> <li>Accessible to consumers at all “open times”</li> <li>_____</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tip:</b> Consider combining EAT approaches to maximize ability to meet a variety of consumer needs, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>retail + vending</li> <li>convenience store + drive-through</li> </ul>
<u>Other Ideas?</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_____</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_____</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	



## EDUCATE

increase knowledge and skills

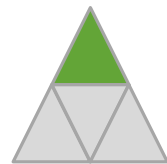


### EDUCATE

These are the strategies designed to empower people with knowledge and skills. These strategies provide the information and activities necessary to build awareness and ability for growing, finding, cooking and eating healthy food.

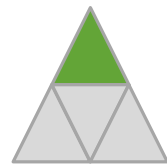
- **WHY:** To increase knowledge and skills for production, preparation, and consumption of healthy, quality, culturally appropriate food.
- **WHAT:** Offer programs, events, and materials that provide knowledge and skills

# ➤ HOW can the CFC provide education?



APPROACHES + IDEAS	INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS	TIPS + CONSIDERATIONS
<u>Hands-on Cooking Classes:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic cooking classes</li> <li>• Healthy meals on a budget</li> <li>• Cooking with limited kitchen equipment</li> <li>• Food preservation</li> <li>• Diet-specific cooking</li> <li>• Health condition-specific cooking</li> <li>• Reducing food waste</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food prep space with simple cooking supplies</li> <li>• Demonstration/teaching kitchen with ample space for students to spread out</li> <li>• Cooking materials and supplies for participants to use and share</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Consideration:</b> Who is your target population? Are your materials and activities culturally relevant to their daily life and environment? Consider who will deliver your material and how it will be received by the intended audience.</p>
<u>Hands-on Gardening Classes:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic gardening at home</li> <li>• Urban farming</li> <li>• Gardening using non-traditional materials</li> <li>• Extending the growing season</li> <li>• Growing on a patio or in pots</li> <li>• Aquaponic and hydroponic growing</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration garden with various kinds of garden beds (e.g. in-ground, pots, various raised bed materials) and examples of season extension (e.g. greenhouse, low tunnel, cold frame)</li> <li>• Aquaponic/Hydroponic growing materials</li> <li>• Materials for teaching multiple students at a time</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tip:</b> Reach out to your local county extension office for gardening resources and tips, as well as nutrition education curriculum, information and assistance with materials specifically designed for low-income populations.</p>
<u>Nutrition Education and Information:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pair nutrition education with hands-on cooking and gardening classes</li> <li>• Nutrition incentive program sign-up support and information (e.g. SNAP, WIC, matching programs in your community)</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hands-on cooking and gardening curriculum</li> <li>• Teaching kitchen</li> <li>• Teaching garden</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tip:</b> Nutrition education paired with hands-on cooking and gardening has been shown to have better outcomes than nutrition education alone.</p>

# ➤ HOW can the CFC provide education?

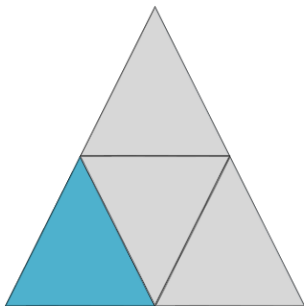


APPROACHES + IDEAS	INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS	TIPS + CONSIDERATIONS
<p><u>Outreach + Awareness Raising:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect individuals to information about programs and services in your community – Become a network and hub of food access information</li> <li>• Host presentations and events for and about programs available in your community</li> <li>• Host a community bulletin board and invite anyone working in food access to post information</li> <li>• Co-host events with partners at your space and at partners' spaces</li> <li>• Develop a food access committee for your neighborhood comprised of both consumers and providers</li> <li>• Workshops, gatherings, book clubs, public dialogues, presentations, and group discussion events on food-based issues</li> <li>• Host food-based art, writing, and drama events – share those pieces publicly</li> <li>• Share stories via public media – newspaper, social media, radio, tv</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting space</li> <li>• Event space</li> <li>• Shared community gathering space</li> <li>• Bulletin board</li> <li>• Online and/or paper database</li> <li>• “Host” – an individual knowledgeable about programs and services available in your community who is available to meet with community members</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Consideration:</b> How can you utilize the resources and support already available in your community to create a network of comprehensive food access?</p> <p><b>Tip:</b> Foster peer-to-peer networking and learning collaboratives. This encourages and creates safe spaces for sharing, feedback and reflection.</p> <p><b>Tip:</b> Find and cultivate educators from within your neighborhood and community.</p> <p><b>Tip:</b> Include the sharing of stories and lived experiences in your educational outreach and curriculum.</p> <p><b>Tip:</b> Prepare and plan for safety in the kitchen – spend time creating a plan in case of an emergency.</p>
<p><u>Food-based Entrepreneurial Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food-based business planning courses</li> <li>• Professional culinary training courses</li> <li>• Professional development courses for food supply chain stakeholders including growers, processors, chefs, restaurateurs, retailers</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting space</li> <li>• Commercial kitchen or teaching kitchen</li> <li>• Materials, supplies, and equipment relevant to the audience you're engaging</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	





**CREATE**  
enabling more



## CREATE

This is the strategy that focuses on creating space for more food-based organizations and businesses to be born, flourish, and thrive. Inspired by the creativity encouraged in maker spaces and innovation hubs, and fueled by access to shared equipment and services, these approaches encourage individuals to create more healthy, quality food for themselves and their neighbors.

