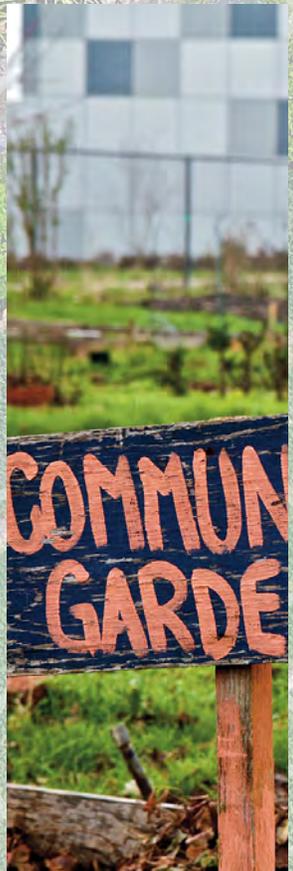


2021

# Jefferson County Food Systems Network Report

A Vision for Jefferson County's Future



# Acknowledgements

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# Executive Summary

**A resilient food system is composed of three healthy and interacting subsystems: policy, markets and institutions, and production (Babu & Blom, 2014).**

When the coronavirus pandemic hit, the percentage of Jefferson County residents who did not have enough food spiked from 10% to 40%. Jefferson County's food system partners responded quickly, effectively, and collaboratively. Jefferson County seeks to build a more resilient food system for the long term. It will require that all stakeholders agree to take collective action and hold one another accountable as well as think creatively and innovatively about funding.

## Project Objectives

The Jefferson County Food Systems Network Project was tasked to create an action plan for Jefferson County food system stakeholders and subsystems.

1. Develop a detailed food system map.
2. Identify gaps.
3. Create a vision of resilience across the Jefferson County food system.
4. Develop an action plan of community-based solutions for coordinated and collective action, as well as funding opportunities.

## A Vision for Jefferson County

A healthy, resilient food system looks like:

- Widespread access to nutritious, culturally-appropriate, and affordable food,
- A vibrant, diverse entrepreneurial food ecosystem,
- Prosperous and well-supported local farmers, ranchers, food workers, and food businesses of all sizes.
- Robust, collaborative cross-sector funding,
- Coordinated, community-centered policymaking that increases resilience and is responsive to food emergencies,
- Cleaner watersheds, less polluted air, and healthier soil because of environmentally sound agricultural practices.

## Highlights

### Challenges:

- Capacity
- Policy
- Funding
- Perception

### Action Steps Overview:

1. Monitoring Food System Indicators
2. Recognizing Food System Emergencies and Risks across the Food System
3. Evidence-based Policymaking and Planning across the Public and Private Sectors
4. Mobilization of Communities for Action and Community-Centered Leadership across the Food System
5. Evaluation, Analysis, and Accountability

# I. Introduction: Food Insecurity

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Before the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), 35 million Americans (or 10.5% of all households) were either unable to get enough food to meet their needs or uncertain of where their next meal might come from, according to 2019 data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (US Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, 2020). During the pandemic, this number more than doubled to 23%, according to one estimate by Northwestern University (Schanzenbach & Pitts, 2020).

**Food insecurity is a lack of consistent access to enough food to live an active, healthy lifestyle (US Department of Agriculture, 2019).**

In Jefferson County, 10% of residents were experiencing food insecurity prior to March 2020. As of December 2020, 40%, or 2 out of 5 Colorado residents struggled with food insecurity (Hunger Free Colorado, 2021). Residents who belong to marginalized groups— including Hispanic, non-white, female, and LGBTQIA identifying individuals— experience food insecurity at higher rates.

The reasons that people don't receive adequate food, both during emergencies and during stable times, can be found throughout the food system. Examples include physical and economic disruptions in food production (due to crop failure or labor shortage), price volatility, a failure on the part of policy, or simple lack of communication between major players.

How do we ensure that community members receive the fresh and nutritious food they need to survive and thrive in Jefferson County— both during emergencies and in the long term? We build a resilient food system that accounts for every step of the process from soil to harvest to transportation to mouth.

## II. A Resilient Food System

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A resilient food system is composed of three healthy and interacting subsystems: policy, markets and institutions, and production (Babu & Blom, 2014).

Food systems are resilient when individual organizations and entities have the capacity and resources to prevent, anticipate, prepare for, and recover from shocks. When shocks and threats do occur, leaders must assess the entire food system and swiftly respond to community needs. To prepare for future shocks and adapt to ongoing needs, communities move from emergency relief initiatives to strengthening their food system network.

It's crucial to ask the right questions to understand resilience issues in terms of capacity, relationships, and performance (Babu & Blom, 2014).

## Three Integral Subsystems

Creating a resilient food system requires building different kinds of capacity through a network of three subsystems: policy, markets and institutions, and production. In order to ground the reader in the report and action recommendations, we offer a high-level understanding of the subsystems and their players.

### Policy Subsystem

The policy subsystem stresses long-term resilience through strategic thinking (Babu & Blom, 2014; Sutcliffe & Court, 2005). A policy subsystem with strong capacity produces policies and programs that make the markets and institutions subsystem and the production subsystem more robust. To develop sound policies and programs, the policy subsystem must analyze and foresee potentially negative events or system shocks.

It must also be able to plan preventative measures and emergency support. Outside of emergencies, the policy subsystem best addresses execution and direction of work across the markets and institutions subsystem as well as the production subsystem. Further, markets and institutions and the production subsystems have the ability to engage the policy subsystem for changes within their own subsystems.

### Markets and Institutions Subsystem

The markets and institutions subsystem influences the capacity to move food from producer to consumer (Babu & Blom, 2014; Khan, 2005). Government agencies, regulatory bodies, data gathering platforms, and the laws, regulations, and policies that control how markets operate are all part of this subsystem. These parts of the markets and institutions subsystem can plan for potential negative circumstances and are able to control, to a degree, how negative consequences on food systems affect them. They can also spot and prevent possible food-safety catastrophes. This subsystem generates a lot of the data that the policy subsystem uses to decide how, when, and what policies are needed to promote resilience. They also give the production subsystem data for decision-making (Babu & Blom, 2014).

### Production Subsystem

The production subsystem includes everything involved in growing and producing food products for consumption, including those sources involved just in inputs (e.g., soil). This subsystem develops specialized tools, technologies, and practices through research and development using data derived from markets, trade, and institutions. A well-equipped production subsystem connects research to farming practices and shares farmers' challenges and suggestions with researchers for further examination. In order to overcome many shocks and stressors, a robust production subsystem requires effective coordination with the policy and markets and institutions subsystems. Policy change and market drivers influence the direction and development of this subsystem (Babu & Blom, 2014).

## Synergy

The interconnection between every aspect of the food system is clear and synergies between the subsystems exist. **Addressing a challenge within one subsystem will often help resolve others.** For example, unless living wages are applied universally, the problem of inadequate food security will never be addressed (Grethe et al., 2011). The policy subsystem has the power to create the necessary wage change that will enable the other two subsystems to reliably and resiliently fulfill their roles.

## III. Jefferson County: From Emergency to Systemic Change

During COVID-19, Jefferson County leaders mounted a remarkable emergency food response to answer community needs. In partnership with Jefferson County, organizations collaborated and acted together to launch a de-stigmatization campaign, serve 12,000–14,000 meals three days per week through 12 county-wide food distributions (including coordinated volunteer shares), and inform policy solutions. Funders came together with emergency collaborative funding pooled through the Blueprint for Hunger.

The work of the Jefferson County Food Policy Council evolved throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council, in partnership with Jefferson County Public Health, was instrumental in the creation and implementation of Jefferson County's Food Assistance Provider Program, which distributed over \$1,300,000 to food assistance providers.

The Council continues to provide data collection and GIS mapping, technical assistance, and capacity building to many organizations, coalitions, and municipalities, including leveraging funding for food organizations across the County (including a total of \$1,101,821.77 aside from the County program in 2020).

In addition to addressing the urgent needs of food insecurity during COVID-19, the Council is working to reframe the narrative from an emergency response to food insecurity to a model of long-term recovery toward resilience. This response demonstrated the power of community when its agents communicate and take collective action towards a mutual goal.

The pandemic also revealed and exacerbated existing gaps in Jefferson County's food system as well as food systems across the country. It exposed several weaknesses in Jefferson County's food system, such as the limited capacity of food system stakeholders, siloed distribution channels, funding gaps, outdated and incoherent data and technology platforms, and a lack of food worker protections. Those who suffer most are our community members, including those with immigration status concerns, disabilities, and inadequate income as well as those experiencing barriers such as transportation.

# Jefferson County Food Systems Network Project

As Jefferson County continues to respond to immediate food insecurity, it also seeks to build a more resilient food system for the future. It can accomplish both of these goals if all stakeholders sign on to take collective action, hold one another accountable, and receive adequate and innovative funding. The Jefferson County Food Systems Network Project was tasked to develop actionable steps for all stakeholders and subsystems to work together. The effort was also completed alongside the Jefferson County Food Policy Council's strategic planning process, and participants in both efforts were offered compensation for their time to facilitate more equitable engagement.

