



# STRATEGIC PLAN

## A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am proud to share Shalom Farms' 2023-2025 strategic plan. This plan is the reflection of 9 months of collective work involving staff, board, customers, partners, critics and consultants. We are grateful to The Spark Mill, who conducted an external landscape analysis and external interviews, crunched participant and partner survey data, facilitated a board and staff retreat and guided our strategic planning committee through this process. We are also grateful to Two Brown Girls, whose facilitation and workshops for staff and board on racial equity, power and hierarchy, and values played a pivotal and synergistic role in shaping a 3-year strategic plan that is ambitious but tangible.

In this plan, you will see goals that color outside of our previous lines. Goals that ask us — staff, board, volunteers, supporters — to rethink our premise as an organization, continuing what we've done well while committing to doing some things differently. You will see phrases like "transform our food system," "food justice," and "racial equity." These are not powerful words on a pretty page. These are commitments. We don't want you to only hear what we say, we want you to watch what we do.

We will continue to grow and distribute high-quality produce at discounted rates, keeping more money in people's pockets and contributing to positive health outcomes. We will continue to provide top notch education and volunteer experiences in food skills and in farming, keeping fresh meals simple and sustainable practices central.

But we will also look ahead. We want the neighborhoods we work with and for to determine how their food system works, from how land and farming infrastructure are used to how food is aggregated and sold to who is involved. We will tap our resources and relationships to build together toward that end. Watch for us to purchase products from more Black + brown farmers. Watch for us to explore long term land agreements that allow us to invest and share. Watch for us to foster space for community-led discussion and decision making. Watch for us to find more ways to collaborate with other justice-oriented organizations — in program development, in fundraising efforts, and most importantly, in impact.

Richmond has all it needs — passionate farmers and producers, highly skilled urban and rural agriculture educators, powerful grassroots and institutional organizations committed to realizing lasting transformation, connected and motivated citizens who understand food justice and historic inequities, and abundant resources: land, time, and money. We know transformation is possible, it's each of us finding what role is ours — farmer, teacher, advocate, volunteer, supporter — and building a strategy together.

However you have come to be a part of the Shalom Farms community, thank you for your support. We are honored to be working with you to make this plan real.

Änna Ibrahim  
Executive Director

# STRATEGIC PLAN SNAPSHOT

## 2023-2025

APRIL 2023

SHALOM FARMS IS A NONPROFIT FARM AND FOOD JUSTICE ORGANIZATION  
WORKING TO TRANSFORM RICHMOND, VIRGINIA'S FOOD SYSTEM.

### OUR GOALS

- Increase accessibility of fresh food across Richmond.
- Shift how we work to invest in systemic change.
- Leverage our farms for community engagement in food system growth.
- Cultivate intentional, thoughtful and mutual relationships with community stakeholders.
- Support and sustain strategic priorities with structure and resources.

### 1. Seeding Equity

All Richmonders have access to affordable, fresh food and the skills/tools to enjoy it.



### 2. Taking Root

Shalom Farms workers and supporters learn about food justice through our programs.

We build and maintain authentic relationships with people who interact with Shalom Farms.

Our farms are hubs for community conversations, gatherings, and events.

### 4. A New Leaf

All Richmonders see a clear path to a more racially equitable, cohesive, and inclusive food system.

### 3. Helping Grow

Community health and wellbeing are improved.

Food justice is a community priority for everyone who lives in Richmond.

BIPOC Farmers and BIPOC food justice organizations have a leading role in the Richmond food system.

# SHALOM FARMS

## DEFINITIONS + VALUES

### DEFINITIONS

#### Access

Access has five dimensions: Acceptability (relationship, quality, cultural appropriateness), Accessibility (location, transportation, travel time), Accommodation (hours, presentation, experience), Affordability (prices, income, discounts/subsidy acceptance) and Availability (volume, variety, consistency)

#### Food Justice

Food Justice is communities exercising their right to grow, sell, and eat healthy food. Healthy food is fresh, nutritious, affordable, culturally-appropriate, and grown locally with care. Food justice represents a transformation of the current food system, including but not limited to eliminating disparities and inequities. (Source: [www.foodjusticebook.org](http://www.foodjusticebook.org), [www.justfood.org](http://www.justfood.org))

#### Food System

Food systems are complex networks that include all the inputs and outputs associated with agricultural and food production and consumption. Food systems can vary substantially from place to place and over time. Food systems provide a comprehensive framing through which to assess the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainability. (Source: [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov))

#### BIPOC

Black, Indigenous and people of color.

#### Racial Equity (RE)

RE is both an outcome and a process. As an outcome, we achieve RE when Black and other people of color have the power to self-determine, when race no longer determines one's socioeconomic outcomes. As a process, organizations apply RE when those most adversely impacted by structural racism are at the center of the creation and implementation of the institutional policies and practices that impact their lives. (Source: Two Brown Girls)

### VALUES

#### Justice

We commit to actively working against systemic inequities in Richmond related to food and farming in order to defend the inherent right to autonomy, health, and wellness, particularly in communities of color.

#### Collaboration

We commit to sharing resources, generating ideas, and building community with old and new partners. We will be clear about what we do and do not bring to the table while also continuously experimenting, reassessing, and iterating on our practices.

#### Integrity

We commit to being candid in our internal and external relationships, especially when having the hard conversation is uncomfortable. We will admit when we are wrong, stay flexible when we can, and stand firm when we need to.

#### Respect

We commit to honoring humanity, recognizing that everyone has infinite value. We are all constantly learning and growing, have something to offer to food justice work, and are also more than our work.

#### Sustainability

We commit to lasting, positive, change. As stewards of the land we use regenerative practices. As stewards of our resources, we invest them in ways that build a stronger Richmond food system. We pace ourselves, balancing transformation with renewal.



