

Restorative Justice



**Sacramento County
Food System Assessment**

**Shared Economic
Prosperity**



**Furthering our
collective work
toward an
equitable local
food system.**

**Equitable and
Sustainable
Agriculture**



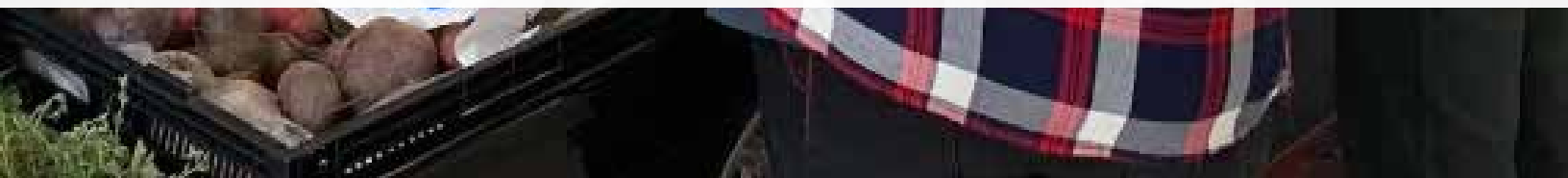
**Health and Well-Being
for All**





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Pre-Publication Letter from SFPC



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Pesticide Action Network North America (PANNA)
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July 2, 2024

Re: Use of Sacramento Food Policy Council "Sacramento County Food Systems Assessment"

The Sacramento Food Policy Council (SFPC) was formed in 2015 to propel collective action throughout Sacramento County, coalescing efforts to build an equitable food system through community organizing and policy advocacy.

The components of the Sacramento Food System Assessment and Partnership Project accompanying this letter was made possible by a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service grant number AM190100XXXXG176, by Alchemist Community Development Corporation as part of its USDA funded Community Food Project grant 2020-33800-33136 "Making Sacramento America's Farm-to-EVERY-Fork Capital", and by in-kind time and cash match contributions. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA.

The assessment is intended to help Sacramento County take action in transitioning our local food system toward resilience and equity - ensuring that all neighborhoods are nourished with a focus on treating everyone at every stage of the food system with dignity. While Sacramento County is the geographic focus, the assessment acknowledges that this area is located on the stolen and unceded lands of the Nisenan and Plains Miwok peoples.

Over a multi-year period starting in 2020, input was collected from neighborhoods, food workers, school food professionals, business owners, nonprofits, policy advocates, farmers, institutions, and government agencies across Sacramento County. Ultimately, this work will catalyze the development of a countywide Food Action Plan that identifies the resources and policy needed to ensure an equitable, resilient, nourished, and diverse food system for generations to come. The Council looks forward to active engagement in the development of the Food Action Plan.

The assessment is the result of diligent work by the Sacramento Food Policy Council and countless community members and partners. Any use of information contained in the assessment must explicitly cite the Sacramento Food Policy Council. If you have any questions or would like to discuss further, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Sacramento Food Policy Council at info@sacfoodpolicy.org.

Co-signed by the Sacramento Food Policy Council Steering Committee:

Adrian Rehn, Vice President

Paul Towers, Secretary

Kristen Murphy, Treasurer

Isaac Gonzalez

Sam Greenlee

Olivia Henry

Krista Marshall

Brenda Ruiz

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Land and Labor Acknowledgement

Sacramento's food system is built on historical injustice. To envision a more just future, we must first recognize past wrongs, work to prevent their recurrence, and be culturally responsive as we create a community that alleviates the painful burdens of inherited inequality.

We respectfully acknowledge that Sacramento is located on the stolen and unceded ancestral lands of the Nisenan People and that Maidu, Miwok, Me-Wuk, and Patwin Wintun People have inhabited this region for generations [*California Indian Heritage Center Foundation*]. Although the Spanish, Mexican, and American governments carried out genocidal campaigns through violence, disease, dispossession, cultural repression, and enslavement, the First People have survived and continue to steward ancestral lands. However, with the appropriation of traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering territories, Native American communities have struggled to sustain themselves. Large infrastructure projects, including the dams and aqueducts that currently support Central Valley agriculture, further undercut indigenous foodways. This loss of food sovereignty caused immense, systemic damage to Native American communities, who remain disproportionately affected by food insecurity, poverty, and health outcomes. It is imperative that policies relating to the food delivery system must make reparations for these injuries.

We also recognize that the underpaid, unfree and coerced labor of workers, particularly those from China, the Philippines, and Central and Latin America, is the foundation of our national, state, and County food systems. Any directives relating to a non-discriminatory food system must prioritize the well-being of these workers and seek to eradicate the exploitative and often illegal policies that prohibit their rights to self-determination.