## Project Objectives

1. Characterize the Jefferson County food system, including all components and stakeholders, and develop a detailed ecosystem map.
2. Identify gaps in the current Jefferson County food system.
3. Define a preferred future vision of resilience across the Jefferson County food system.
4. Develop an action plan of community-based solutions for coordinated and collection action amongst partners paired with funding opportunities.

## IV. The Existing Jefferson County Food System

To characterize the Jefferson County food system, the project developed a stakeholder inventory and collected stakeholder data examining services areas, expertise, function, and networks.

Stakeholder data was collected through:

- A survey, in English and Spanish. 56 responses were collected, and counts and frequencies for each item were calculated.
- 3 one-hour focus groups with:
  - ranchers,
  - individuals who worked in the emergency food system, and
  - individuals who identified as urban farmers or local food businesses.

# Mapping the Food System

The project developed a preliminary map of the Jefferson County food system that shows the types and roles of stakeholder organizations. A kumu map visually illustrates these findings and the food system as a whole.

To view and interact with the dynamic digital map [click here](#).

**Limitations:** While the map provides insights on strengths and gaps in the food system, it also has limitations. No survey respondents identified as funders and lenders, businesses, or labor organizations. Of the 43 organizations who reported on the communities they serve, five organizations or less served Aspen Park, Fairmount, Buffalo Creek, Foxton, Pine, Superior, and Coal Creek. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings in these sections.

## Stakeholder Type:

Figures 1a and 1b illustrate the stakeholder groups and subgroups as well as survey respondents' self-identified stakeholder groups. Survey respondents identified as:

- 53.6% community-based organization,
- 19.7% health and education organization,
- 19.7% policymakers and government,
- 7.1% agriculture organization, and
- 0 respondents identified as funders and lenders, businesses, or labor organizations.

Figure 1a. Jefferson County food system stakeholders' groups and subgroups

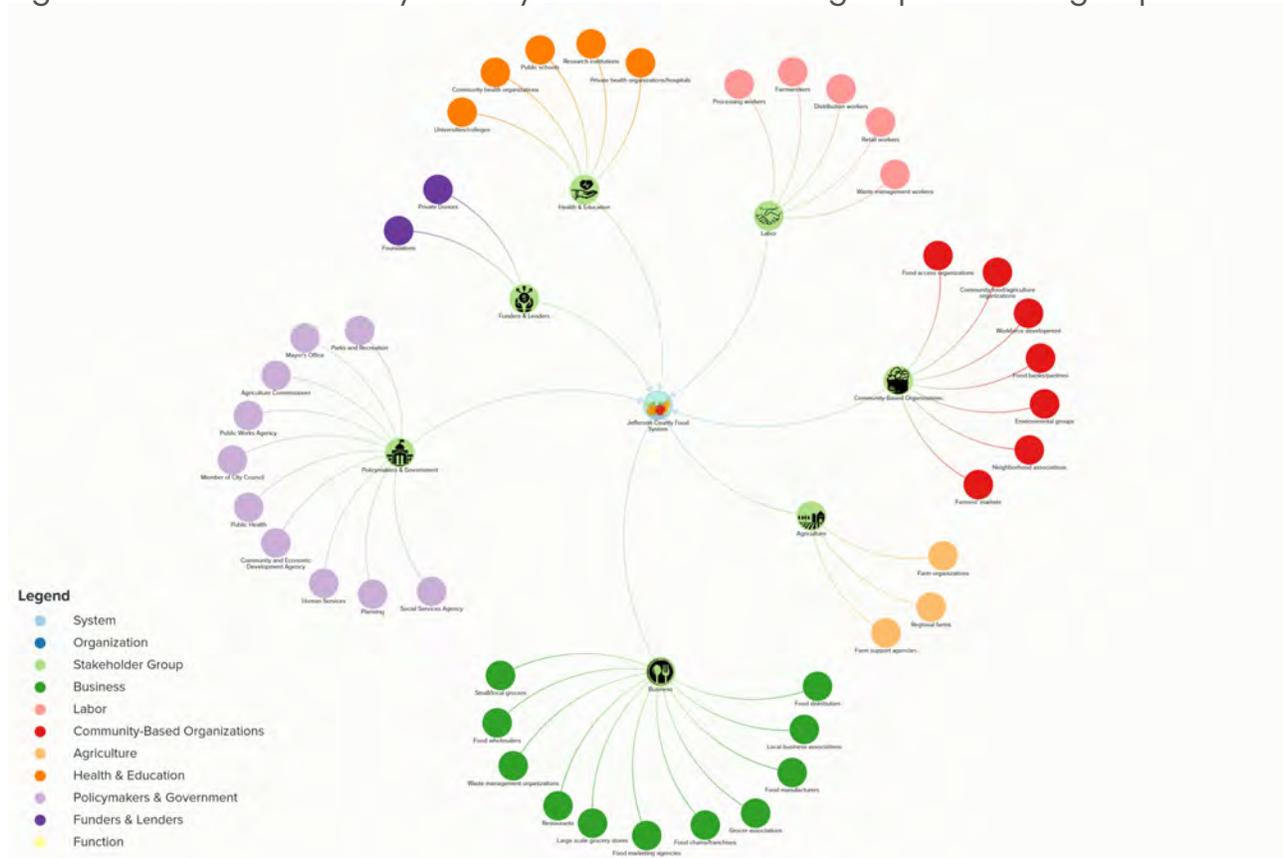
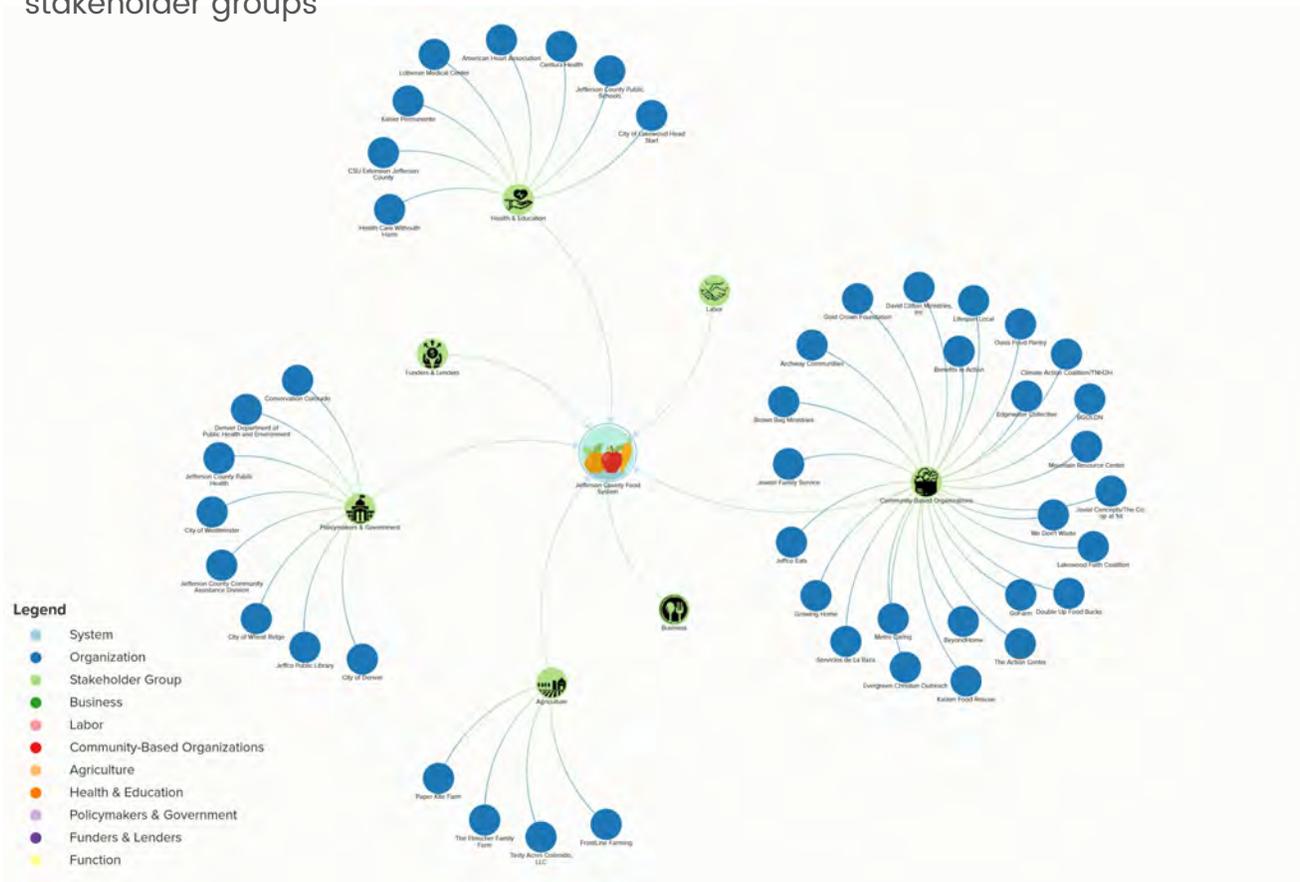


Figure 1b. Jefferson County food system stakeholders' self-identified stakeholder groups



**Function:**

Survey respondents also identified up to three food systems functions that their organization addresses. In Figure 2, these identified functions are mapped, and clusters (i.e., functions in tightly packed areas of the map) demonstrate functions that are addressed by many organizations whereas the periphery (i.e., functions along the perimeter of the map) demonstrate functions that are addressed by few organizations. Notably, all 15 functions were addressed by at least one stakeholder.