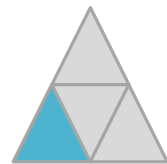
- **WHY:** To foster an environment of creativity, innovation, and economic development centered around healthy food
- **WHAT:** Create infrastructure, programming, and services designed to increase and support the production of healthy food and food entrepreneurs

# ➤ HOW can the CFC foster creation?



APPROACHES + IDEAS	INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS	TIPS + CONSIDERATIONS
<u>Shared Commercial Equipment/Space</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rentable commercial kitchen space</li> <li>• Rentable specialty food preservation equipment (e.g. dehydrators, industrial grade canners, individual quick freeze)</li> <li>• “White box” rentable space</li> <li>• Rentable cold/dry storage and co-packing space</li> <li>• Space for experimentation, testing of new products</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercially-inspected equipment space</li> <li>• Walk-in cooler/freezer space with shelving</li> <li>• Dry storage space – warehouse, locking cabinets, individually rentable/reserve spaces</li> <li>• Fork lift is moving by the pallet load</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Consideration:</b> Some food-based entrepreneurs have their own specialty equipment and only need safe, clean space to plug in and produce. “White boxes” are commercially-inspected empty rooms available for rent. Pair with a steady produce supply, storage and distribution for a locally produced, processed, and distributed product.</p> <p><b>Tip:</b> Co-packing refers to how the products are packaged before they are distributed.</p>
<u>Aggregation and Distribution Network</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggregation of products (e.g. locally grown fruits and vegetables, meats, herbs, etc.) available for sale</li> <li>• Delivery vehicles (e.g. standard delivery truck, refrigerated truck, bike fleet, mobile catering unit) for rent</li> <li>• Network of vendors and purchasers of goods created in CFC</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enough cold/dry space for aggregating products</li> <li>• Cold/dry co-packing space and materials</li> <li>• Insured vehicles</li> <li>• Shipping and receiving docks and flow of goods</li> <li>• Database, relationships with vendors/purchasers</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tip:</b> Traditional food hub models can serve as a means of aggregating supply from multiple growers in order to serve large institutions such as schools and hospitals.</p>
<u>Business and Workforce Incubation</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide access to shared, low-cost resources, equipment, and supplies</li> <li>• Provide shared office equipment, internet, work spaces, meeting rooms, teleconference capability</li> <li>• Connection to business services</li> <li>• Connection to investment funding</li> <li>• Web-based tools to foster commerce</li> <li>• Access to mentors/experts in the field</li> <li>• Connect with workforce development</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office space with shared equipment</li> <li>• High-speed internet</li> <li>• Computer software licenses as needed by business services offered</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tip:</b> Traditional food hub models can serve as a means of aggregating supply from multiple growers in order to serve large institutions such as schools and hospitals.</p>

# ➤ HOW can the CFC foster creation?

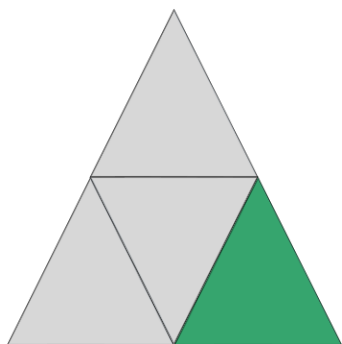


APPROACHES + IDEAS	INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS	TIPS + CONSIDERATIONS
<u>Access to Business Services</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing and promotion assistance</li> <li>Legal, accounting, and finance assistance or expertise</li> <li>Human resources assistance</li> <li>Grant writing and administration support</li> <li>Focus group facilitation for investigating needs/preferences of consumers and clients</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Network of experts in the fields of marketing, communications, law, accounting, finance, human resources, grant writing</li> <li>Compensation arrangements for services</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Consideration:</b> Rent space and equipment to start-up operations by the month or charge a flat membership fee for access to a suite of services and equipment. Encourage “tinkering” and experimentation by having “free play” or “guided play” days.</p>
<u>Marketing and Promotion of Goods</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website promoting goods created and distributed out of the CFC</li> <li>Retail venue for purchasing goods</li> <li>Branding and marketing campaign</li> <li>Public events and activities showcasing goods created in CFC</li> <li>_____</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website infrastructure</li> <li>E-commerce infrastructure</li> <li>Graphic design and marketing expertise</li> <li>Outreach and communication materials</li> <li>_____</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tip:</b> Keep spaces flexible and well-powered. Fill meeting rooms and office space with dry erase wipe boards.</p>
<u>Showcase Events</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pop-up (events designed to test a concept) restaurant/café events</li> <li>Showcase/tasting events</li> <li>Rotating food and beverage maker showcases</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexible event space</li> <li>Materials and supplies for hosting events – dishes, tablecloths, tables, display shelving</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Consideration:</b> Not all “creation” ends in a product or food service. Consider fostering other healthy-food-promoting operations such as food photography, edible landscaping, and market services.</p>
<u>Funding and Capital Investment Support</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Micro-loan program</li> <li>Grant and philanthropic funding opportunities and connections</li> <li>Investor events</li> <li>Serve as fiscal agent for a start-up</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial foundation and structure to provide fiscal support and administration for start-up business or organization</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	



## ENGAGE

finding solutions that fit



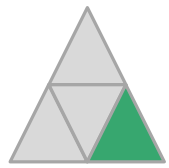
### ENGAGE

Coursing through all of these programs and services is the often unspoken *process* by which they are designed, developed, implemented, evaluated, and shared. This process can greatly dictate the outcome and shape the relationships between a community food center and its neighbors. Use these practices to guide your process.

