

**Restorative Justice**



**Sacramento County  
Food System Assessment**

**Shared Economic  
Prosperity**



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

**Equitable and  
Sustainable  
Agriculture**



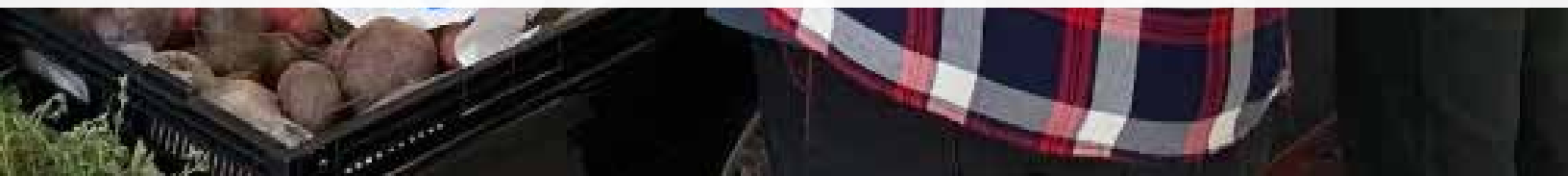
**Health and Well-Being  
for All**





## Funding Acknowledgement

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# Pre-Publication Letter from SFPC



Sacramento Food Policy Council  
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SFPC is a fiscally-sponsored project of  
Pesticide Action Network North America (PANNA)  
[info@sacfoodpolicy.org](mailto:info@sacfoodpolicy.org)

**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](mailto:info@sacfoodpolicy.org).

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

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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.

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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)

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## 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.