**Clusters include:**

- Food Security: Food access (78.38%)
- Food Supply Chains: Food storage and distribution (37.84%)
- Food Security: Enrollment in federal assistance programs (e.g., SNAP, WIC, F&RL) (35.14%)
- Consumer Behavior: Nutrition education (27.03%)

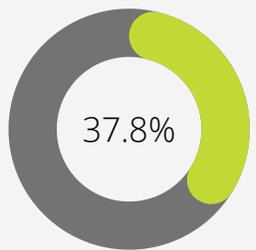
**The periphery includes:**

- Food Environments: Food worker protections (2.70%)
- Food Environments: Food marketing and advertising (2.70%)

The graphics present the functions of a food system suggested by local stakeholders and food systems literature that are important in creating a resilient food system.

**Figure 2: Which function(s) of the food system does your organization address? Please select up to three functions:**

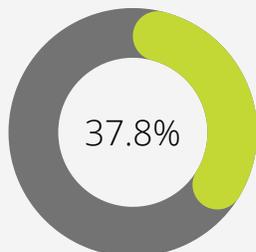
### Food Supply Chains



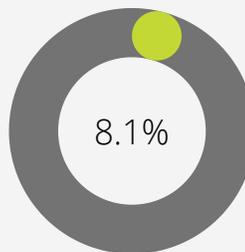
Food Storage & Distribution



Food Retail

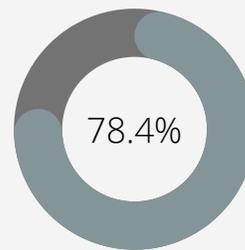


Food Waste Management

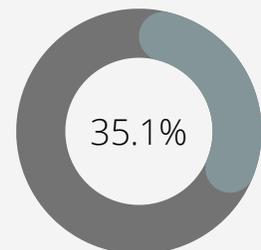


Food Processing & Packaging

### Food Security

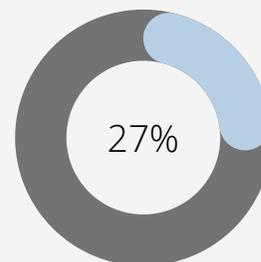


Food Access



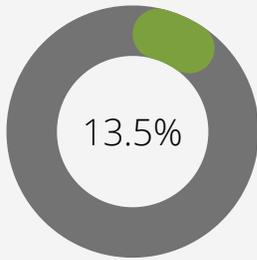
Enrollment in Federal Assistance Programs (e.g., SNAP, WIC, F&RL)

### Consumer Behavior

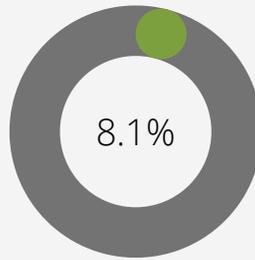


Nutrition Education

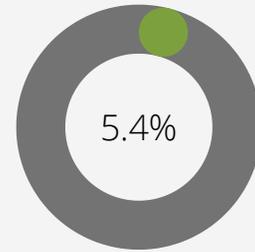
## Food Procurement



Retail procurement, including grocery stores, corner stores, and cooperatives

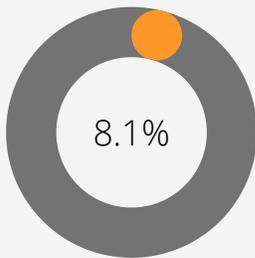


Institutional food procurement, including hospitals, schools, and companies

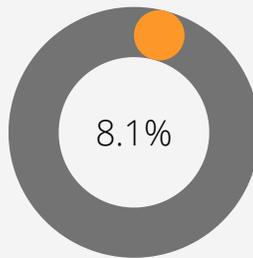


Restaurant food procurement

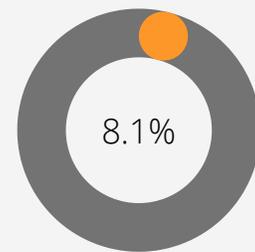
## Food Environments



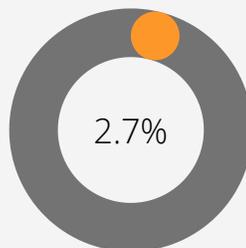
Food Transportation & Delivery



Food Safety

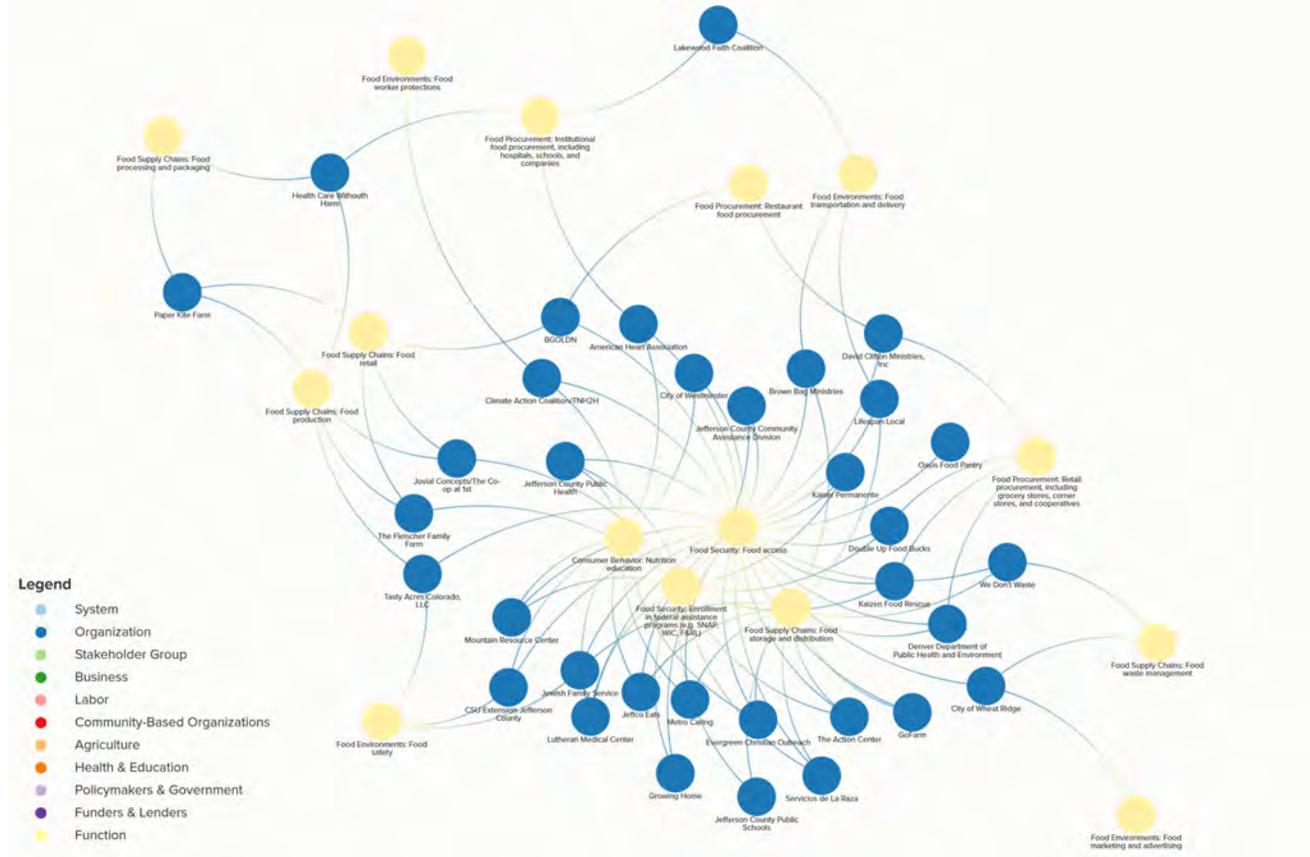


Food Marketing & Advertising



Food Worker Protections

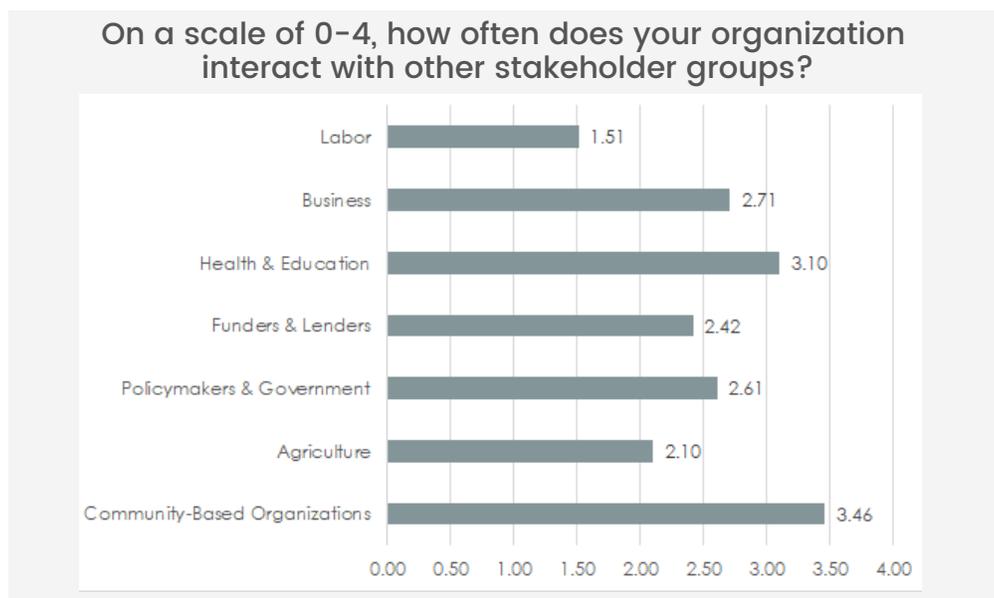
Figure 3. Stakeholder functions in the Jefferson County food system



