

NATIONAL YOUNG FARMERS COALITION

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2026



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Our strategic planning process involved deep stakeholder engagement and we are grateful for the leadership of our consultants, Richael Faithful and Julia Metzger-Traber, and the members of the Strategic Planning Committee: Roberto Meza, Salima Jones-Daley, Michelle Week, Vero Vergara, Julia Asherman, Andy Breiter, Lytisha Wyatt, Michelle AT Hughes, Vanessa Garcia Polanco, and Erin Foster West.

And thank you to the partner organizations, farmers, board, and staff who gave their time, insight and creativity to this process.

# WHO WE ARE

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**WE BELIEVE WE HAVE ONE GENERATION TO TRANSFORM AGRICULTURE IN SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITIES AND THE LAND. WE ARE THAT GENERATION.**

We are farmers and ranchers who steward the struggle to transform agriculture.

We are an intersectional coalition that works for justice and collective liberation of our food and farm systems.

We champion policies that resource connections to the land and foster our health in the face of climate crisis.

We advocate for policies that recognize farming as a public service.

We work in partnership with social justice movements for a future in which people, land, and relationships are respected.

We aspire to stand in ever greater solidarity with global movements that advance human rights - especially the right to food and place.

# VISION

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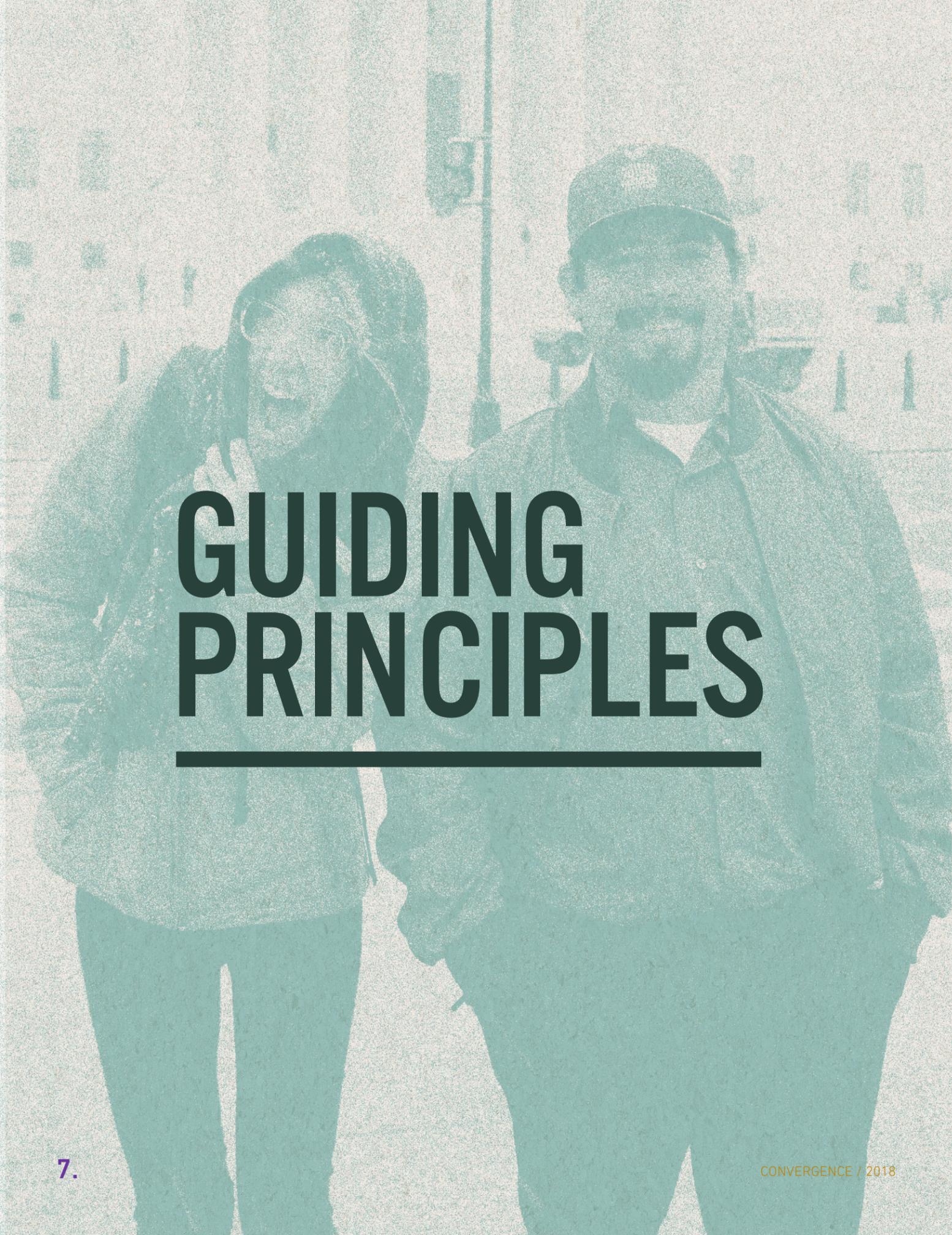
**WE ENVISION A JUST FUTURE WHERE FARMING IS FREE OF RACIAL VIOLENCE, ACCESSIBLE TO COMMUNITIES, ORIENTED TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING, AND CONCERNED WITH HEALTH OVER PROFIT.**



