



# NAFSN STUDENT CHAPTER

## LEADERSHIP TOOLKIT 2023



NORTH AMERICAN  
**FOOD SYSTEMS  
NETWORK**

# WELCOME!

The North American Food Systems Network (NAFSN)  
is a professional development association  
for people working together  
to strengthen local & regional food systems.





# NAFSN STUDENT CHAPTERS

NAFSN is specifically focused on connecting students and other emerging professionals to networks, resources, and other opportunities as they forge their career paths in the burgeoning field of food systems development.

In 2023, NAFSN will support  
**6 new student chapters**  
on colleges campuses in North America.





# APPLY

Your group has been **[invited to apply](#)**.

Please read through  
the entirety of this  
Student Chapter Leadership Toolkit first!

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis  
throughout 2023.

# WHY STUDENT CHAPTERS?

College degrees in food systems studies have sprung up throughout higher education. Local and regional food system innovators, researchers, and activists abound. All who work within and at the periphery of food systems are necessary to restorative food-growing practices, fair economic opportunities, and equitable access to farmland and nutrition.

**Yet we know that breaking into the food systems profession can be daunting.** It's difficult for students to navigate the profession, join networks, meet practitioners, apply academic knowledge, and find paid jobs once they've graduated.

NAFSN aims to connect students enrolled in food systems studies (and other aligned disciplines) to regional and national networking and engagement opportunities **before** they graduate.

# WHAT DOES A NAFSN STUDENT CHAPTER DO?

Each year, NAFSN Student Chapters will:

- Recruit and engage at least **6 undergraduate student members**.
- Appoint **2 co-chairs** to coordinate your group & attend NAFSN national meetings virtually.
- Hold **monthly gatherings** (virtual or in-person) with support from NAFSN. Gatherings can include:
  - engagement in NAFSN's webinars with **food systems employers**;
  - engagement in NAFSN's webinars with **food systems innovators**;
  - engagement in NAFSN's webinars with **food systems researchers**;
  - one-on-one virtual networking with **food systems professionals**;
- Engage in a **community food projects** locally.
- **Publish an article or video** with NAFSN about your engagement with a local food project.
- Participate in guided **job searches** using NAFSN's employment portal.
- Use NAFSN's association website to create and manage your **chapter's webpage**.
- Be featured in NAFSN's **newsletter and website** as a participating chapter.
- Contribute to a **Code of Ethics** project for the food systems profession.



# HOW DO WE RECRUIT CHAPTER MEMBERS?

Each Student Chapter will **recruit and engage at least 6 student members** annually. There is no maximum but we encourage you to keep it manageable.

Of course, most efforts will usually start with just 1 or 2 founding student leaders taking the lead.

Use our [recruitment flyer](#) to get the word out as you build your chapter in its inaugural year.

# WHAT ARE THE CO-CHAIR RESPONSIBILITIES?

Chapters normally start with a couple of students who take the lead. More often than not, these will also be the students who act as initial co-chairs. Chapters are encouraged to appoint/elect leadership in a manner that suits their group.

## **Co-Chairs will:**

- Recruit and welcome new members.
- Work with NAFSN to coordinate, promote, & convene monthly gatherings
- Attend the national virtual meeting of NAFSN Leaders monthly, held on the 1st Wednesday of each month, 12noon-1:15pm EST.
- Help chapter members engage in community food projects locally.
- Oversee the creation and management of the chapter webpage.
- Coordinate an annual publishable article or video from the chapter.
- Arrange annual payment of chapter dues.

Successful chapter chairs will earn a certificate in NAFSN Food Systems Leadership based on nationally-recognized [Core Competencies](#) for food systems professionals.





# HOW DOES NAFSN ENGAGE WITH CHAPTERS?

Chapters are encouraged to meet monthly, in person or virtually.

**NAFSN will work with each Chapter to create & provide engaging networking & educational opportunities for student chapter gatherings such as:**

- guest speakers from our professional network
- job creators in the food systems profession
- researchers from our sister journal ([JAFSCD](#))

Chapters are also encouraged to use their meeting times to better know and engage with their own local food system movements. NAFSN will help make local connections happen, when requested.

# WHAT ARE CHAPTER DUES?

In an effort to make membership as affordable as possible for college students, NAFSN waives the individual member fees. Instead, the Chapter pays **annual dues of only \$60 total, which covers all its members.**

If 6 students share the cost of Chapter dues, each student pays only \$10/year.

If 12 students share the cost of Chapter dues, each student pays only \$5/year.

In addition to participation in your Student Chapter, all student members will also receive a free membership to our national organization for the duration of their undergraduate years.

**Optional:** We understand that some Student Chapters will want to raise additional funds to cover costs associated with community food projects. Fundraising and accounting for these purposes are the sole responsibility of the Chapter, in accordance with each institution's guidelines, and are outside of NAFSN's scope of management or support for the Chapters.



# ARE YOU READY TO START YOUR COLLEGE CHAPTER?

Use this checklist to determine if you're ready to start:

\_\_\_ We have at least two students enrolled in food systems studies (and/or aligned disciplines) to act as **founding co-chairs** for the Chapter.

\_\_\_ We are confident that we can recruit at least **6 student members** to our chapter during our first year, including us.

\_\_\_ We have identified a **faculty advisor or administrator** who can guide us in the establishment of a student group at our college/university as needed.

\_\_\_ We understand that **\$60 dues** will be paid by the Chapter, on behalf of its membership, to NAFSN, and that dues will be assessed annually.



# LEGAL STATUS & CONTACT INFORMATION

NAFSN is hosted by the  
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(a 501(c)(3) nonprofit affiliated with Cornell University).

*The Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*  
is a sister program to NAFSN.

**For more information** about starting a NAFSN Student Chapter in  
2023, contact:

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