## Network Analysis

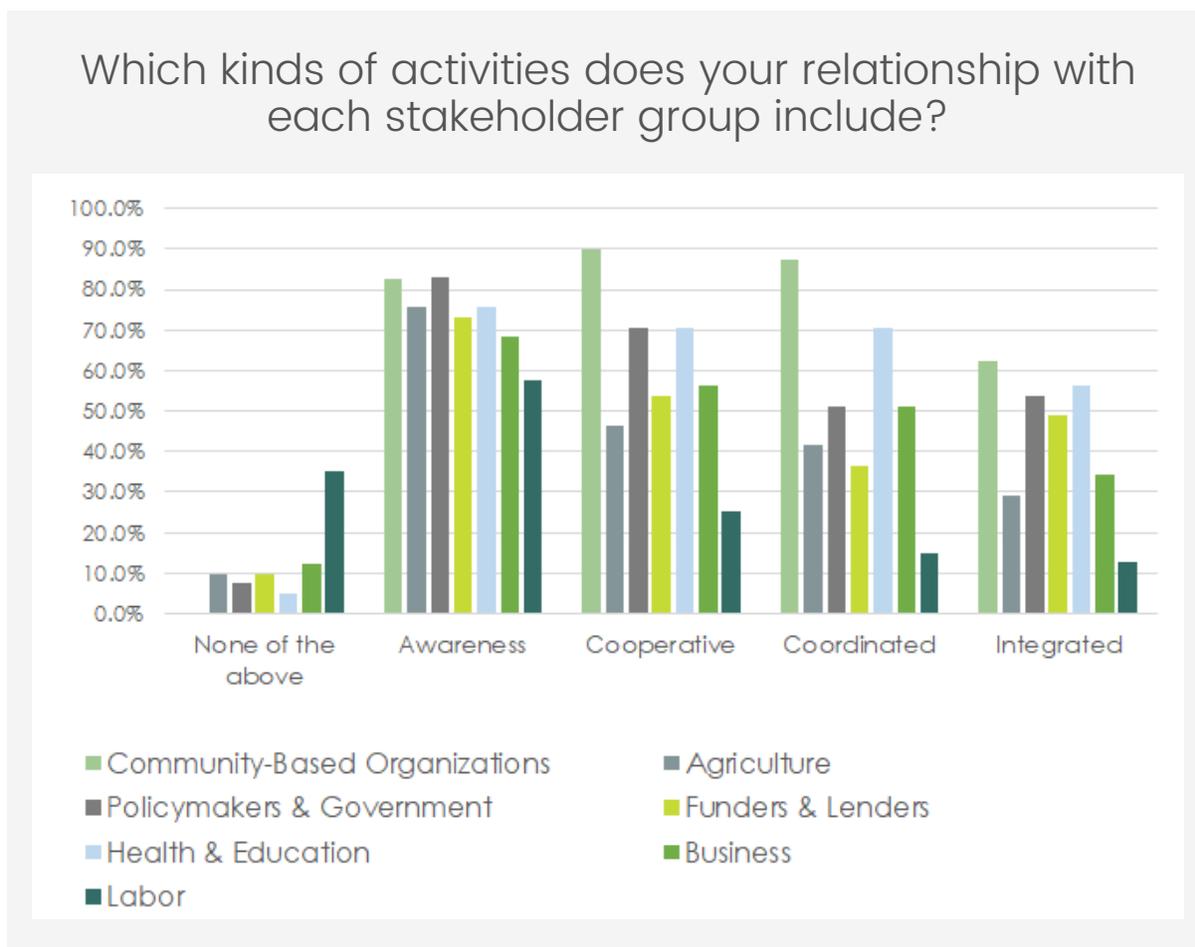
To determine how well stakeholders are communicating and acting collectively, the survey also examined two preliminary network measures: connectivity and relationships.

Figure 4. Connectivity of Jefferson County food system stakeholders



**Connectivity Key Finding:** The most interaction occurs between the community-based organizations, health and education organizations, and the entirety of the food system. Agricultural and labor organizations report the lowest interaction with other stakeholders. The rancher focus group reported a disconnect with community-based organizations and health and education organizations; their only connections with policymakers and government were through regulatory relationships. All three focus groups reported capacity barriers to creating deeper cross-system connections. All three focus groups want to increase connections with stakeholders, including with the Jefferson County Food Policy Council.

Figure 5. Relationships of Jefferson County food systems stakeholders



**Relationships Key Finding:** Stakeholders reported the highest engagement in cooperative, coordinated, and integrated activities with community-based organizations.

They reported the lowest levels of engagement with business and labor organizations.

# V. Challenges, Interruptions, and Gaps

Zeroing in on exactly where a food system experiences challenges, interruptions, or holes is integral to understanding where and how to build resilience. To do that, the project conducted a comprehensive gap analysis. A SCOT (Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Threats) tool was used to conceptualize strategies to move from the current food system to a preferred future state. The following sections outline key findings from these activities, including challenges, interruptions, and gaps.

## Stakeholder Input

The challenges that Jefferson County's food system stakeholders presented fall within three areas: capacity, policy, and funding (type, amount, flexibility).

True resilience depends on the capacity for all of these players to act collectively, as well as a community's assets and its use of these assets (Frankenberger et. al., 2013).

### Survey Findings

Survey participants reported the most significant challenges to creating a resilient food system in Jefferson County were:

- **Programming:** 48.65% experience difficulty engaging community members in food programs, especially those impacted by food insecurity.
- **Capacity:**
  - 32.43% feel there is limited coordination and collaboration amongst organizations, which can lead to system gaps and duplication of efforts. This barrier leads to another challenge:
  - 27.03% report limited awareness of and commitment to food systems approaches amongst organizations.
- **Policy:** 24.32% feel organizations and municipal/county decision makers do not prioritize food policy work enough.
- **Funding:** 35.14% cite limited funding support of for-profit organizations in the food system, including restaurants and purpose-driven businesses, which could preclude a holistic approach to food system resilience.

### Focus Groups Summary

The three focus groups reported gaps in connectivity and limitations to their ability to serve community food needs at a higher level.

#### Ranchers:

- Disconnect between producers and the food system aside from their buyers (individual consumers, some restaurants);
- Limited awareness of opportunity to sell directly to Emergency Food Providers; however, they welcome it and would like to do more (e.g., rural food pantry purchases directly from local ranchers);
- Great interest in being more involved with the Food Policy Council and other policy organizations but limited on time as most work full-time jobs plus ranching.

### Emergency Food Providers:

- Disconnect between emergency food providers and local producers;
- Limited funding to purchase food (particularly local);
- Lack of flexible funding to allow for purchasing in bulk and aligning timing with harvesting and processing schedules;
- Limited capacity to reach certain communities; however, they have a desire to hire bilingual and more culturally diverse staff;
- Limited data collection and data sharing across organizations;
- Limited role certain organizations can take in leading policy work based on donor bases.

### Urban Producers and Aggregators:

- Want to be able to better support community members that are marginalized through SNAP, WIC and additional social support programs tied to their operations/markets;
- Significant challenges in emergency preparedness, e.g., how to deal with looming climate change/drought/wildfire as more producers lose more of their crop each season; season extension tools are needed;
- Land access in order to expand operations and provide more product;
- Need for more overlapping communications and governance in local food systems (redundancies);
- Would like more opportunities to better connect to other parts of the food system (e.g., school district, hospitals, markets, emergency food providers).

### Stakeholder Blind Spots

There were three functions of a food system that survey participants mentioned LEAST, indicating they are not considered priority areas:

- Food worker protections,
- Food procurement, and
- Food marketing and advertising.

When looked at together, we see where the food system breaks down as each factor is in one of the three subsystems (policy, markets and institutions, and production). These subsystems are intertwined and when one has a weakness, it impacts the other.

## Challenge One: Systemic Capacity

Capacity is the ability for the three subsystems to work together to prevent, anticipate, prepare, cope, and recover; this enables the food system to be more resilient to future shocks (Babu & Blom, 2014).

### Individual and Subsystem Capacity Limitations

Capacity can refer to an individual organization or subsystem's ability to deal with emergencies, their physical infrastructure (e.g., land access, storage, or staff numbers), and whether they are connected meaningfully to community members.