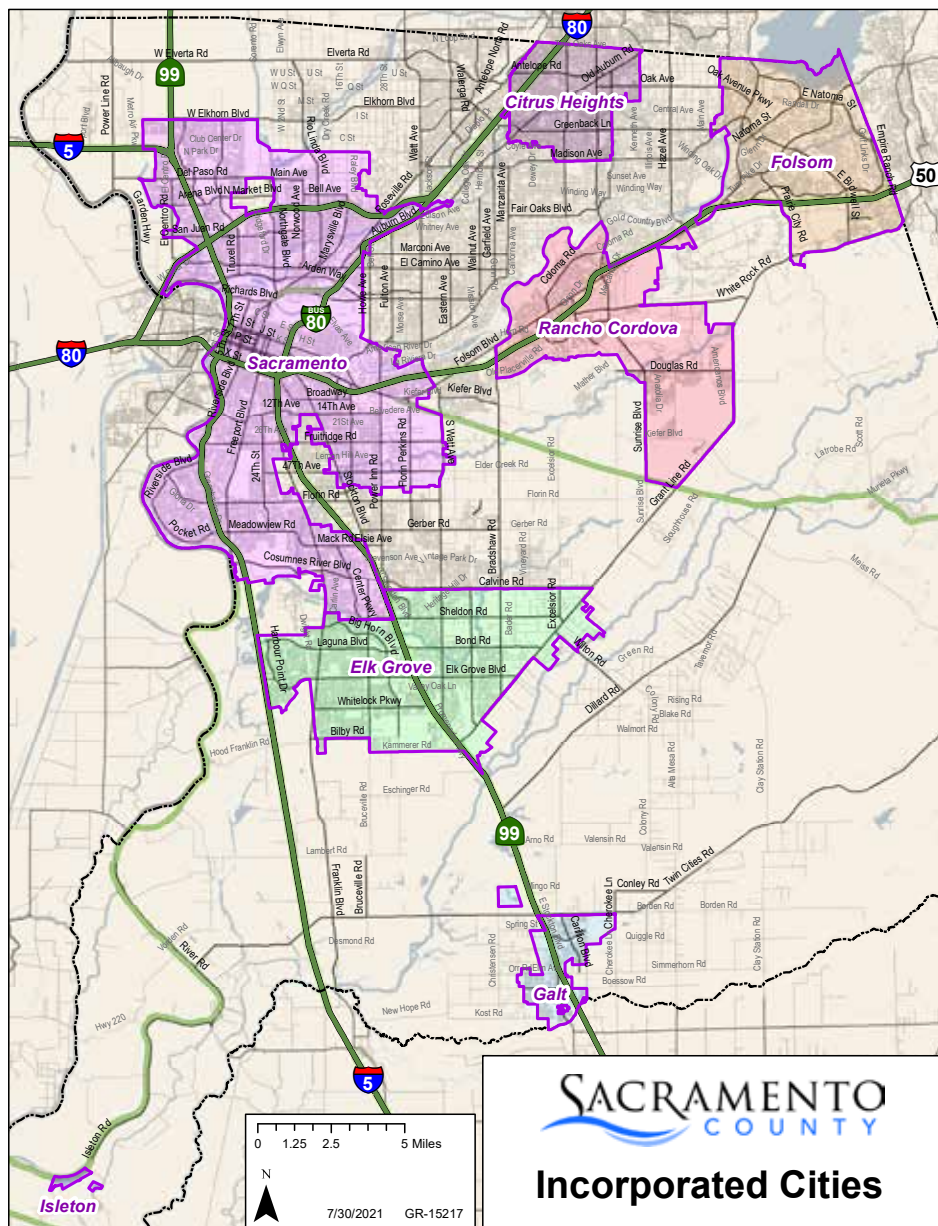


# Overview of Sacramento County

## Geography and Climate

Sacramento County spans 994 square miles and is situated between the San Francisco Bay Area to the west and the Sierra Nevada Mountain range to the east (Figure 1). The County is positioned just north of the conjunction of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys, which together constitute the Central Valley. Most of the area is near sea level, with elevations rising towards the Sierra Nevada Mountains' foothills, reaching 800 feet at the County's eastern border.

Figure 1



The City of Sacramento is located at the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers. The American River flows west from the Sierra Foothills, while the Sacramento runs from California's far northern border. The Sacramento River, the largest in California, feeds lowland delta areas and wetlands in the south-southwestern part of the County before eventually flowing into San Francisco Bay (Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta - Water Education Foundation, 2020). The Sacramento provides water for over one-half of California's residential population, while also supporting the region's abundant agriculture: Located within the flood plains of these two rivers, nutrient deposits resulting from historical flooding have produced fertile soil, and the area's agricultural success is further fueled by warm, dry summers and wet winters. Until 2020, the average temperatures ranged from 36-54°F in winter to 58-92°F in summer, with average annual precipitation at 18 inches (Truong (n.d.); Weather Averages Sacramento, California, n.d.). However, the average temperature over the last 20 years has risen, with Sacramento breaking the record for the most days over 100°F in 2022, including the hottest day ever recorded at a temperature of 116°F (McGough et al., 2022). With the increasing impact of climate change, this escalation is expected to continue.

## Population, Communities, and Demographics

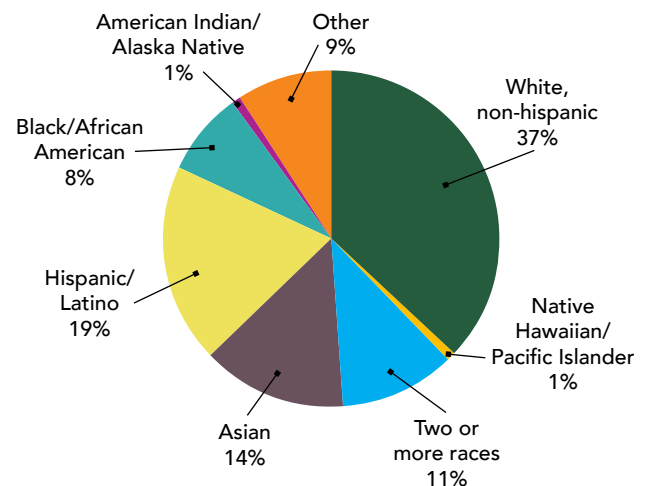
Since 2002, Sacramento County has continually been recognized as one of the nation's most racially and ethnically diverse cities, as calculated in the Diversity Index (*Diversity Index | (National Equity Atlas, n.d.)*). US Census Bureau data shows that the three largest race and ethnicity groups are White, non-Hispanic (37%), Hispanic (19%), and Asian (14%) (Figure 2). Of the 21.2% of the population born outside of the United States, Mexico, the Philippines, and China are the most common countries of origin. Approximately 34.1% of households speak a language other than English at home (US Census Bureau).

While the population of Sacramento County is diverse, the legacies of structural racism persist, and the effect of discriminatory housing policies, including the historical practice of redlining, is evident. Across the County, there are varying levels of segregation and integration, with the metro area classified as "highly segregated" in a 2020 census review. These segregated neighborhoods typically have less green space, less infrastructure, more pollution, and higher rates of asthma, maternal death, and food insecurity (*A Look at Demographic Differences in Poverty Across Regions in California, 2024*).

The California Reparations Report shows that the gap in homeownership in formerly "greenlined" neighborhoods in the Sacramento Metropolitan area has widened drastically over the last 40 years: In 1980, 35.7% of homeowners in formerly "greenlined" neighborhoods were Black, and 79.5% were White. In 2017, the gap widened significantly, with only 16.7% of homeowners in formerly greenlined neighborhoods Black, while 73.4% were White. Similarly, the equity gap between formerly green-lined and redlined neighborhoods is 49%. (CA Reparations, p.228).