- **WHY:** To ensure that providers and consumers are equally and equitably co-creators of their food
- **WHAT:** the *process* by which stakeholders, community members, creators, and consumers are involved in the process of increasing their own access to healthy foods

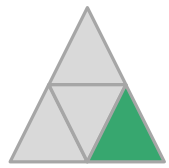


# ➤ HOW can the CFC encourage engagement?



APPROACHES + IDEAS	INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS	TIPS + CONSIDERATIONS
<u>People-Centered Approach</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize individuals and their relationships with one another and how food can foster, not hinder, stronger interconnectedness between one another</li> <li>• Recognize the knowledge and social practice that exists within your community and neighborhood as useful to the development of new strategies and solutions for addressing needs</li> <li>• Consider the cultural history and heritage associated with our food supply and prioritize righting any injustices that hinder relationship building</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equitable communication and decision-making structure</li> <li>• Collective purchasing structures</li> <li>• Shared resources that enable wealth building of a whole community, not just individuals</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Consideration:</b> Take a people-centered approach to the design, development, and creation of your community food center.</p> <p><b>Tip:</b> Refrain from a “build it and they will come” perspective. Instead, ask first. Co-create. Share responsibilities and decision making. Go slow and prioritize relationships with users of the space, beneficiaries, and those who will share their neighborhood with this CFC.</p> <p><b>Consideration:</b> Approaches and ideas will look different in urban areas than they do in rural areas. Consider geographic location and history of the community.</p>
<u>Participatory Community Engagement</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include all stakeholders involved in feedback and reflection</li> <li>• Develop various levels at which users and beneficiaries can engage, from advisory roles to delivery of programs and services to succession of management and ownership</li> <li>• Search out and include hard to reach groups such as youth, seniors, racial and ethnic minorities, chronically ill, individuals of varying physical and cognitive abilities, and socially excluded individuals</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotional and outreach materials in various formats, literacy levels, languages, and locations</li> <li>• Infrastructure within CFC should consider diverse array of individuals</li> <li>• Leadership should reflect users and beneficiaries</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	

# ➤ HOW can the CFC encourage engagement?



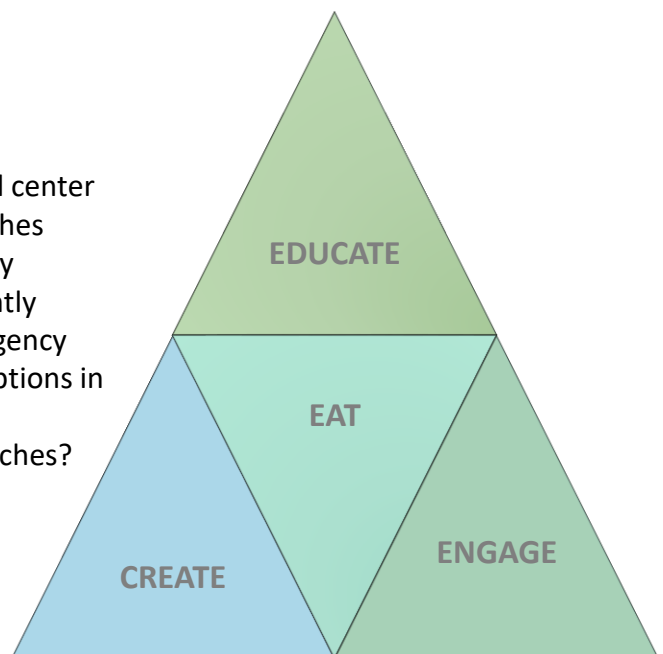
APPROACHES + IDEAS	INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS	TIPS + CONSIDERATIONS
<u>Innovation Hub Practices</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage diverse groups of individuals to intersect</li> <li>• Create space and events that encourage planned and unplanned collaboration</li> <li>• Focus on the impact a new idea has on its intended community, rather than on the number of new ideas created</li> <li>• Foster community by creating safe spaces for sharing ideas</li> <li>• Provide an environment full of energy, spark, reflection and feedback</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-working space that encourages sharing ideas – shared tables, brainstorming spaces, couches, coffee</li> <li>• Space for public events that showcase ideas and products</li> <li>• A “host” that facilitates connection between users of the space</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<div> <p><b>Tip:</b> Prioritize local knowledge and understanding in all practices.</p> </div> <div> <p><b>Consideration:</b> Consider co-creating values first and then using them as touchstones for decision-making, selection, and design of your community food center.</p> </div>
<u>Food Justice Values</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate values and principles of fairness, equity and justice into growing, processing, transporting and consumption of healthy food</li> <li>• Eliminate disparities in access to healthy food</li> <li>• Build policies and political will to ensure everyone has a basic right to healthy food</li> <li>• Prioritize sustainable agriculture techniques</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fair wages and safe labor practices for all employees</li> <li>• Infrastructure that accommodates individuals of all physical abilities</li> <li>• Welcoming and open space, programming and services</li> <li>• Infrastructure that incorporate the multiple elements of healthy food access presented earlier in toolkit</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<div> <p><b>Consideration:</b> Consider how the development of this space will impact the neighborhood and its residents, regardless of whether or not they benefit or participate in your community food center. Intentionally make choices that will avoid marginalizing residents or pushing them out of their own neighborhood.</p> </div>



## EXAMPLES bringing strategies together

### EXAMPLE COMMUNITY FOOD CENTERS

The following pages are example community food center spaces. Each one brings together various approaches from each strategy to demonstrate complimentary programs, services, and activities. Each has a slightly different focus – community, entrepreneur, emergency food assistance. Are any of these combinations options in your neighborhood or community? Is there an organization already offering one of these approaches? How can you collaborate with them?



