



**FEATHER
RIVER FOOD**

CO-OP

SINCE 1978



FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

2026-2030

INTRODUCTION

Feather River Food Cooperative (the Co-op) is a retail consumer cooperative formed in 1978. We currently have over 3000 member-owners and operate two storefronts in Quincy and Portola, CA. These stores generate just under \$5 million in gross annual sales. A democratically elected board of directors is responsible for ensuring the Co-op meets the needs of its owners while remaining fiscally responsible.

OUR MISSION

As a food cooperative, we strive to uphold a sustainable, democratic and equitable food system that offers wholesome, nutritious, and high-quality products to our community while supporting local farms, businesses and nonprofits.

The Seven Cooperative Principles:

- Voluntary and Open Membership
- Democratic Member Control
- Members' Economic Participation
- Autonomy and Independence
- Education, Training, and Information
- Cooperation Among Cooperatives
- Concern for Community

OUR VISION

- To provide exceptional food
- To provide exceptional service
- To nurture a sense of community
- To model sustainability in our business practices
- To be active in community education and outreach
- To be a desirable workplace
- To maintain financial wellbeing and responsibility for the organization

OUR PROCESS

In 2024 the board and management team began an effort to develop a strategic direction for the future. The general manager gathered input from the board and staff by conducting a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis to help identify key areas of focus for our strategic plan.

Key areas that were identified include providing competitive pay for staff, improving food access, and preparing for climate change.

Strengths identified during the SWOT analysis include providing excellent customer service, showcasing local products and organic food, having two strategically placed locations in the county, and providing community support and outreach.

The Strategic Plan also addresses the weaknesses and threats we face. This includes climate change, our location in the state being isolated, competition, staff turnover, and aging infrastructure.

This Strategic Plan outlines four long-range goals for the next five years that provide broad direction for management and the board.

SUMMARY OF LONG-RANGE GOALS

Food Access

Provide access to high quality foods to all segments of the community.

Food System Development

Actively promote and participate in local food system development.

Leadership and Employment Practices

Develop leadership and commitment within the organization while modeling excellence in employment practices.

Infrastructure and Growth

Upgrade and maintain facilities to meet operational and member needs and provide a welcoming and vibrant environment for all shoppers. Prepare for natural disasters in order to ensure continued operations of the business.

FOOD ACCESS

Long-Range Goal

To provide access to high quality foods to all segments of the community.

Overview:

Affordable food is a basic survival need. Consistent access to nutritious food supports an individual's growth, energy levels, and immune system function. Food is deeply connected with family, community, and social interactions. Food access measures the ability to acquire food for an adequate diet while not compromising on other basic needs. Factors that can affect food access for the community include availability of nutritious foods, affordability of food and accessibility of food resources.

Strategy:

- Revitalize our Farmers' Market
- Expand our Affordable Food Program (AFP) to include WIC members.
- Harness the Co-op Basics program to highlight lower cost nutritious foods.
- Audit current food offerings to ensure high-quality and nutritious foods are in line with current buying policies.
- Increase prepared foods options to provide nutritious and locally made food.
- Increase knowledge and use of our special order program.

Measures:

- Expansion to our AFP program
- Increased promotion of Co-op Basics program
- Increase in sales for prepared foods
- Increased use of the AFP discount
- Provide a Farmers' Market to the community

Benchmarks:

- 2026 Expand AFP by becoming a WIC retailer
Revitalize the Farmers' Market to provide direct farmer to shopper food access.
Audit products to ensure they align with current purchasing guidelines
- 2027 Special Order/Bulk program is user-friendly, with an online portal to allow shoppers access to bulk nutritious foods.
Expand participation in the Co-op Basics program via NCG
- 2028 Access participation in WIC to determine effectiveness
- 2029 Assess the Farmers' Market impact on food access
- 2030 Additional 100 new users of our AFP program.

FOOD SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

Long-Range Goal

Actively promote and participate in local food system development.

Overview:

Supporting local and sustainable agriculture is a major part of our mission. Historically Plumas County had a much more diverse agricultural landscape. With the effects of climate change, local farmers and producers are becoming more and more rare. We all benefit from local food. The more local food we consume, the more we will support our community, protect the air, water, and ecology of our landscape and the planet as a whole.