Figure 2

Racial and Ethnic Demographics, County (%)



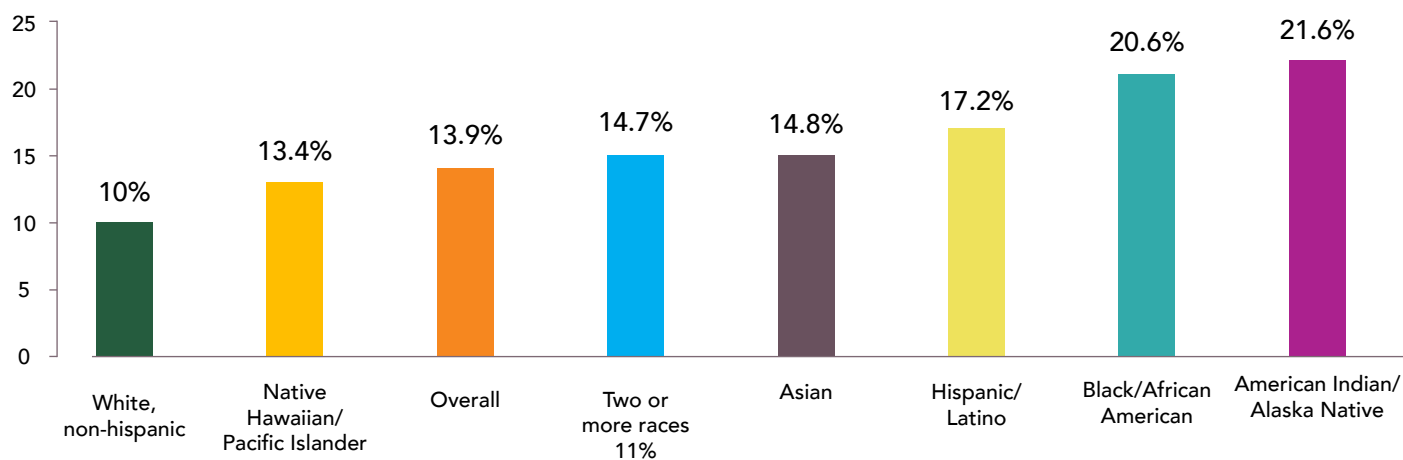
Sacramento County has 13 school districts serving 239,997 public school students between kindergarten and 12th grade. The County also has multiple types of private and public higher education institutions, including California State University Sacramento, Los Rios Community College, branches and proximity to the University of California Davis, and various law and trade schools. Approximately 70% of Sacramento County residents have a high school diploma and about 44% have an associate degree or higher (US Census Bureau).

## Economics

The 2020 census reported that the median household income in Sacramento County is \$84,211 (2022 dollars), with men earning 1.26 more than women. The poverty level in Sacramento has decreased over the last five years, currently standing at 13.9%, higher than California's poverty rate. However, there continues to be a discrepancy between BIPOC-identifying people and those identifying as white/non-Hispanic (Figure 3 for chart below). While Black, Hispanic, Latino and Native Americans have poverty rates above 15%, those identifying as White have a poverty level of 10% (Malagon & Danielson, 2023). Children are also disproportionately impacted, having the highest rates of poverty in the County of any age group (15.2%) (US Census Bureau).

**Figure 3**

Percentage of people living below the poverty line, 2020





## Methodology

To better understand inequitable food access in our community, the Sacramento Food Policy Council, in collaboration with Green Technical Education and Employment and other key partners, conducted the Sacramento County Food Assessment in 2020 and 2022. The project used a people-centered and decentralized approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current food and farming landscape. A primary focus during the process was to identify both the barriers and the pathways that exist as we work to address inequalities, promote reparative processes, and ascertain truly community-informed priorities. The project involved three phases:

### Phase 1: Visioning an Equitable Food System in Sacramento

UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (UC SAREP) convened three gatherings of partner organizations to identify four high-level visions, laying the foundation for FSA community engagement and, ultimately, the creation of community-informed goals. The group devised 37 questions, broadly categorized under the four visions, to ask community members during phase two of the project (APPENDIX A). Partner organizations represented during this process included:

- Community Alliance with Family Farmers
- Restaurant Opportunities Center United
- Lunch Assist
- Sacramento County Planning & Environmental Review Division
- Sacramento County Public Health
- Civic Thread
- Sacramento Promise Zone
- Alchemist CDC
- Food Literacy Center
- Center for Wellness and Nutrition
- Health Education Council
- Burgess Brothers BBQ & Burgers
- GreenTech