Research completed in June 2020 revealed a quite literal example of limited capacity. Representatives from 14 Jefferson County emergency food providers reported inadequate space to store food (relying on abandoned classrooms at times), unreliable food transportation methods, and lower staff and volunteer availability in the winter to distribute food (LaRocca, 2020).

## Stakeholder Connectivity and Collaboration

Insufficient connectivity and collaboration can be observed across the Jefferson County food system in the lack of collaboration around: data collection of who is accessing services; who is providing services and impact; competition for funding for similar initiatives; and, as heard in the focus groups, complete disconnects between producers and distributors. The limited connectivity and collaboration can be attributed to a number of factors including: competition for funding; lack of relationship building and trust; lack of knowledge of how to collaborate and hold partners accountable; and limited resources specifically allocated to the systems and skills-building needed to support collective action.

## Siloed Channels and the Public

Siloed distribution channels can prohibit food from getting to the families and people who need it. This isn't unique to Jefferson County but is a nationwide challenge. The recent Rockefeller Foundation report, "Reset the Table: Meeting the Moment to Transform the U.S. Food System," acknowledges the siloed nature of both emergency food access programs and market channels that compounded food insecurity throughout COVID-19. These fractures resulted in empty grocery store shelves, the inability of food pantries to get certain products, and shortages in the meat industry due to distribution breakdowns and the closure of large scale processing facilities (The Rockefeller Foundation, 2020).

**Opportunity:** Building relationships across the food system is an opportunity to better mobilize community members and build cross-sector partnerships for more holistic approaches to addressing food system challenges. Funders can help strengthen the connections between these subsystems as well as apply true cost accounting to monitor food system indicators and data collection. This true cost accounting will build trust amongst all subsystems and community members (The Rockefeller Foundation, 2020).

## True Cost Accounting

True cost accounting considers not just immediate and direct costs, but also extended or indirect costs (e.g., to human health or the environment). Without true cost accounting, decisions made by public and private entities prioritize short-term, direct costs while failing to consider the long-term and indirect costs that might have led to a different decision or justify a long-term investment. ([Aspensen, 2020](#); [The Rockefeller Foundation, 2020](#)).

## Challenge Two: Policy

Evidence-based policymaking and planning across the public and private sectors requires a great deal of connectivity and collaboration. Policymakers must develop long-term strategies and priorities for research and a food policy agenda. Existing deficiencies are evident in two of the blindspots of our food systems stakeholders.

### Policies that Increase Equity

The lack of existing stakeholders that have capacity or the structure to advocate for policy is most concerning, particularly when it comes to the much needed inclusion and prioritization of equitable food policies. One example can be seen in the gap analysis around agriculture worker inclusion. As was highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, food worker protections are crucial for a functioning, equitable, and resilient food system. During the COVID-19 pandemic, food systems workers were deemed essential workers. This assignment further exploited workers and required them to risk their own safety for collective societal benefit. Passage of the recent Agricultural Worker Rights' bill in Colorado is a great first step in building equitable policy, and there is much to learn from this process as well as identification of additional equitable policies and policy processes that include the entire food system.

### Leveraging Resources through Policy

Actors across the food system identified challenges in actively working on policy, including restrictions within their organizations. That said, many of these stakeholders have been able to utilize resources from successful policy change, which indicates a strong need to have their continued voice at the table. Efforts over the last several years in Colorado around the Food Pantry Assistance Grant illustrate success in leveraging dollars for emergency food providers and local farmers through policy change. Additional policy opportunities, such as the Good Food Purchasing Program, can allow for stronger ties to the markets and institutions subsystem and set standards that benefit the production subsystem, encouraging farmers and food businesses to prioritize resiliency in their own business models and practices. Policy change may also include resources that are not solely financial. Land and water access continue to pose growing challenges for local agricultural communities. Creating policies that ensure more accessible natural resources for farmers, particularly farmers within marginalized communities, is key to ensuring a more resilient food system.

### Educating the Public

Food marketing and promotion influence dietary choices and food access across communities. Marketing is often in and of itself one of the few educational channels when it comes to information about food, particularly in marginalized communities. Examples may include promotion of sugary beverages or association of processed foods with utilizing food benefit programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). When unhealthy food promotion dominates marketing channels, communities suffer the health consequences, including diet-related illnesses such as diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol, and obesity.

**Opportunity:** Given the limited capacity of organizations to address policy work head-on, having a clear structure for engagement that lives outside of these organizations is critical. Success has already been identified in leveraging policy work through the Jefferson County Food Policy Council. In terms of equity, the Council launched a racial equity subcommittee in May 2020 that is actively working on tools to assess equity in policy. As for leveraging resources, the Council has been successful in establishing the first city-level Food Pantry Assistance Grant in the City of Golden, as well as working with municipalities to establish public-private partnerships for increased agricultural land access. Continued leveraging of this structure, as it best meets the needs of partners around the table, will ensure success in policy change that creates benefits across all three subsystems.

## Challenge Three: Funding

A resilient food system involves funder collaboration guided by a shared strategic vision. Funders must come together with the intention of collaborating across definitions, metrics, strategies, and processes. Funders need to develop coordinated efforts and pool their funding towards initiatives and opportunities that support each of the three subsystems.

### Flexibility of Funding

Traditional funding methods are not keeping pace with the food system's needs. Grantmakers and funders abide by their own grant process structures and funding schedules. These often do not align with the needs of grantees (or farming and ranching practices) and cannot fund urgent, timely requests.

Who receives funding is also limited in scope. Funds do not reach small food businesses, ranchers or farmers, or for-profit entities that provide gap funding for ranchers and farmers. Funders also miss the opportunity to direct power purchasing of large institutions and reinforce a values-based (equitable, ethical, sustainable) supply chain. These restrictions hinder local economies and create gaps in the food system, even though funders have an opportunity to play a role in stimulating local economies and strengthening the collaboration across food subsystems.

### Siloed Funding Exacerbates Weaknesses

Each funder is led by its own board of directors, staff, and multi-year strategic plan. Traditionally, funders want to decide exactly which programs, initiatives, and operation costs they will fund with the desire to fulfill donor intent and funder objectives. Individual funders request the metrics by which they want their grantees to measure and evaluate impact, and they often don't match the indicators or metrics of other subsystems or even other funders. There's an opportunity for funders to collaborate and shift from individual systems of measuring and evaluating impact to coordinated systems that provide grantees with technical assistance and mentorship.

Having all these individual funders with smaller funding amounts creates competition amongst grantees and weakens trust-based relationships. When grantees are in

competition, they are not collaborating. This competitive environment also decreases equitable funding and pushes grassroots groups and diverse stakeholders to the sidelines due to language or cultural barriers– a loss for innovation and creative problem-solving as well as equitable communities.

## Challenge Four: Perception versus Reality

Our perception of reality and reality itself can sometimes be very different. These differences can have significant impacts on collaboration, funder expectations, and overall strength of the food system. The survey and focus groups offered an opportunity to explore perception vs. reality in future work in the following areas:

1. **Food system role:** What does each organization see as their role vs. what do their stakeholders see as their role?
2. **Collaboration and trust between organizations:** Are organizations working together at the level they believe they are?
3. **Food system functioning:** What do stakeholders assume is working well, but isn't?
4. **Community accountability:** When organizations say they are engaging the community, does the community agree that their voices are heard?

The project's survey included a section for self-identification as a first step towards a deeper analysis of the gap between perception and reality. This information was used to create the network map (Figure 1b). Focus group participants also shared various perceptions about their roles, ideas of how they were viewed by the public, and more.

Examples of the differences between perceptions and reality from the focus groups:

1. **Ranchers** stated they don't see themselves as part of the food system, but the reality is they play an important role in producing high quality local proteins. This gap highlights a lack of public awareness of their value and their challenges.
2. **Urban Farmers and Food Businesses** stated that they thought the general public doesn't consider them to have a viable business model. The reality is that it is entirely possible to create sustainable business with diverse revenue streams including direct to consumer sales and social support programs (e.g., WIC, SNAP). There are a variety of nonprofit and for profit business models as examples.
3. **Emergency Food Providers** stated they do not see a connection with local food production. This gap, similar to that noted above with ranchers, illustrates an important lack of awareness of local food producers (farmers and ranchers) and a disconnect between two significant areas of the food system.

The gap between perception and reality presents opportunities to better educate the public, integrate and coordinate stakeholders and subsystems, and create more flexible funding models to support the food system. It is important to understand the perception AND the reality so that strategies can be developed to address gaps. The initial analysis conducted for this report lays the groundwork for more in-depth network mapping, which should include targeted community interviews designed to identify potential differences. This information can then be used to update the network map.

# VI. A Vision for Jefferson County's Future

How does Jefferson County achieve its goal of transitioning from its current food system to one that is more resilient? The project analyzed stakeholder input and data as well as best practices of building resilient food systems. The project's proposal identifies a framework and recommended actions to co-create a future food system that enhances our subsystems and provides innovative funding approaches.

## Capacity through the Three Subsystems at Work

Increasing the health and connectivity between each of the three subsystems is a top priority. The network of policy, markets and institutions, and production subsystems can help us understand capacity gaps, what resources are needed to maintain the system, and how to build capacity across the food system.