Finally, we acknowledge the historical enslavement and oppression of Black people in the United States and recognize that the prosperity and success of our country, the State of California and the Sacramento region continue to be enriched by the Black community, despite the institutional racism that perpetuates intergenerational trauma on Black members of our society. As outlined in the 2023 California Reparations Report, policies such as redlining and other forms of ["government or government-enabled discrimination"](#) (p.77) have resulted in the creation of food deserts and high rates of food insecurity for Black households. We must rectify the institutional anti-Blackness and resource theft that have inhibited food sovereignty in Black communities. Learning from the legacy of resistance and creativity among Black farmers, gardeners, chefs, entrepreneurs, and others is central to creating a more equitable food system.

Acknowledgment of the Team

We are incredibly grateful to all our partners and the wide range of support provided for the development of this report. Together, we are able to provide a rich context for the Sacramento Food System. Acknowledgements are listed in alphabetical order.

Food System Assessment Report

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Project Partners: Primary Research and Stakeholder Engagement

Civic Thread, formerly Walk Sacramento

Participated in and directly supported community engagement and promotion efforts within Environmental Justice communities. With County partners, they drafted, distributed, and analyzed the County Healthy Food Access Survey.

Community Alliance with Family Farmers;

Convene, survey, interview, and otherwise engage new and historically disadvantaged farmers, small & mid-size farmers and ranchers, institutional & non-institutional buyers for assessing needs and opportunities for local markets development and expansion.

Green Technical Education and Employment

Regional Food System Partnership Project USDA grant fiscal agent and administrator; convener of youth engagement persons ages 14-22.

Health Education Council

Participated in and directly supported community engagement and promotion efforts within Environmental Justice communities]. With County partners, they drafted, distributed, and analyzed the County Healthy Food Access Survey.

LunchAssist

Coordinated and directly engaged school district food operations to develop an assessment of local purchasing and school district food system needs, as well as Farm-to-School Census data analysis.

Restaurant Opportunities Center United

Food system sectors statistical labor analysis and initial findings.

Sacramento Food Policy Council

Lead Project Manager; Partnership Coordination; Community Engagement, and Stakeholder Outreach. Grants Reporting, Grants Administration. Principal author and publisher of Sacramento County Food System Assessment Report

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SAREP), University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Food system assessment process design. Research framework and coordination plan creation. Data access & data interpretation support.

Project Partners: Community Engagement and Additional Support

Alchemist Community Development Corporation

Provided resources for, participated in, and supported community engagement and promotion efforts in developing the values framework.

Burgess Brothers BBQ & Burgers

Participated in and directly supported community engagement and promotion efforts in developing the values framework. Coordinated BIPOC food business owners' participation and engagement.

Center For Wellness and Nutrition, Public Health Institute

Participated in and directly supported community engagement and promotion within underserved communities.

Food Literacy Center

Participated in community engagement efforts in developing values framework.
JAIDE Conservation Collective, LLC
Project management, secondary research, data analysis and collation, co-author.

Sacramento Promise Zone

Participated in and directly supported community engagement and promotion efforts in developing the values framework.

Sacramento County Planning and Environmental Review

Participated in community engagement efforts of developing the values framework. Provided policy guidance based on the adopted Environmental Justice Element and other elements of the Sacramento County General Plan, as well as coordinated with additional County departments and agencies.

Sacramento County Public Health

Provided resources and guidance to coordinate the framework and alignment with the County General Plan and other related county planning, health, and nutrition efforts. Participated in and directly support community engagement and promotion efforts in developing the Food System Assessment values framework.

Project Partners: Community and Stakeholder Convening Hosts

Canon East Sac
City of Sacramento, Office of Mayor Steinberg, Food Access Collaboration
Consulado General de México, Sacramento
Family Meal Sacramento
GreenTech Teaching Urban Farming, Forestry and Aquaponics (TUFFA)
Hmong Youth and Parents United
La Familia Counseling Center
Melanin Day School
Sacramento Job Corps
Sacramento Native American Health Center
Sheba Farms
SIA Tech South Sacramento
Queen Sheba Ethiopian Cuisine

Project Partners: Secondary Research and Related Reports

Healthy Food For All Collaborative (HFAC) studies on food system capacity, governance and funding models, a Sacramento Building Healthy Communities project

Sacramento 2022 Edible Food Recovery Capacity Study, Edible Food Waste Working Group

Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Rural Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS)

Sacramento County Healthy Food Access Survey

Sacramento Emergency Food Plan Update, Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services

Valley Vision: Regional Food Action Plan (greater Sacramento 6 county region)



Executive Summary

All communities deserve an equitable and resilient local food system where access to food, health, and opportunity is not determined by race, ability, age, gender, or income. The purpose of the Sacramento Food System Assessment is to provide a community-informed overview of the inequalities, assets, and opportunities within Sacramento County's local food system – as experienced across the entire food system. This project ultimately aims to inform the implementation of specific policies, programs and investments through A Food Action Plan for Sacramento County, adopted in Dec. 2019 as part of the Sacramento County Environmental Justice Element (page 35, EJ-12).