# MISSION

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WE SHIFT POWER AND CHANGE POLICY  
TO EQUITABLY RESOURCE OUR NEW  
GENERATION OF WORKING FARMERS.



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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## FARMERS ARE LEADERS AND CHANGE-MAKERS

We believe farmers, ranchers, and land stewards can contribute to the transformation of society. Though we have inherited an economic system designed to maximize profits, we structure our farms to feed our communities. Motivated by the looming climate crisis, we farm for collective resilience. Despite farm policies that exclude us from participation, we organize and persist. In carving out a space for ourselves to plant, cultivate, nurture and feed, we are uniquely positioned to advocate for and change policy to create this transformation.

## WE FARM FOR OUR HEALTH

We recognize that food is medicine, connection to land is transformative, and the act of farming can provide fulfillment. We believe farming is essential to our public health and our well-being. We believe prioritizing the physical and mental health of our communities, of those who farm, and ourselves is vital.

## WE WORK FOR RACIAL JUSTICE AND COLLECTIVE LIBERATION

The history of agriculture in the U.S. is defined by racial injustice and the struggles of our ancestors for collective liberation. We reckon with historical and ongoing violence against Black, Indigenous, Latine, and other communities of color, especially those with intersectional identities. As an advocacy organization working to change policy within the confines of existing institutions, we acknowledge that these systems are derivative of colonialism and permeated by anti-Black racism and white supremacy culture. We understand that our collective liberation depends on the evolution, or in some cases abolition, of these systems. We represent a generation of farmers who are motivated by the opportunity to orient agriculture toward the realization of justice and a world defined by equitable outcomes.

## LAND IS FOUNDATIONAL

We belong to and honor land as a life-giving resource providing for our farming, housing, and social needs. We believe a new generation of agriculture depends on repairing a land system that began with theft from Indigenous communities and is built on dispossession and continual displacement. We recognize the current distribution of land ownership as unsustainable, a threat to our climate resilience, and deeply unjust. We believe that our work as farmers is to repair, enliven, and maintain our connections to land.

## POLICY CHANGE IS NECESSARY FOR A RADICAL FUTURE

We believe in both incremental and radical change in support of a just farm future. We acknowledge a distrust for a federal government that originated in violence and oppression, including dispossession of Indigenous lands and enslavement of African peoples, and that continues to harm BIPOC communities and farmers. And we appreciate a cynicism felt by many farmers that the system will never serve them at all. But we've seen grassroots policy advocacy dismantle inequitable policies and democratize political participation. We work strategically to contribute to these hardwon policy victories. As farmers and advocates we lead with our shared values without compromising on core principles. We believe policy change requires work and dialogue, and we fight to ensure our advocacy does not obstruct the realization of the radical vision in which farming serves the public interest.