The world is ever-changing, which means that the food system should organize in a way that is open to evolution. Stakeholders must align under shared goals while maintaining the capacity to adapt as conditions change and emergencies arise. We build redundancies across the subsystems for effective cohesion, information sharing and standardization, accountability mechanisms, and mobilization of community members and organizations.

A healthy, resilient Jefferson County's food system would include:

- Widespread access to fresh, nutritious, culturally-appropriate, and affordable food for all community members to live in absolute food security;
- A vibrant entrepreneurial food ecosystem with diverse, equitable, and innovative business owners, collectives, restaurateurs, co-ops, food markets, etc.;
- Prosperous and well-supported local farmers, ranchers, food workers, urban food aggregators, and small food businesses;
- Robust, collaborative cross-sector funding allocated to food systems;
- Coordinated, community-centered policymaking that increases the resilience of the food system and is responsive to food emergencies;
- Cleaner watersheds, less-polluted air, and healthier soil because of environmentally-sound agricultural practices.

# SUBSYSTEMS OF A RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEM

Creating a resilient food system requires building different kinds of capacity through a network of three subsystems: production, markets and institutions, and policy. The interconnection between every aspect of the food system is clear and synergies between the subsystems exist. Addressing a challenge within one subsystem will often help resolve others and thus build resilience across the broader food system.



## PRODUCTION

The production subsystem includes everything involved in growing and producing food products for consumption, including those sources involved just in inputs (e.g., soil). This subsystem develops specialized tools, technologies, and practices through research and development using data derived from markets, trade, and institutional systems. A well-equipped subsystem connects research to farming practices, and shares farmers' challenges and suggestions with researchers for further examination. In order to overcome many shocks and stressors, a robust food production subsystem requires effective coordination with the policy and markets and institutions subsystems. Both policy change as well as market drivers influence the direction and development of this subsystem.

## MARKETS AND INSTITUTIONS

The markets and institutions subsystem influences the capacity to move food from producer to consumer. Government agencies, regulatory bodies, data gathering platforms, and the laws, regulations, and policies that control how markets operate are all part of this system. These systems plan for potential negative circumstances. They have some control over how bad consequences on food systems affect them. They can also spot and prevent possible food-safety catastrophes. These subsystems generate a lot of the data that the policy subsystem uses to decide how, when, and what policies to evolve to promote resilience. They also give the production subsystem data for decision-making.

## POLICY

A policy subsystem with strong capacity produces policies and programs that make the markets and institutions subsystem and the production and distribution subsystem more robust. To develop sound policies and programs, the policy subsystem must analyze and foresee potentially negative events or system shocks. It must also be able to plan preventative measures and emergency support. In the context outside of emergencies, the policy subsystem best addresses execution and direction of work across the markets and institutions subsystem as well as the production subsystem. Further, markets and institutions and the production subsystems have the ability to engage the policy subsystem for changes within their own subsystems.

## Working Together for Community Health

A food system must account for the true cost of food, and that responsibility would fall upon all three subsystems as well as funding entities.

When a community values the least expensive food product, competition to produce food as cheaply as possible forces ranchers and farmers to cut corners in order to stay in business. This often manifests as poor farming practices like poor working conditions, improper waste disposal, and low wages. These poor farming practices negatively affect the community as a whole in air pollution, water pollution, degraded soil, and lower nutritional content in our food. More still, costs normally impact marginalized communities the most. Stakeholders need to account for the true cost of food along the value chain and build a food system that considers the total costs and benefits for our community.

**Opportunity:** Funders, policymakers, and agricultural producers can work together to develop true cost accounting for the creation of specific products. Policymakers can develop/adapt/adopt food indicators to be measured across the subsystems. Funders can also channel their dollars and technical assistance to fund producers and local food businesses who are applying best practices to benefit their workers, product, community members, local environment, and regional economies. The policy and markets and institutions subsystems can also work together to build support for farmers and ranchers through policy, legislation, and public education.

## Policy Subsystem

In the food system of the future, local policymakers are well-educated and informed about the entirety of the food system and work with actors from the other subsystems. They have a stronger collaborative network of private, public, nonprofit, and academic researchers who work together to set food policy strategy, protect food workers along the value chain, and educate and provide for community needs. To keep the public informed of Jefferson County's progress towards its shared vision, the policy subsystem also produces a public dashboard.

**Clear Structure for Community Leadership:** Community-based organizations and community members have the knowledge to lead change within their communities. That said, they may have limited capacity and structure to effectively address policy change. Establishing a consistent and sustainable structure for building community leadership for policy change will allow for effective leveraging of community power to address challenges at a local and regional level.

**Opportunity:** The Jefferson County Food Policy Council has achieved initial success through a primarily volunteer-driven Leadership Team, with limited staffing support from Jefferson County Public Health. Considering an equitable, community-centered approach, Council staff and leadership—with input from the Food Policy Council's annual survey and Council member input—have indicated a need to assess opportunities to shift the Council from being a government-based entity to an independent nonprofit or fiscally sponsored entity. The Council membership seeks to

better engage with community members most impacted by issues across the food system and ensure the Council is providing the right tools for the community to lead policy change. There is a stronger opportunity to do this by shifting to a different structure while also supporting their intention to become a more centralized hub for community leadership.

**Protecting Food Workers:** A robust food system workforce supports a sustainable procurement subsystem. It provides massive economic opportunity within Colorado by ensuring food channels that serve residents are sustained during and post-emergencies. It is essential that food systems challenges be recognized as emergency events, and that food workers receive the support needed to protect them and their families.

**Opportunity:** Policymakers should deem food system workers as “essential workers” beyond an emergency status. They should be guaranteed equal rights, living wages, and basic protections to create and sustain a resilient food system.

**Educating the Public:** The policy subsystem can better connect with food system experts to determine how to educate community members on healthy food choices—for their own health as well as in line with true cost accounting. When the public is better educated about the true cost of food, how to purchase directly from producers, and where they can receive public benefits, food security is strengthened throughout the value chain.

**Opportunity:** Informed by community needs and coordinated health indicators, food marketing and advertising can create greater awareness around food access, particularly for marginalized communities. Potential examples can be promoting local farm programs such as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs that utilize SNAP or other incentives through school food programs or other community hubs.

## Markets and Institutions Subsystem

A resilient markets and institutions subsystem involves coordination and collaboration amongst the institutions (e.g., schools, hospitals), restaurants, emergency food providers, and transportation that influence the movement of food from producer to consumer. Such coordination and collaboration can provide data to the policy and production subsystems to build resilience via policy and supply chains.

**Institutional Procurement:** Connecting restaurants and institutions (e.g., schools, hospitals) with local ranchers and farmers, or food procurement, was also overlooked as a method to build food system resilience by our survey respondents. Due to the siloed nature of food distribution channels, restaurants and institutions have faced significant barriers to obtaining food items, and it can be more expensive to source from local farms and ranchers. However, there is significant public demand for fresher, local food.

**Opportunity:** Jefferson County’s food subsystems can work together to directly connect restaurants and institutions with local food sources and make the supply

process smoother. This has massive potential to stimulate the economy, especially when considered in context of true cost accounting. Purchasing from local farms helps maintain farm businesses, creates jobs, increases food security, reduces food waste, and builds resilient communities.

**Developing New Market Channels:** While there was stronger conversation in focus groups about connecting farmers and emergency food providers, there is also opportunity in the markets and institutions subsystem to better network restaurants and additional markets with emergency food providers.

**Opportunity:** While emergency food providers actively procure from grocery stores, few examples currently exist of active distribution channels with restaurants. More so, considering mutually beneficial opportunities for emergency food providers to purchase meals from restaurants as well as opportunities to leverage procurement across the restaurant/institution and emergency food provider sectors from the production subsystem would allow for effective redundancies and more sustainability in procurement.

## Production Subsystem

Resilient and responsible food producers include those who build soil, produce vegetables and fruits, raise livestock, and transport food. They operate with full awareness of the true cost accounting, utilize research and technology to expand innovation, and understand emerging issues and scenarios to respond intelligently to emergencies, new partnerships, and new market needs.

**Business Planning for Resiliency:** With the growing threat of climate change and various forms of emergencies that may arise, resiliency as a part of business planning has not been effectively established across networks. In initial surveying done by Jefferson County Public Health in February 2020, just before the major food shortage during the COVID-19 pandemic, 90% of urban farmers in Jefferson County identified that they did not have an emergency plan. Ensuring emergency plans are established for the production subsystem is essential to building resilience across all three subsystems.

**Opportunity:** Ensuring farmers and food businesses are written into the Jefferson County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan will allow for stronger engagement with this subsystem from Emergency Preparedness operations at the county level. Additional opportunities are seeking federal funding and connecting with the policy subsystem on creating state and local level funding sources to protect agricultural production in the wake of emergencies.

**Incorporation of Food Security into Business Model:** Focus groups centered around the production subsystem indicated that there are certainly opportunities where it may be more financially viable and sustainable for them to have emergency food providers purchase wholesale directly from them vs. bringing their product to the retail market. Considering this, looking at economic models where business planning can allow for a

considerable amount of product to be purchased or leveraged through funds brought in by the policy subsystem may be feasible.