# EXAMPLE #1 – Community Focus

---

## INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS:

1. Community kitchen
2. Garden space
3. Minimal cold and dry storage
4. Community space for events, teaching, and packing groceries

## EDUCATE

1. Gardening workshops
2. Garden-based nutrition education

## EAT

1. Online farmers market pick-up location
2. Garden with produce to sell + donate to community
3. Recovered food pantry

## CREATE

1. Community kitchen available for education and community use

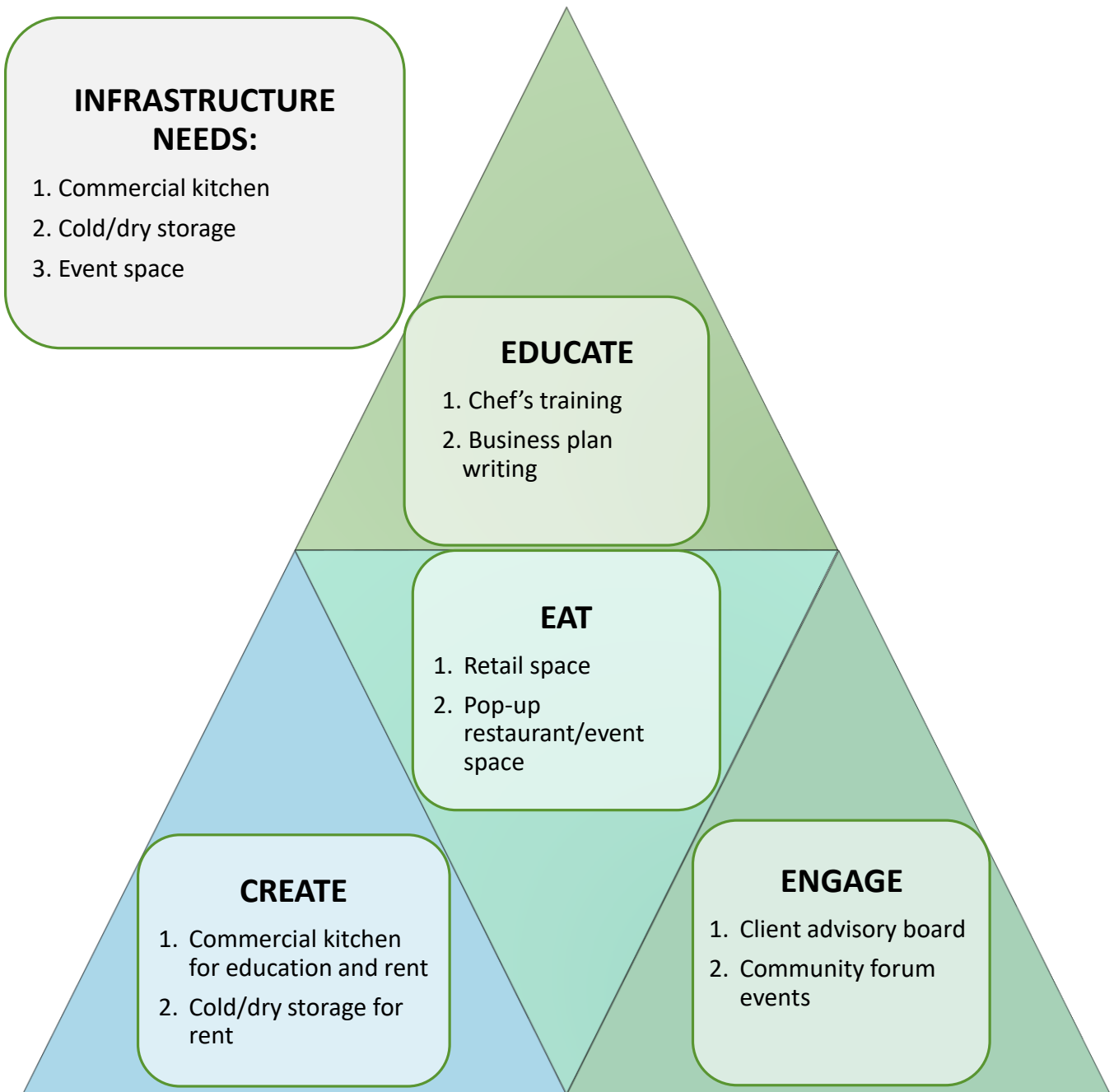
## ENGAGE

1. Participatory engagement
2. Community advisory board
3. Home for community or neighborhood association



## EXAMPLE #2 – Entrepreneur Focus

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# EXAMPLE #3 – Emergency Food Focus

## INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS:

1. Commercial kitchen
2. Restaurant/café space
3. Garden
4. Vending machine

## EDUCATE

1. Hands-on cooking and gardening classes
2. Nutrition education and eating on a budget classes

## EAT

1. Recovered food pantry
2. Donation-based café/restaurant
3. 24-hour vending machine

## CREATE

1. Commercial kitchen for meal prep and teaching

## ENGAGE

1. Employ neighborhood members at fair wages
2. Community-created organization

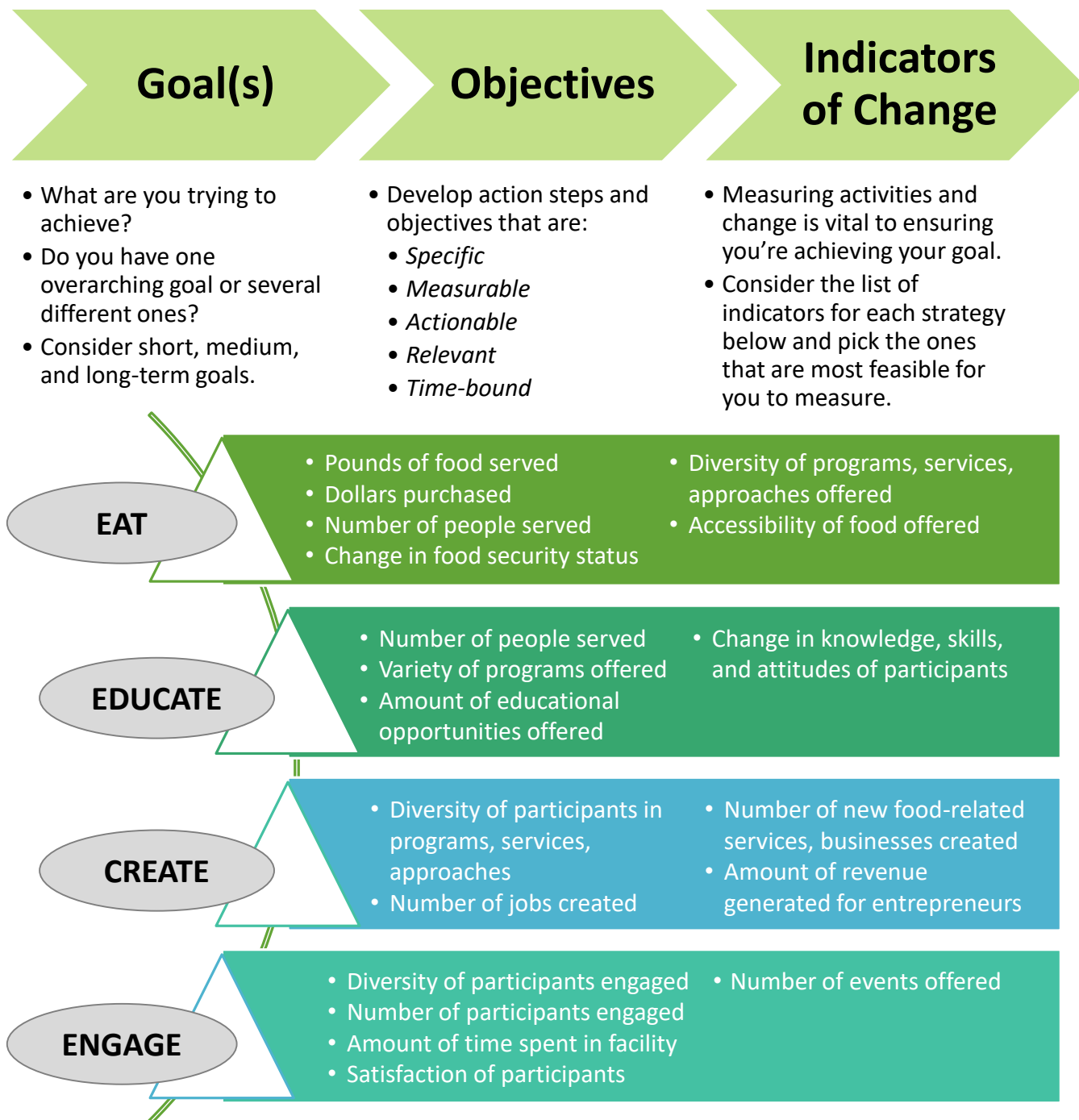


# **EVALUATION**

## **measuring progress and impact**

# EVALUATION: MEASURE YOUR SUCCESS

Equally important to getting it done is measuring your progress and success - Did you achieve your intended outcomes? Use this process to connect each approach to a goal, objectives, and indicators of change. Potential indicators are included below. Use the worksheet in the Planning section to guide you.







## **STRUCTURE + FINANCING**

**defining and financing your efforts**

# STRUCTURE AND FINANCING

The **structure** of your community food center can take many forms. First and foremost, use what you have, use what is available, build on existing strengths and work with trusted champions in your neighborhood. It is highly likely someone in your neighborhood is already doing something within one of the major strategies of EAT, EDUCATE, CREATE, and ENGAGE. Find them and work together. One organization does not have to do everything, nor do they have to be the sole owner or operator of a community food center. Use a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or expectations agreement to outline roles and responsibilities of partnering organizations. The plan and available assets/resources will dictate the structure. Don't rush to formalize the structure until that need arises. Below are a few options for both informal and formal structures.

## STRUCTURE

### INFORMAL

- Volunteer-driven
- Work through/with an existing organization
- Find a sponsoring formal organization and allow them to serve as your fiscal agent

### FORMAL

- Requires registration with state and federal government
- Generally requires a board of directors
- Responsible to tax law, bylaws, applicable rules and regulations

#### Examples:

- Non-profit corporation
- Low-profit limited liability corporation (L3C)
- For-profit Benefit Corporation (B Corps)
- Traditional for-profit limited liability corporation (LLC)
- Hybrid models with both non-profit and for-profit arms

**Financing** options are abundant. Financing always come easier when there is a clear plan, a known intended audience, and measures of success defined. Break down your programs, services, and resources into pieces and attach the appropriate funding source to each. Don't be afraid to combine sources. Below are several options to be considered. Consider charging a sliding scale for for-profit customers, non-profit service providers, and low-income clients.

## FINANCING

- Material, in-kind, cash donations
- Federal, state, philanthropic grant funding
- Educational class, workshop, and event fees
- Monthly rate rental fees (e.g. cold and dry storage, co-work spaces, community garden)
- Hourly rate rental fees (e.g. commercial kitchen, specialty equipment)
- Fundraising events and event space rental fees (e.g. meeting rooms, special events)
- Private investors and partnerships
- Product sales (e.g. retail space, pop-up events)
- Fee-for-service (e.g. gardening, cooking, consulting, training)
- State and municipal partner financing options (e.g. bond issues, tax credits, land, real estate)

A photograph of several small green seedlings with two leaves each, growing out of dark brown soil. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title text.