# STRATEGIC PLAN DETAIL

## 2023-2025

FEBRUARY 15, 2023

**SHALOM FARMS IS A NONPROFIT FARM AND FOOD JUSTICE ORGANIZATION  
WORKING TO TRANSFORM RICHMOND, VIRGINIA'S FOOD SYSTEM.**

### Introduction

Everyone deserves access to good food. Food that is good for their bodies, their families, their community and the environment. We envision a food system where all persons have equitable access to nourishing food and meaningful opportunities to grow, choose, cook and enjoy fresh, affordable food.

As we look to the future, we want to collaborate with others, sharing our resources, to create a new and better food system together. Over the next three years our strategic direction is to join with others to transform the food system in Richmond.

The plan was researched and developed by a strategic planning team comprised of Shalom Farms staff and Board members. They met in September 2022 to identify and capture current and future environmental, program and operational opportunities and challenges; collect input from staff, key stakeholders and board members; and shape the final plan. At a retreat held in December 2022, Board of Directors reviewed and finalized areas of focus for this strategic plan and voted to adopt it in February 2022.

The organization used the services consultants from The Spark Mill. They collected information from four areas as part of the information-gathering portion of the planning process.

- Interviews with community stakeholders
- Environmental scan of food justice space in Greater Richmond
- Review of internal process and data
- Review of mobile market survey results by DMBA

We recognize that a plan is only as useful as it is flexible. We commit to the intentions of this plan, while also leaving room for learning, experimentation, iteration, and change.

### Background

Shalom Farms is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that seeks to build healthy communities by growing and sharing healthy food. The food grown at the Shalom Farms gets distributed through its network of programs and partnerships in communities where access to healthy food is limited.

Started in 2009 on ¼ acre at Camp Westview on the James in Goochland County, Shalom Farms has evolved into two large scale farms spanning 9 acres, producing over 600,000 servings of produce each year.

### Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles

Mission: Shalom Farms is a nonprofit working together to build healthy communities by growing and sharing healthy food.



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Vision: We envision a healthier community where everyone has equitable access to nourishing food and meaningful opportunities to grow, choose, cook and enjoy fresh produce

### Guiding Principles

- We believe everyone deserves access to good food. Food that is good for their bodies, their families, their community and the environment.
- We believe barriers to accessing healthy food disproportionately affect our Black and brown communities due to unjust systems.
- Providing meaningful access to healthy food is at the heart of everything we do, and we have programs to advocate for lasting change.

### Impacts, Outcomes, Goals and Strategies

With this strategic plan, we aim for the following **impacts**:

- All Richmonders have access to affordable, fresh food and the skills/tools to enjoy it
- BIPOC Farmers and BIPOC food justice organizations have a leading role in the Richmond food system
- Richmond has an inclusive, cohesive, and accessible food system
- Community health and wellbeing are improved
- Food justice is a community priority for all who live in Richmond

To achieve these impacts, we will focus on these **goals**:

- Shift how we work to invest in systemic change
- Increase accessibility of fresh food across Richmond
- Leverage our farms for community engagement in food system growth
- Cultivate intentional, thoughtful, and mutual relationships with community stakeholders
- Support and sustain strategic priorities with structure and resources

Focusing on these five goals will help us with the following

### **outcomes:**

- Shalom Farms is an active advocate of food justice in the community
- More people can readily access affordable fresh food
- Community stakeholders feel the impact of their contribution to shared goals and achievements
- More BIPOC farmers and organizations are supported and funded in food justice and healthy food access work
- More people who interact with Shalom Farms are aware of food justice due to our education programs

Below we expand the five **goals** and outline supporting **strategies** to achieve these goals.



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### **Increase accessibility of fresh food across Richmond**

- Expand direct distribution of fresh produce and other value-add and/or whole diet products from local and regional producers
- Equip people to prepare and enjoy fresh food
- Increase capacity for collaboration and production in service of the local food system (ex: partnering with more local farms, year-round programming)

### **Shift how we work to invest in systemic change**

- Invest in relationships with BIPOC farmers and organizations to amplify their power and voice
- Embed food justice and racial equity values in all Shalom Farms communications, experiences, and programs
- Invest in systemic change through educational programs

### **Leverage our farms for community engagement in food system growth**

- Support farm incubator initiatives for future BIPOC farmers
- Equip volunteers to be advocates through enhanced education to include food systems and food justice
- Leverage farms as an inclusive community-building space

### **Cultivate intentional, thoughtful, and mutual relationships with community stakeholders**

- Ensure opportunities for communities with whom and for whom we work to be heard and explore shared decision making
- Actively participate in local neighborhood associations, city council meetings, and schools
- Form strategic partnerships through community engagement to advance food justice

### **Support and sustain strategic priorities with structure and resources**

- Develop internal racially equitable practices in staffing, board development, and community engagement
- Create a value-aligned and inclusive development strategy to support strategic goals
- Ensure a just and equitable work environment for Shalom Farms staff
- Explore purchasing land in service to justice, unity of operations, program flexibility, and sustainability.

### **Acknowledgements**

- Board: Elesha Belke, Sharon Blount (Chair), Darren Broughton, Eric Clay, Isabel Eljaiek, Jeff Fender, Johanna Gattuso, Linda Georgiadis, Helen Ragazzi, Steve Russo, Jennifer Wicker, Tamara Young-Elmore
- Strategic Planning Committee: Sharon Blount (Chair), Eric Clay (Board), Alistar Harris (Staff), Anna Ibrahim (Executive Director), Erin Lingo (Leadership Team), Steve Miles (Leadership Team), Rainey Niklawski (Leadership Team), Hannah Wittwer (Leadership Team)