## WE FARM FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE

We are a generation of farmers who recognize our responsibility for climate action and imagine a future with thriving ecosystems. We know the climate crisis will define our future: we work to build climate resilience so our farm future is possible. We steward our soils in the long tradition of Indigenous practices and the legacies of agricultural expertise that respect our soil, water, and air. We are uncompromising in our stewardship and we expect the same from our public policy. We advocate for policies that support the work of farmers to shift from extractive forms of agriculture and power to a new agricultural economy premised on the regeneration of resources, well-being of people, and climate action.

## **WE ARE FARMERS IN SOLIDARITY WITH FARMWORKERS**

We believe that a just future for agriculture depends on the recognition that farmworkers are agricultural experts without whom farms could not operate. We work toward the elimination of the exploitation of farmworkers and towards the full recognition and respect of their expertise, rights, and freedoms. We use our power as a Coalition of working farmers to amplify our farmworker-led partners' priorities, including immigration reform to legalize undocumented farmworkers, full labor protections, and more effective enforcement of labor violations. And we affirm that the U.S. would not have a crisis of attrition in agriculture if all structural barriers preventing farmworkers from becoming farm owners were removed.

## **WE CHALLENGE CAPITALISM**

Agricultural policy exists within a capitalist system that favors profit and wealth accumulation over community needs and the social good. As a consequence, we endure an agricultural system that urges consolidation, perpetuates wealth inequality, and exploits labor. As farmers and advocates, we believe capitalism must be challenged for the benefit of our communities. We build upon Black farmers' innovation to expand accessibility of our products and build cooperative models. We believe in constructively challenging obsolete economic paradigms by acknowledging the limits of market solutions and private land ownership. And we work towards creating a public agricultural system where farming is a recognized public service, local food infrastructure is supported, and all people are guaranteed the right to food.

## **WE WORK ACROSS ISSUES**

Farms are not isolated from society. Farms exist as part of the broader community and working farmers are subject to impacts of policy beyond the limits of agricultural policy. And many farmers experience harm, discrimination, and limited opportunities because of these policies. We focus on agricultural policy but engage in issues beyond "agricultural" policy necessary for our vision for a just world, including, but not limited to: free education and debt cancellation, path to citizenship for all, climate action, healthcare for all, and the institution of a restorative justice system. We defer to partners in these movements and mobilize farmers to add their voices in solidarity.

## **WE EXPRESS GLOBAL SOLIDARITY**

We recognize the mistake of focusing on agriculture in the United States without being attentive to the role of our country's policy on farming communities across the world. We stand in solidarity with global food sovereignty movements and are accountable to the ramifications of our agricultural system on the health and well-being of the global community.

GOALS	END OF 2022	END OF 2024	END OF 2026
 <p><b>COALITION STRUCTURES AND CULTURE</b></p>	<p>We will establish the organizational structure, decision-making processes, and business model necessary to implement our strategic plan and reinforce our organizational values.</p>		<p>Our staff and network will be thriving in a supportive and human-centered culture aligned with our organizational values, and will be operational change leaders contributing to a larger movement for a just agricultural future.</p>
 <p><b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b></p>	<p>We will (1) strengthen our metrics and evaluation processes by continuing to include regular feedback from BIPOC staff, farmers, organizational partners and leadership, and (2) establish majority BIPOC governance teams (Board, Executive Team, and Leadership Team).</p>	<p>We will have institutionalized an evaluation practice that upholds our organizational values, and we will have majority BIPOC staff and governance teams.</p>	
 <p><b>BASE-BUILDING</b></p>	<p>We will re-envision our organizing structures (such as chapters, affinity groups, membership, events, etc.) for farmers to build community and lead grassroots movements for an anti-racist farm future.</p>	<p>Our organizing spaces are innovative and affirming, in intentional alignment with our values and vision for structural change.</p>	<p>We will represent 50,000 farmer members nationally, creating an irrefutable voice for change in D.C.</p>
 <p><b>FARMER LEADERS IN ACTION</b></p>	<p>We will strengthen our network of farmer leaders, including providing the media, policy, and anti-racism training necessary to advocate for structural change.</p>	<p>Our expanded farmer leader network will leverage their lived experience and training to build influential relationships with policy makers.</p>	<p>500 farmer leaders in our network will serve in decision-making or advisory roles, shaping policy outcomes.</p>
 <p><b>POLICY CAMPAIGNS AND CHANGE</b></p>	<p>We will develop collaborative, farmer-driven policy campaign strategies for each of the five Federal Policy Platform pillars: land access, climate action, labor and immigration, student loan debt relief, USDA access &amp; accountability.</p>		<p>Federal policy reflects recommendations from each of the pillars of our Federal Policy Platform.</p>
 <p><b>FARM BILL WIN &amp; FOLLOWUP</b></p>		<p>We will advocate for the farm bill to include farmer-driven policy solutions and for Congress to make a historic, \$2.5 billion dollar investment in national land transition to the next generation of farmers, recognizing land as critical for climate action and racial equity.</p>	<p>We will work with USDA to implement our farm bill wins, turning bold legislative change into material benefit for young and BIPOC farmers.</p>