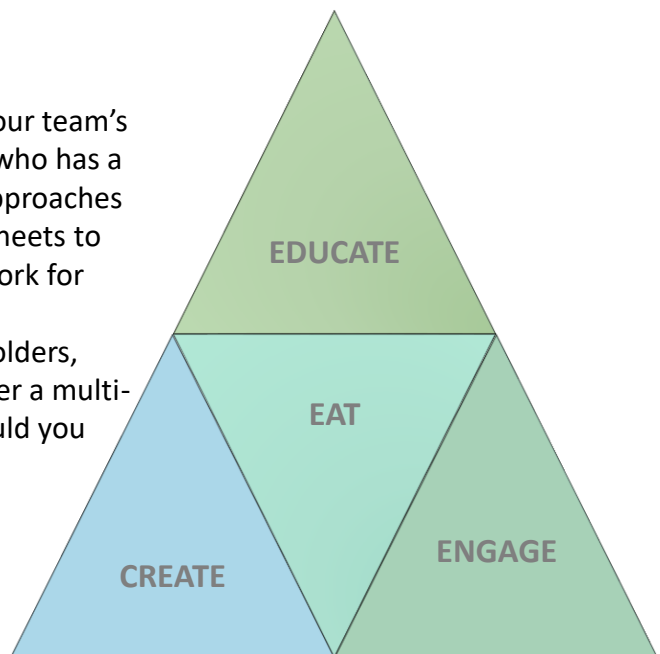
# PLANNING

## capturing your thoughts

### PLANNING WORKSHEETS

Use the following pages to work through you and your team's thoughts. First, consider what you have, need, and who has a stake in this work. Next, refer back to the various approaches in the strategies section. Use the three blank worksheets to record various approach combinations that could work for your neighborhood and residents. Think through infrastructure needs, potential partners and stakeholders, structure, and financing options (if needed). Consider a multi-phased approach: What can be done now? How could you later add to or enhance initial offerings?

Finally, how will you measure your progress and success? Do your approaches align with your goals? Map out your evaluation plan using the goals, activities, timeframe, and indicators matrix.



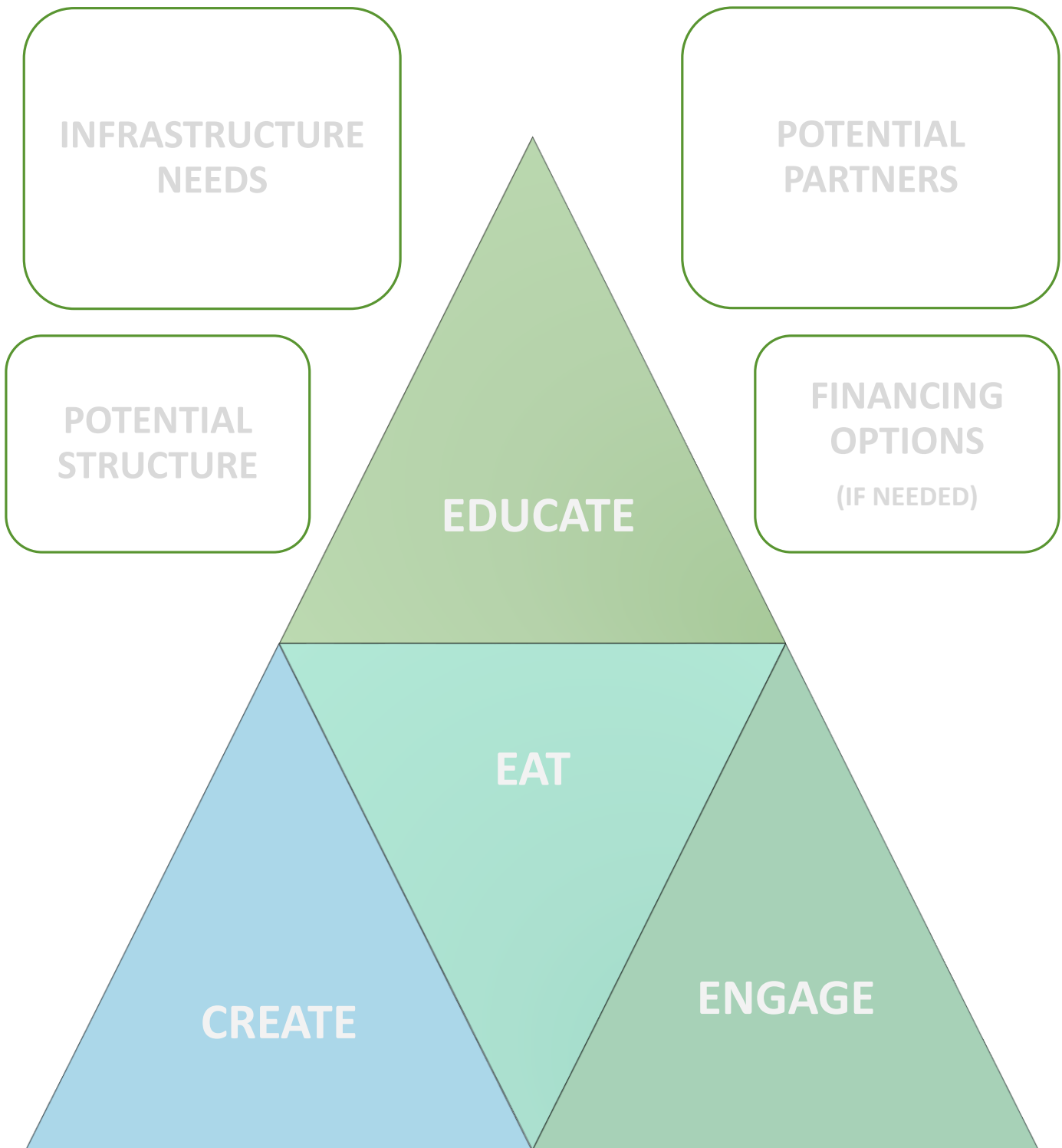
# COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS, ASSETS, NEEDS

Use the space to brainstorm stakeholders, assets, and needs in your community. The questions below can aid your process.

- Consider first **WHO** this space will serve, both directly and indirectly - Who will this space be aimed at serving and how can you involve them in the development of this space? Are there others that won't utilize the space but could be impacted by its development? How are those groups being considered in this design?
- Next, consider **ASSETS THAT EXIST** in your community and neighborhood - How can existing organizations, programs, and resources at the community or regional level be used to address your neighborhood's access to healthy foods needs? What organizations already exist? Could they work in your neighborhood if they had a space available to them? What potential spaces are already available in your neighborhood to start the development of a community food center? How can various organizations or resources be pooled together to create more comprehensive access?
- Finally, consider **UNMET NEEDS** – Within each of the four strategies of eat–educate–create–engage, what needs have been identified that are not currently being served? Even if physical or tangible needs are being met, are those solutions culturally appropriate? Does additional work need to be done to determine those needs, such as a community dialogue, door-to-door conversing, or survey?