**Opportunity:** Leverage existing programs such as SNAP and WIC Community Support Agriculture shares for utilization with local farmers. Additionally, setting relationships between emergency food providers and farmers and food businesses at the beginning of the growing season, as well as establishing funding sources at that time of the year, would ensure the greatest success for the production business model to partner on addressing food security.

**Leverage Expertise for Policy Change:** The challenges facing the production subsystem often gets overlooked in the policy subsystem due to limited engagement between the two subsystems. Providing opportunities to better engage the production subsystem and prioritize their expertise would ensure effective agricultural policies are established.

**Opportunity:** Utilizing existing networks such as the Mile High Farmers farmer advocacy group as well as the Jefferson County Food Policy Council will ensure consistent feedback from the production subsystem. Further, identifying strong opportunities to address gaps in these groups, such as engaging the rural ranching community, may allow for new leverage points across the network.

## Funding

A resilient food system requires strategic, long term, and coordinated efforts. Stakeholders need time and funding support in order to build and practice the skills and experience they need to effect change. Funders are a key factor in helping Jefferson County Food System achieve resiliency and establish a skilled network of food system stakeholders. A supportive funding environment would include the elements below.

**Funder Collaboration:** It is not unusual to have multiple funders supporting food system efforts in Jefferson County, each with their own funding strategy and priorities. The drastic increase of food insecurity during the pandemic galvanized several local funders to pool their funds through the Blueprint for Hunger. This type of funding worked well in an emergency, but it is not necessarily supportive of long term systems change. However, it is an example of how funder collaboration around similar strategies can create a multiplier effect. Shifting to a collaborative funding approach includes establishing common criteria, accountability standards, and a high-level of communication.

**Opportunity:** In July 2021, Community First Foundation and Jefferson County Public Health partnered on a \$1.7 million funding opportunity: Reimagining the Jefferson County Food System. This was the first time either entity had partnered like this to award funding to support systems level initiatives. It required coordination of contracts, communication, joint review, and sharing of fund management systems. It also created an opportunity to offer larger grants and work together toward their shared objectives. The mixing of funding sources also allowed for diversification in applicants,

which specifically included for-profit entities— something not typically possible through a foundation due to IRS regulations. The resulting requests far exceeded the available funding and created a pool of additional ideas, capacity building opportunities, and potential partnerships. Through collaboration with other funders, the funding pool could be expanded, and a formalized technical assistance program was established to provide grant writing, partnership matchmaking, and relationship-building assistance designed to ensure stronger collaborative efforts and inclusion of for-profit businesses and others with limited experience applying for grant funding.

**Commitment to Local Producers:** Food shortages occurred multiple times throughout the pandemic, revealing both the fragility of storage and distribution channels as well as the importance of investing in local producers to ensure their sustainability. Purchasing locally generally means from smaller farmers or ranchers and requires an understanding of harvesting and processing timing. This benefits the consumer, local economy, and food system business owners. This is also an important step towards creating “a more equitable system focused on fair returns and benefits to all stakeholders—building more equitable prosperity throughout the supply chain,” as suggested by the Rockefeller Foundation in their 2020 Food Policy Paper. Funding like this demonstrates how each dollar can impact more than one part of the system.

**Opportunity:** An example of how this approach has the potential to strengthen multiple parts of the food system is to consider an emergency food provider’s existing meat procurement practice. This rural Jefferson County food pantry program currently purchases ground beef directly from three small-scale local ranchers. However, based on state funding award schedules, the organization was limited to only being able to purchase what was immediately available, and in some cases that meant not being able to purchase from certain ranchers at all. Looking to the future, a more flexible funding model is needed that would allow it and similar organizations to place an order before the season, allowing ranchers to better plan the size of their herds and support their scheduling needs in which they must set processing appointments 18–24 months in advance. Greater flexibility with funding provides emergency food providers assurance they will be able to meet the needs of their customers and will give ranchers greater financial security, and ultimately customers benefit from consistent access to high-quality protein.

**Culture of Accountability:** System change requires a long-range view, coordinated response, and a multi-sector commitment— a complex undertaking. If there is to be coordinated funding as described above, there needs to be coordinated accountability. The traditional metrics required— such as number of meals served, pounds of food distributed, or number of service hours— need to be expanded. Funders and grantees will need to develop and agree upon system-wide shared metrics to demonstrate the change Jefferson County’s food stakeholders seek. Funders should anticipate supporting their grantees in developing these analysis and evaluation skills as well. Funders should share these key performance indicators and data to lower barriers and lessen any burden on grantees.

**Opportunity:** Co-create storytelling metrics with organizations and consumers designed to demonstrate the differences or impacts that the various subsystems are having. This form of narrative data collection allows for a deeper understanding of the immediate and long term differences in people’s lives as told by the people experiencing those differences, telling a personal story can feel less like data collection and therefore less threatening than responding to a survey, can use very simplified

technology and is perceived as more accessible to staff at various levels, given it occurs in the form of a conversation. In addition, storytelling goes deeper and broader than numerical data could. It allows organizations to capture more fully the work that they do by adding context to the impact they are having. It is also an opportunity for organizations to learn what is working, what is not working, and further provides an avenue for feedback from community members that isn't always present. An important consideration for funders is that this type of data collection is complex (with regards to equitable practices, ensuring it is not extractive and tokenizing, and re-traumatizing), and additional resources are necessary for organizations to complete this type of evaluation.

## VII. Building the Future State: An Action Plan

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There are five components that ensure effective capacity for resilience when addressed across all three subsystems and directive funding. For additional detail, see the Action Plan Grid in the Appendix.

### 1. Monitoring Food System Indicators

By working together, subsystems can develop/adopt/adapt food system indicators (i.e., metrics) to track key indicators and trends across the food system. Stakeholder adoption of a common data collection system and language will improve coordination and increase capacity. It's also important to monitor aspects such as the availability and status of physical infrastructure or acreage, and the effectiveness of policies, collaborations, and institutions.

Organizations have traditionally focused primarily on outputs (e.g., the number of people served) since they have less control over outcomes. It's often difficult to track outcomes, as several factors can contribute to certain behavioral or process changes. Process-based indicators may be the answer to tracking outcomes of actions and policies. Process-based indicators aim to describe:

- decision-making methods,
- institutional capacities,
- equity and inclusion practices, and
- the way organizations manage, share, and use information.

In other words, these indicators look at how things are implemented to ensure the desired outcomes. This also makes it possible to evaluate and adopt processes to better reach shared objectives.

## **2. Recognizing Food System Emergencies and Risks across the Food System**

The entire food system can be organized in order to predict, prevent, and effectively respond to emergencies. This capacity is built across each subsystem. This includes regular risk analysis and contingency planning performed by the markets and institutions subsystem, relief and stimulus policies that kick in when emergency strikes, and adaptive food production strategies created based on previous system shocks. It also includes flexible funding mechanisms that provide financial stability for ranchers and farmers, as well as other stakeholders. We'll know that Jefferson County is succeeding in this piece of a resilient food system when a number of indicators are fulfilled, including:

- subsystems are communicating and coordinating around potential risks,
- small scale producers are financially healthy, and
- there is a food supply and emergency food resilience management plan that, when activated, brings food security to every community member.

## **3. Evidence-based Policymaking and Planning across the Public and Private Sectors**

Evidence-based policymaking relies on the best available research and information to guide decisions at every stage and across all levels of government. The policy subsystem takes responsibility for cross-training government officials on food system issues and scenarios, strategizing priorities based on evidence and food system indicators, and strengthening communication with the remaining subsystems. But all stakeholders must see themselves as stewards of municipal policies and regulations that promote food production and processing. Jefferson County's food system stakeholders will need to be educated on emerging issues, empowered to engage in policy discussions and planning, and equipped to help inform and implement a shared food policy agenda. By taking this holistic approach, governments can reduce wasteful spending, expand innovative programs, and strengthen accountability.

## **4. Mobilization of Communities for Action and Community-Centered Leadership across the Food System**

Perhaps one of the most important elements of resilient food systems projects is that it is a collaborative process. This means that it includes the participation of multiple formal and informal organizations, associations, and individuals with a variety of backgrounds and expertise. The participation of a broad cross-section of the community is essential for the system to be representative and contribute to long-term resiliency. A food system can enhance its resiliency by mobilizing organizations across the subsystems to participate in various forms of community engagement, including facilitating community conversation, building networks and relationships, providing information, and codifying conclusions into plans and legislation. Community members should also be able to access information on their food and nutrition rights

and be able to advocate for themselves. Every community member has the right to know the procedures, decision-making processes, and specifics about community interventions, including improving food and nutrition security.

## **5. Evaluation, Analysis, and Accountability of Utilizing these Capacities**

Dramatic improvements in data availability and quality are needed to meet the challenge of evaluating, analyzing, and strengthening our food systems. The first step is to make sure the entire food system is communicating at a high level and is using a coherent language to track and measure the health of our food system (see step 1). The next step is to develop transparent evaluation and analysis systems so that there is the accountability and relationship trust that make it possible to coordinate with so many stakeholders. Creating feedback systems and ingraining meaningful evaluation into all programs, funding relationships, and strategies will help Jefferson County experiment, adapt, and respond to long term and emergency food system needs.