# CORE STRATEGIES

## TO SHIFT POWER, WE WILL FOCUS ON

### FARMER ORGANIZING & MOBILIZATION

We build power by engaging with farmers, supporting farmer organizing, growing our collective structural analysis, and making space for farmers to participate in policy advocacy.

### FARMER LEADERSHIP

We cultivate farmer leadership, particularly from those most marginalized from the political process, and center their voices in Coalition decision-making and internal leadership opportunities (such as Board, chapters, circles, committee structures). Externally, we amplify their voices and prioritize their participation in media and advocacy opportunities.

### FARMER OPPORTUNITIES & FELLOWSHIP

We train farmers to harness their lived experience and practical solutions to demand bold policy change, individually and in community. We direct resources to compensate farmers for their time learning and practicing advocacy and organizing and leadership.

## SECONDARY STRATEGIES

### FUNDER INFLUENCE

Challenging funders, corporations, and other influencers to adopt new perspectives on agricultural challenges and opportunities.

## TO LEAD FEDERAL POLICY CAMPAIGNS, WE WILL

### DEVELOP FEDERAL POLICY SOLUTIONS

We will develop and publish research, policy ideas, and narratives to advance bold ideas and establish the context for more inclusive and farmer-driven policies. We will develop analysis and policy ideas for each of our federal policy pillars as well as broader ideas such as Farming as a Public Service framework.

### ADVANCE LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE PRIORITIES AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH CONGRESS AND USDA, WITH A FOCUS ON WINNING BOLD CHANGE IN THE 2023 FARM BILL

1. Cultivate Congressional champions to introduce and support our legislative priorities.
2. Keep USDA accountable to serving all farmers and implementing legislative wins accordingly.
3. Strategically time policy efforts to maximize impact (Farm Bill focus now until 2023.)
4. Develop USDA internal transformation campaign to ensure long-term support for Young Farmer issues.

### MOBILIZE THE GRASSROOTS AND WORK IN COALITION

1. Lead and participate in coalitions to advance shared priorities, especially BIPOC-led coalitions.
2. Educate and activate our network of young farmers to participate, take action, ask their elected officials to help, and stay informed.

### ACCOMPLICESHIP & ECOSYSTEM

Channeling resources and opportunities to BIPOC-led organizations and partners to grow the ecosystem's capacity for policy engagement and organizing.

# CORE VALUES

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GENEROUS / HUMBLE / GRACIOUS  
CONSCIENTIOUS / HUMANE / SUPPORTIVE  
TRUSTING / OPTIMISTIC  
VULNERABLE / TRANSPARENT / DIRECT  
ADAPTABLE / DYNAMIC / FLEXIBLE  
COLLABORATIVE / COHESIVE / DELIBERATIVE  
INNOVATIVE / RISK TAKING / CREATIVE  
AMBITIOUS / PROACTIVE / BOLD  
JUDICIOUS / ANALYTICAL / STRATEGIC  
STABLE / SUSTAINABLE / COMPLIANT



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