# PLAN YOUR COMMUNITY FOOD CENTER

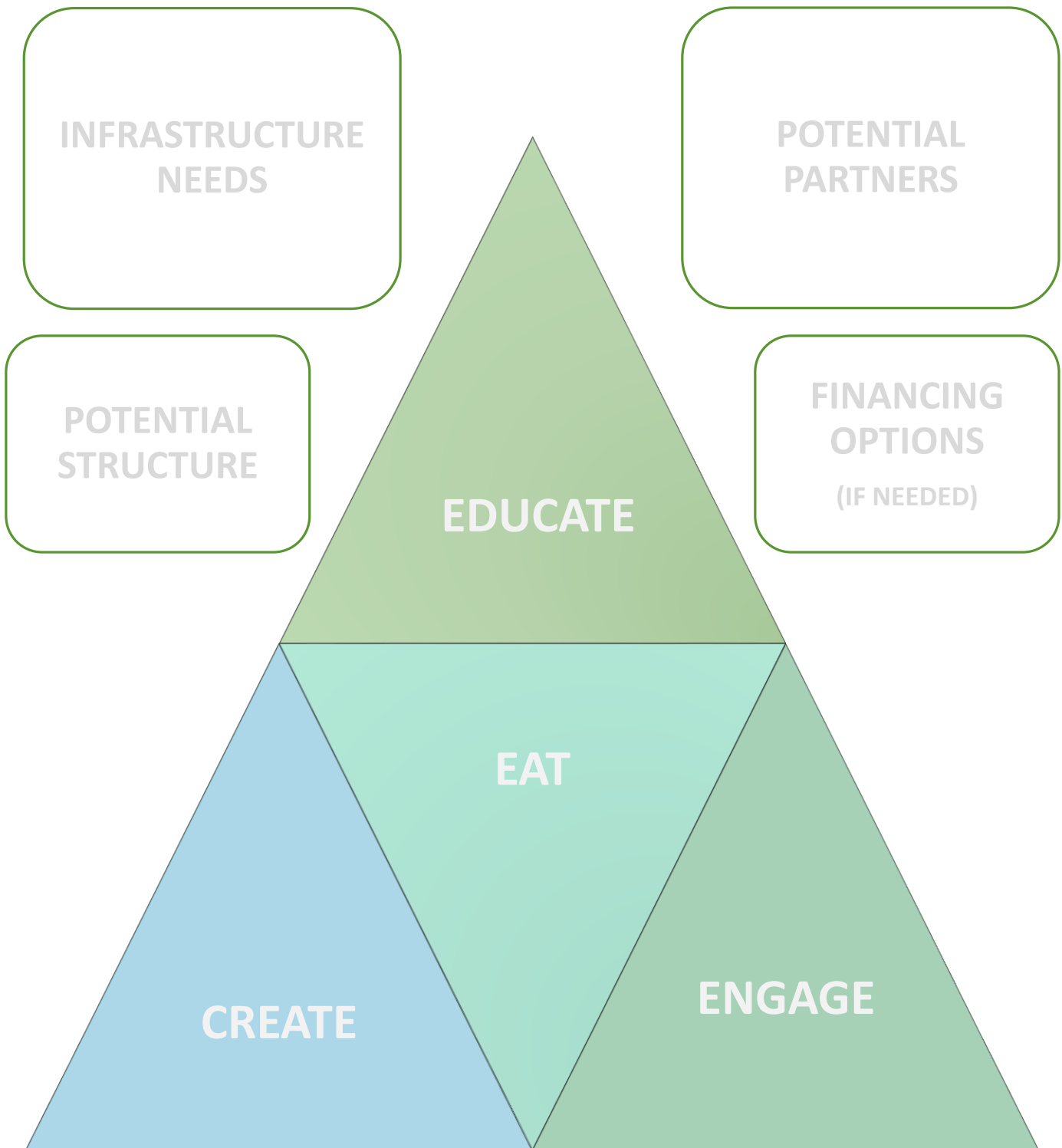
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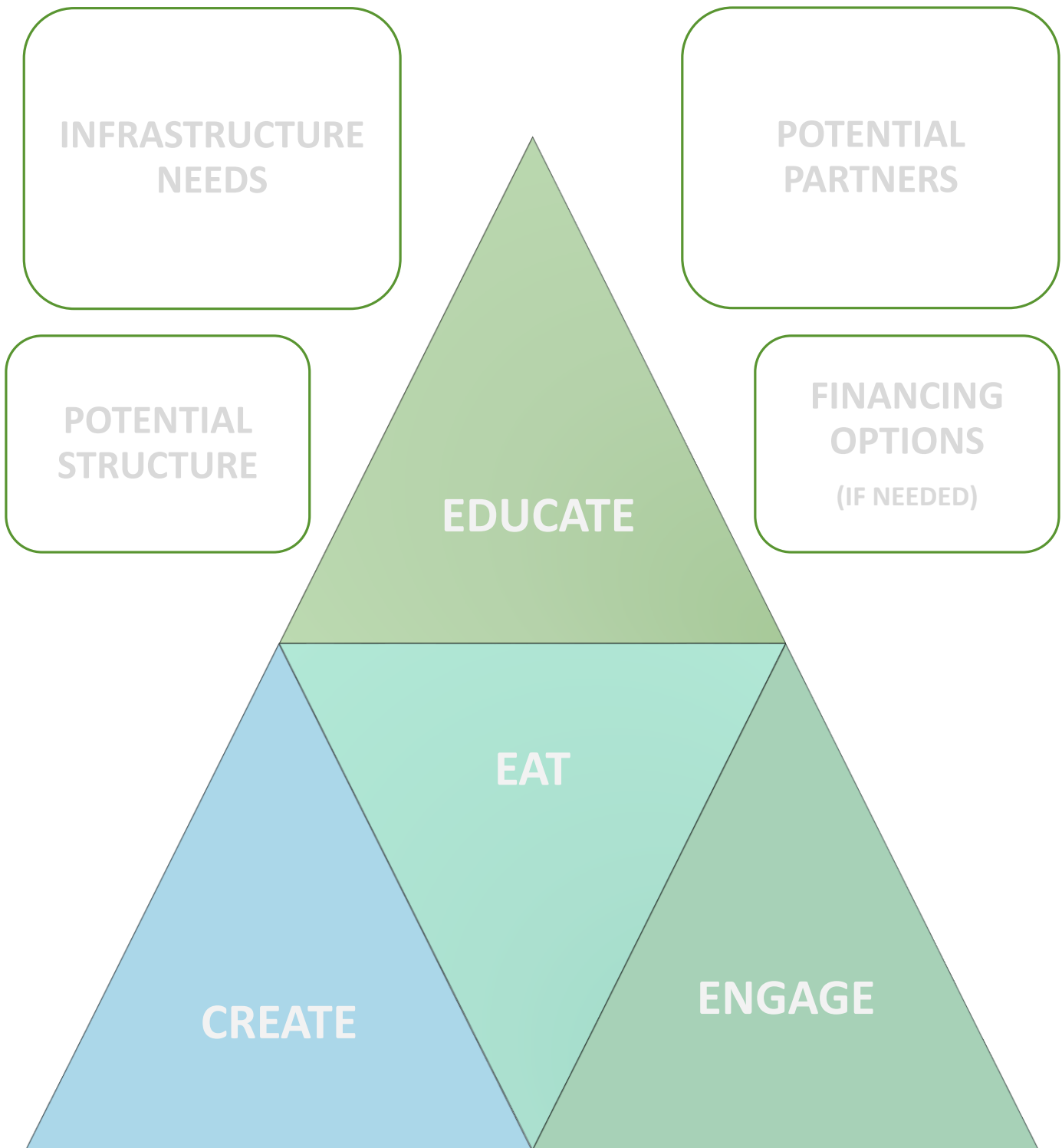
# PLAN YOUR COMMUNITY FOOD CENTER