Strategy:

- Increase diversity and quantity of local and regionally produced food.
- Support local farmers to increase their sustainability in agriculture.
- Increase business accounts that utilize our bulk buying program.
- Host a farmers' market as a benefit to the community.
- Collaborate with programs that improve community food access (e.g. Lost Sierra Food Project, Feather River Food System Collaborative, Eco-farming program, VOAD, community gardens)

Measures:

- Quantity and quality of local fresh foods available
- Number of local vendors selling to the Co-op
- Participation in programs that support local agriculture and community access to locally produced food

Benchmarks:

- 2026 Local vendors evaluated
Revitalization of the Quincy Farmers' Market
- 2027 Special Order/Bulk buying program informational flyers created and distributed to local businesses.
- 2028 Become a drop site for Tahoe Food Hub pick ups for local farmers to reach more markets
- 2029 Support local food access programs and non profits – find ways to support these organizations
- 2030 Create in-house grant opportunity to be distributed each year to farmers and producers

LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Long-Range Goal

Develop leadership and commitment within the organization while modeling excellence in employment practices.

Overview:

A key element to being a successful business is having a dedicated staff that is knowledgeable and engaged in the organization. Part of our vision is to be a desirable workplace, known for being employee-friendly and having friendly employees. We strive to cultivate a work environment that generates staff engagement and models excellent employment practices by providing fair wages and benefits, professional development opportunities, and a comprehensive training program.

Measures:

- Evaluation of wages compared to local livable wages
- Comparison of employee benefits with industry standard
- Annual Employee Survey
- Employee participation in and evaluation of training opportunities
- Board evaluation and utilization of current training opportunities

Strategy:

- Demonstrate best practices as an employer by compensating our staff well, offering affordable, comprehensive benefits, and allowing flexible approach to employment that balances work, family, and personal goals.
- Encourage staff commitment and engagement in the organization, including ongoing training in the cooperative business model.
- Cultivate talent within the organization by developing incentives that encourage staff to develop additional skills and leadership qualities.
- Develop a skilled board of directors by providing regular board trainings and education.

Benchmarks:

- 2026 Utilize industry recommended leadership trainings to provide Department Managers with opportunities for growth
Develop a Board training road guide
- 2027 Assess wages and wage compression to further align with livable wages in CA
- 2028 Develop a training module for staff development
- 2029 Perform an audit of workplace benefits with staff input
- 2030 Organizational chart evaluated

INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH

Long-Range Goal

Upgrade and maintain facilities to meet operational and member needs and provide a welcoming and vibrant environment for all shoppers.

Overview:

The way we shop for goods and groceries is always evolving. It is important for the Co-op to ensure that we are able to serve our members needs in the best way possible. We also want to make sure that the way we grow into the future is in alignment with our values. We need to evaluate our growth and determine if the store sites are still meeting the needs of our members. Our Portola store is growing fast, and we are in a good place financially to make some investments. With newly installed refrigeration in Quincy, we will turn our focus on the outdated flooring, outdoor space, and fixtures.

Measures:

- Evaluate current use of space at all three co-op worksites to determine improvements
- Conduct a customer experience survey to ensure shoppers are satisfied with current store operations.
- Conduct an analysis of the Quincy deli space to determine if expansion to an offsite commissary is necessary.
- Expansion of the Portola store to include a full kitchen and additional retail space.

Strategy:

- Evaluate current space use and determine next steps to ensure growth is addressed.
- Improve facilities to meet short and long-term goals
- Develop capital expenditure projections to ensure investment in both locations
- Take into account environmental impacts of climate change and ensure both stores are reasonably prepared to endure extreme weather.

Benchmarks:

2026 – Generator acquisition and electrical upgrade for the Portola location

Begin planning for an expanded deli space in Quincy

2027 – Develop a capital expenditure budget that addresses reinvestment at all three properties.

2028 – Conduct a customer experience survey to determine areas of focus

2029 – Complete work to expand the Quincy store's footprint after moving kitchen to offsite commissary.

2030 – Work with NCG to determine expansion of the Portola store in its current footprint