



ADVANCING EQUITY

Working toward a food system that supports viable livelihoods for all farmers and communities.



WORKING FARMLAND PARTNERSHIP: BUILDING BRIDGES TO FARMLAND ACCESS



PARTNERS

- KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT
- WASHINGTON FARMLAND TRUST
- SNOVALLEY TILTH
- KING COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM
- VIVA FARMS
- AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST
- INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE'S NEW ROOTS PROGRAM
- TILTH ALLIANCE

Access to land is a significant barrier for farmers. Rising land prices, competing uses, climate impacts, and urbanization limit access to farmland. For farmers of color, these challenges are compounded by a long history of systemic discrimination. In 2018, organizations and agencies focused on farmland access came together with a shared goal of ensuring a farming future in King County.

The [Working Farmland Partnership](#) (WFP) brings together the services of several organizations to support the successful transition of farmland. This includes partners who serve BIPOC farmers with the goal of ensuring all farmers have access to farmable land and land is maximized to its full potential.

The [King County Agricultural Team](#) walks properties with landowners and farmers, identifies barriers to production, and creates a plan for improvements. The team makes connections to service providers with expertise in technical farming, funding sources, market access, business planning, and permitting and regulatory processes.

The WFP has a track record of supporting farmers in their land access journeys, ultimately resulting in increased farmland in production and a greater number of farms in the county.

Since 2018, the WFP partners have:



RAINIER BEACH URBAN FARM INSPIRES THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS TO ENGAGE IN FOOD PRODUCTION



PARTNERS

TILTH ALLIANCE
FRIENDS OF RAINIER
BEACH URBAN FARM

At a time when community connections are strained and food security is of concern, it is inspiring to look at a program that is cultivating not just crops, but leadership. At [Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands](#) (RBUFW), young people are taking active roles to build a just and abundant food future that is vital to our sustenance and economy. They are working to develop connections with their community and farming through meaningful learning experiences in fields, farms, and kitchens.

Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands is a community hub for food, urban farming, and environmental education in Seattle's Rainier Beach neighborhood co-operated by Tilth Alliance and Friends of Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands.

The youth employment program at RBUFW expose young people to food production and wetland restoration techniques, but perhaps the most important part of this program is the team and community building that helps cultivate a connection to our food system.



“We want to show youth participants that farming is for everyone and they can do it too,” said Suez Gebretsadik, Youth Engagement Coordinator. “Many youth members that I’ve worked with have never stepped foot in a garden or have experience growing their own food. RBUFW hopes to show youth how to farm in creative and engaging ways so they are invested in food production as well as their own personal and professional development.”

CREATING OPPORTUNITY: A NEW VISION FOR KING COUNTY-OWNED FARMLAND



PARTNERS

KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT
SNOVALLEY TILTH
FOOD ACCESS AND AGGREGATION
COMMUNITY TEAM (FAACT)
WORKING FARMLAND PARTNERSHIP

Development pressures and competing land-use demands continue to make farmland in King County harder to come by and increasingly expensive. King County manages a portfolio of farm properties and recently re-envisioned the role this land could play in the landscape of the regional farm economy. County-owned farmland will provide a space for the establishment and growth of farm businesses with an emphasis on socially disadvantaged and new and beginning farmers.

King County's Farm Lease Program provides land and infrastructure access in alignment with [King County's Equity and Social Justice Goals](#), Local Food Initiative, and the [Strategic Climate Action Plan](#). The [Farm Lease Program](#) will provide an accessible pathway for new and aspiring farmers to access farmland while supporting the responsible stewardship of these properties.

The approach includes working closely with community partners, which is critical for providing necessary technical, business, market access, and financial support. The land made available through the Farm Lease Program paired with technical assistance and entrepreneurial training allow more farmers to grow healthy and nutritious food for the community.



2020 STRATEGIC CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

King County plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions countywide by 80% by 2050 and the [2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan](#) includes strategies that can reduce emissions from the farm sector and make the King County agricultural landscape more resilient to climate change.

Strategies to reduce emissions include accelerating farmland preservation, expanding the use of compost and recycled water, ensuring that farm plans include the impacts of climate change and strategies for climate resilient farms. Strategies that will prepare farmers and farmland owners for the impacts of climate change include conducting a countywide irrigation water needs assessment; preparing farm plans that stress regenerative agriculture; conducting a climate change impact assessment; examining infrastructure vulnerability, especially from increased flooding; and increasing farm participation in federal disaster insurance programs. There is also a focus on supporting farming communities of color, particularly immigrant, refugee, and Black and Indigenous farming communities, to improve land access and provide opportunities to build farming businesses and grow culturally appropriate food.