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# PLAN YOUR COMMUNITY FOOD CENTER

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# WHAT WILL YOU MEASURE?

**OVERARCHING GOAL**  
**TO INCREASE ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS FOR:**

STRATEGY AREA	GOALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMEFRAME	INDICATORS
EAT				
EDUCATE				
CREATE				
ENGAGE				



## RESOURCES

### tools from the field

Use the following resource links for more information and inspiration. Toolkits on several of the approaches described in this document exist online. Hyperlinks have been included on the following page and are categorized by strategy. Additionally, there are a handful of example community food center spaces around the country, each with a different mission but intentionally combining strategies to meet their goals. Links to these are also provided on the following page of this section. Some take on a food hub model of aggregation and distribution combined with commercial kitchens and co-working space. Others expand food pantries to offer more comprehensive services for low-income clients such as gardening, shared kitchens, and access to federal services. Others work first to develop a cooperative model and then determine what services and programming they need.

Community food centers can exist in every neighborhood and should look as different as each community they serve. They can be simple or complicated and may start one way only to end up looking completely different the next year. Use these resources and examples as inspiration to expand your understanding of what is possible but do not let them overshadow the wisdom of those who will be served. Seek out the need, be inspired by the dreams, and build on the assets and strengths present in your community. This can and should be accessible to everyone everywhere.

# RESOURCES

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## EAT

DC Central Kitchen [website](#)

Farmers Market Coalition's [Resource Library](#)

Kansas State University Rural Grocery Initiative: [Rural Grocery Tool Kit](#)

Cook County Department of Public Health & Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children: [Healthy Corner Store Toolkit](#)

PolicyLink's [Equitable Development Toolkit: Access to Healthy Food](#)

United States Department of Agriculture's [Urban Agriculture Tool Kit](#)

Hunger Free Colorado: [Backpack Food Program Starter Toolkit](#)

## EDUCATE

USDA [MyPlate](#) materials and associated [curricula](#)

Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters [curricula](#)

Garden-based curriculum and activity [resources](#)

School of Food Business Planning [website](#)

## CREATE

Aitken County Public Health, Healthy Northland, & Minnesota Statewide Health Improvement Partnership: [Local Food from Local Farms](#)

Wholesome Wave: [Food Hub Business Assessment Toolkit](#)

Kane County, Illinois. [Food Hub Feasibility Study Toolkit](#)

Grand Traverse Foodshed Alliance [Food Innovation Hub](#)

## ENGAGE

Policy Link's [Community Engagement and Participation Checklist: Addressing Disparities for Healthier Places](#)

University of AR, Division of Agriculture - Cooperative Extension's [Community Food System Development Framework for Change](#)

Community Food Strategies: [Toolkits Library](#)

PolicyLink: [Equitable Development Toolkit: Equitable Food Hubs](#)

## Community Food Center Models

Community Food Centres of Canada [website](#)

East End Market [website](#)

Grey Bruce Health Unit: [More Than Food: Community Food Toolkit](#)

Chicago Healthy Food Hub [website](#)

The Redd on Salmon Street [website](#)

Baltimore Food Hub [website](#)





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide was inspired and informed by the hard work, commitment, and passion of those who spend their days breaking down barriers and building solutions to ensure they, their families, their communities, and all people have access to healthy food.

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