### **Next Steps**

Ensuring that every Jefferson County resident has enough healthy food to eat is at the center of our shared objective to build a more resilient food system. And still, as we reflect upon the system as a whole, from producers to consumers, it becomes clear that this investment benefits all aspects of our community.

The Jefferson County Food System is composed of many different types of organizations and businesses, each playing a role in sustaining and strengthening the whole. This report took an initial step toward defining that network by identifying challenges, interruptions, and gaps as well as associated actions to begin to address them. This, however, is only the beginning. There is a significant need to develop a more comprehensive map of our food systems network. Engaging all existing stakeholders across the subsystems will provide a clearer picture upon which to develop a strategy for greater food system resilience. It will reveal how deeply food systems organizations collaborate, where duplicative services exist, and less obvious weaknesses that can be addressed and remedied. It will also help us to better understand and close gaps in the way both stakeholders and community members interpret the roles of those who make up the food system.

The action plan lays out a coordinated sustained effort required by the policy, producer, and markets and institutions subsystems with support and strategic leadership of funders. With so many players, a pivotal piece of driving this work forward is a central convener who will prioritize an equitable, community-centered approach. It is a natural fit that the Jefferson County Food Policy Council would take this position to lead the policy subsystem action steps. The Council can be a central champion for a resilient food system, collaborating alongside the Community First Foundation and other significant funders.

Together, Jefferson County's Food System stakeholders rallied in a time of crisis. Now, we have an opportunity to build a system that stimulates our regional economy, protects our environment, feeds our community, and adapts to a changing world.

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## Appendix

### Jefferson County Food Systems Network Action Plan

This action plan is based on several assumptions:

1. Coordination will occur across regional food systems.
2. Performance indicators will be developed for each subsystem. All food system stakeholders are expected to commit to collecting and analyzing data holding each other accountable
3. An approach of develop/adopt/adapt will be taken for all resources and tools to ensure that existing research and findings from successful, resilient food systems in other communities are leveraged and resources are not duplicated.

	Policy Subsystem	Markets and Institutions Subsystem	Production Subsystem	Funding Recommendations	Recommended Metrics
<b>Monitoring food system indicators (data collection)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop/Adopt/Adapt indicators (e.g., nutrition, food affordability, sociocultural well-being, food safety, and waste).</li> <li>• Strengthen collaborative network of private, public, nonprofit, and academic researchers.</li> <li>• Produce a public dashboard to show progress towards goals, (e.g., <a href="#">Live Well San Diego</a>).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track data and trends to predict potential shocks and risks (e.g., pricing, inflation/deflation, market supply).</li> <li>• Modernize data and technology platforms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor food production and yield, nutrition content, availability and use of inputs, processing/distribution challenges, waste along the value chain.</li> <li>• Compare costs for producers to sell directly to food pantries vs direct to consumers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply true cost accounting-accounting for all external costs/benefits including environmental, social, and economic-generated by the creation of a product, e.g. <a href="#">True Cost of Food</a> <a href="#">Measuring What Matters to Transform the US Food System</a>.</li> <li>• Shift from individual evaluation to a shared evaluation team that collects and analyzes data, provides 1:1 assistance to grantees, and ensures quality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nutrition content of products</li> <li>• Incorporate the above metrics into a comprehensive true cost accounting model for local subsystems and the full food system.</li> <li>• All grantees participate in data collection.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Recognizing food system emergencies and risks across the food system</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure relief and stimulus policies improve the resilience of supply chains and strengthen local systems.</li> <li>• Connect to early warning systems, institutions, and production data to identify potential policy issues.</li> <li>• Increase capacity to articulate food system shocks and challenges at all levels of the system.</li> <li>• Assess land use policy across the front range to support and sustain local food production and distribution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand when to intervene in markets and when not to; incorporate a variety of data points into market analysis.</li> <li>• Perform regular risk analysis and contingency planning.</li> <li>• Reflect on existing threats with sufficient capacity to study potential future threats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain awareness of potential shocks to value chain segments and risk in food production.</li> <li>• Adapt production strategies based on the effects of shocks on the food production system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide credit, loan servicing, and debt relief for farmers and ranchers.</li> <li>• Create a grant or forgivable loan fund for for-profit entities providing gap funding to provide financial stability for ranchers and farmers.</li> <li>• Increase prosperity of farmers and ranchers through marketing contracts and other models that more equitably distribute risk and profit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dollars in both the public and private sectors allocated to the food system,</li> <li>• Risk assessment across both the production and the markets and institutions subsystems as well as the connection between the two,</li> <li>• Funding distributed to marginalized producers, including loan and marketing dollars,</li> <li>• Existence of a food supply/emergency food resilience management plan,</li> <li>• Acreage utilized for food production,</li> <li>• Commercial zoning utilized for the markets and institutions subsystem,</li> <li>• Dollars leveraged through policies passed</li> <li>• Land and infrastructure accessed through policy passage,</li> <li>• Financial health of small-scale producers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evidence-based policymaking and planning across the public and private sectors</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-train government staff/decision makers in areas across the food system.</li> <li>• Strategize priorities for research and food policy agenda.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act independently and according to evidence (not based on public or private pressures).</li> <li>• Increase capacity to implement market and institutional policy changes, and for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand emerging issues and scenarios, and appropriately respond to emergence of new partnerships.</li> <li>• Expand innovation along the value chain through technology and</li> </ul>	<p>Create an innovation lab or incubator/accelerator funding program to support pilot projects addressing gaps in the food system; pair with technical assistance from multisector advisors; co-create evaluation metrics, data collection, and analysis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of municipal policies/regulations that allow and promote agricultural/food production/processing,</li> <li>• Presence of an active multi stakeholder food policy and planning structure and the</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen communication channels or forums between the subsystems.</li> </ul>	<p>impact assessment of policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate evidence-based policy efforts that are informed by community needs and health indicators.</li> <li>Develop and support policies that counter private interests detrimental to the community.</li> </ul>	<p>empowered and engaged producers.</p>		<p>presence of urban food policies and action plans,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and types of meetings and capacity-building sessions to ensure that relevant government officials are knowledgeable about regulations and policies relevant for food security.</li> <li>Number and types of policies/strategies in which the mainstreaming of policy on food security was completed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mobilization of communities for action and community-centered leadership across the food system</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unify across sectors/subsystems for effective systems-based policies and planning.</li> <li>Continue capacity strengthening to educate all relevant stakeholders for informed community decision making.</li> <li>Link and coordinate players across the policy subsystem, including nontraditional actors such as public, private, and civil society organizations, and development partners.</li> <li>Develop participatory processes to obtain sufficient stakeholder and public input that yields evidence-based solutions.</li> <li>Adopt language justice policies across the public and private sector, require</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create information channels to efficiently disseminate early warning information, food prices, and market data.</li> <li>Build capacity to connect external markets and trade systems.</li> <li>Build capacity to connect farmers with markets and institutions.</li> <li>Build awareness of local producers through creation of an online directory, farm/ranch tours, and annual food events showcasing local producers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mobilize farmer and rancher collectives.</li> <li>Support new leader training in farm and cooperative groups.</li> <li>Understand emerging issues and scenarios, and appropriate responses to emergence of new partnerships.</li> <li>Share technical advice and mobilize resources to support subsystems.</li> <li>Increase awareness of value chain functioning among all stakeholders to ensure decisions are based on systems-level information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a small business incubator/accelerator for local food businesses (production and distribution) including technical assistance for how to start a business, food safety, packaging, marketing, and distribution with start up funding and ongoing mentoring.</li> <li>Establish language justice funding pool in partnership with Jefferson County, with a standing contract with a language cooperative to provide translation and interpretation for diverse languages, fund community engagement stipends.</li> <li>Direct the purchasing power of large institutions along a values-based (equitable,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presence of an active multi stakeholder food policy and planning structure and the presence of urban food policies and action plans,</li> <li>Dollars allocated to language justice, food entrepreneurship, and additional areas identified by communities as essential to their involvement,</li> <li>Percentage increase in awareness of local producers, value chain functioning across subsystems,</li> <li>Number of new connections within subsystems and across subsystems in the network</li> <li>Comprehensive network analysis inventorying roles,</li> </ul>

	translation and interpretation, and set standards for community engagement stipends (tied to funding).			ethical, sustainable) supply chain. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen connections between subsystems/sectors.</li> </ul>	connections, strength of connections etc.
<b>Evaluation, analysis, and accountability of utilizing data to inform decision making</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create feedback channels for different stakeholders with a focus on facilitating participation of vulnerable populations.</li> <li>Evaluate data on policy outputs and outcomes that are integrated across the public sector.</li> <li>Make evaluation a mandatory component of policymaking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt/Adapt transparent market systems that share data (e.g., food prices) in a coordinated manner.</li> <li>Build capacity for analysis and development of marketing and institutional strategies dictated by data from monitoring systems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build capacity to organize production and farming systems to achieve food security.</li> <li>Develop coherence at community, local, and regional levels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish common metrics across funders, incentivize data collection of common metrics across grantees</li> <li>Provide ongoing technical assistance for how to evaluate and use data to inform decision making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of food system policies with an evaluation component,</li> <li>Number of new data sources</li> <li>Percentage of grantees complying with consistent data collection</li> <li>100% data accuracy goal.</li> </ul>