This assessment involved extensive engagement with various stakeholders including farmers, food entrepreneurs, advocacy organizations, institutions, families, and food-business workers. The outcome of this work generated a set of community-designed visions and goals that provide important insight into what an equitable and healthy food access system could look like in Sacramento County. An overview of Sacramento's current environmental, economic, and community characteristics will be provided. Additionally, an overview of the process used by UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (UC SAREP) to ensure robust community engagement is outlined; this includes a summary of the initial phase, during which UC SAREP worked with partner organizations to establish a framework to focus community listening activities. This collaboration resulted in four overarching principles for the project:

- Restorative Justice across the food system
- Health and well-being for all people
- Shared economic prosperity
- Sustainable agricultural equity and diversity

These concepts were then formulated into thirty-seven questions for use in the second phase of the process, which involved a series of comprehensive community listening sessions conducted between 2020 and 2022. These sessions produced a set of seven targeted community-informed goals, intended as a framework to guide Sacramento County in developing an equitable food access plan, listed below.

- 1) **Equitable Food Access:** Every individual in Sacramento County will have equitable access to culturally relevant, locally produced, healthy, organic, and affordable food.
- 2) **BIPOC communities have tenure and access to land and third spaces:**
BIPOC communities will have access to land and third spaces, ensuring increased food/resource availability, diversified revenue streams, and third spaces for community networking and knowledge transfer.
- 3) **Food and Farm Business support is distributed equitably:** Business support will be distributed fairly and easily accessible for BIPOC food and farming-related enterprises.
- 4) **Strengthened local food purchasing opportunities:** Increase connection points between local food producers and local market opportunities.

5) **Agriculture to support a thriving, equitable, sustainable local food system:**

Sacramento County will have an equitable, diverse, and ecologically sustainable agricultural system supporting multiple socio-economic and ecological goals.

6) **The food and farming industry will be fully educated, staffed, and justly compensated:**

Sacramento County will support a food and farming industry that justly compensates a diverse pool of workers and ensures opportunities for professional development

7) **Community education opportunities:** Robust, non-traditional education opportunities about food and agriculture that are interactive, impactful, and intergenerational available in all jurisdictions

This Food System Assessment aimed to lay the foundation for positive movement toward an equitable local food system in Sacramento County. Through community engagement and data review, we found that there are significant inequities and challenges present for each goal outlined above. Below highlights select data that characterizes the status of Sacramento County's food system:

- 43% of low-income adults are not able to afford enough food
- 14% of the population is enrolled in CalFresh food assistance
- 59.5% of children are enrolled in free and reduced lunch
- 3.4 million tons of food is produced in the Sacramento region; however, only 2% of this is consumed locally
- Neighborhoods, particularly those with high populations of Asian or Pacific Islander community members, are more likely to experience a lack of adequate access to supermarkets.
- 87% of Sacramento's farmers are white
- Compared to White-owned businesses and farms, Black, Indigenous & People of Color (BIPOC) owned food businesses and farms receive lower rates of the financial and business support needed for success
- The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected, and continues to affect, those already struggling with food insecurity. These challenges also present additional challenges to BIPOC-owned food businesses, low-income food industry workers and the institutions that traditionally provide a safety net for at-risk communities.



As exhibited, these food accessibility disparities are being felt predominantly by BIPOC communities and people experiencing poverty. Further, while there are hotspots of critical infrastructure for local food systems (e.g., farms, processing facilities, distribution, grocery, educational/business supports, etc.), this remains a notable gap that will need to be addressed. Sacramento County also has many remarkable organizations, communities, and individuals who are currently contributing to an equitable local food system that spans agriculture (urban and peri-urban), mutual aid, food justice, food service, education, and small businesses. We hope this overview of both local food system inequities and challenges as well as existing assets and future opportunities can catalyze progress in the next phase of work for Sacramento County. We are grateful for community participation and for the partnership of so many organizations that helped create this assessment.