### Phase 2: Grounding Visions for an Equitable Food System

The listening activities that took place from 2020 through 2022 utilized the 37 questions developed in the visioning phase (APPENDIX A). Several key partners – Lunch Assist, CAFF, Green Tech Education, and the Restaurant Opportunities Center United – carried out separate but complementary community listening efforts. Each organization's findings are included in the Appendices. Additionally, the Sacramento Food Policy Council collaborated with community organizations to conduct its part of the listening sessions. Among these organizations were La Familia Counseling Center, Melanin Day School, Canon East Sac, Family Meal Sacramento, Queen Sheba Ethiopian Cuisine, Sheba Farms, Sacramento Native American Health Center, SIA Tech South Sacramento, and Sacramento Job Corps. The table below displays the in-person community listening events.



| Town Halls (4)                                    |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Date  | Organizer(s)  | Brief Description   |
| December 2020                                     | Sacramento Food Policy Council  | A town hall with Sacramento Community members and project partners (66 participants)            |
| January 2021                                      | Sacramento Food Policy Council, City of Sacramento, Health Education Council  | Large forum with City of Sacramento food access organizations (67 participants)                 |
| March 2021  | Sacramento Food Policy Council, Consulate of Mexico, Health Education Council   | Town hall as part of Conferencia de Liderazgo Para Mujeres (27 participants)                    |
| November 2022                                     | Sacramento Food Policy Council  | Series of three online sessions providing a wrap-up overview of the FSA for a general audience  |
| Focus Groups/Listening Sessions/Roundtables (30+) |   |   |
| Date  | Organizer(s)  | Brief Description   |
| Fall 2021 - Spring 2022                           | Community Alliance with Family Farmers  | CAFF hosted six focus groups with five to seven farmers per session                             |
| Summer 2022                                       | Restaurant Opportunities Center - United  | Three listening sessions with fast food and restaurant workers (40 participants)                |
| March 2022  | Sacramento Food Policy Council, Health Education Council  | Large listening session with Afghan families (250 participants)                                 |
| Summer 2022                                       | Health Education Council  | Three follow-up focus groups with Afghan families, 5-20 people per session                      |
| November 2021 - March 2022                        | Lunch Assist  | Series of four cohort calls with school nutrition directors at Sacramento area school districts |
| January 2021 - July 2021                          | Sacramento Food Policy Council, Green Tech Education's Teaches Urban Farming, Forestry and Aquaponics (TUFFA) Program | Two listening sessions with youth participating in the TUFFA program                            |
| September 2021 - March 2022                       | Sacramento Food Policy Council, SIATech/Sacramento Job Corps  | Three sessions with youth enrolled in SIATech/Sacramento Job Corps                              |
| August 2021                                       | Sacramento Food Policy Council  | Listening session for women, mothers and femmes   |
| September 2023                                    | Sacramento Food Policy Council, Civic Thread, Hmong Youth and Parents United  | Listening session about active transportation and food access (25 participants)                 |

| September - October 2021      | Sacramento Food Policy Council, Health Education Council, Public Health Institute Center for Wellness and Nutrition, La Familia Counseling Center | Two sessions of a Foro De Comida  |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| October 2021                  | Sacramento Food Policy Council  | Listening session with Indigenous women (10 participants)   |
| February 2022                 | Sacramento Food Policy Council  | Two sessions with food entrepreneurs and food workers (40 participants)   |
| February 2022                 | Sacramento Food Policy Council  | Listening session with food entrepreneurs of color  |
| March 2022                    | Sacramento Food Policy Council  | Listening sessions with Black families  |
| <b>Interviews (55+)</b>       |   |   |
| <b>Date</b>                   | <b>Organizer</b>  | <b>Brief Description</b>  |
| Throughout Jan 2021- Dec 2022 | Community Alliance with Family Farmers  | 6 Institutions (UC Davis Medical Center, San Juan USD, Golden 1 Center, Sac County Office of Ed, Sutter Health, Sacramento State University, 5 Non-Institutions (Meals on Wheels, Yolo County Food Bank, SPORK Food Hub, Renegade Dining), Next Gen Foods, FoodHub, 5 Agencies (other): Sac County Farm Bureau, Sac County Farm Service Agency, Sac County Agriculture Commissioner, UCCE Small Farms Advisor, NRCS staff, plus others 33 restaurant partners participating in Great Plates Delivered |
| Throughout Jan 2021- Dec 2022 | Lunch Assist  | Six school district food service authorities: Natomas USD, Sacramento City USD, Elk Grove USD, Robla School District, Twin Rivers USD, San Juan USD   |

## Phase 3: Community Goal Setting for an Equitable Food System

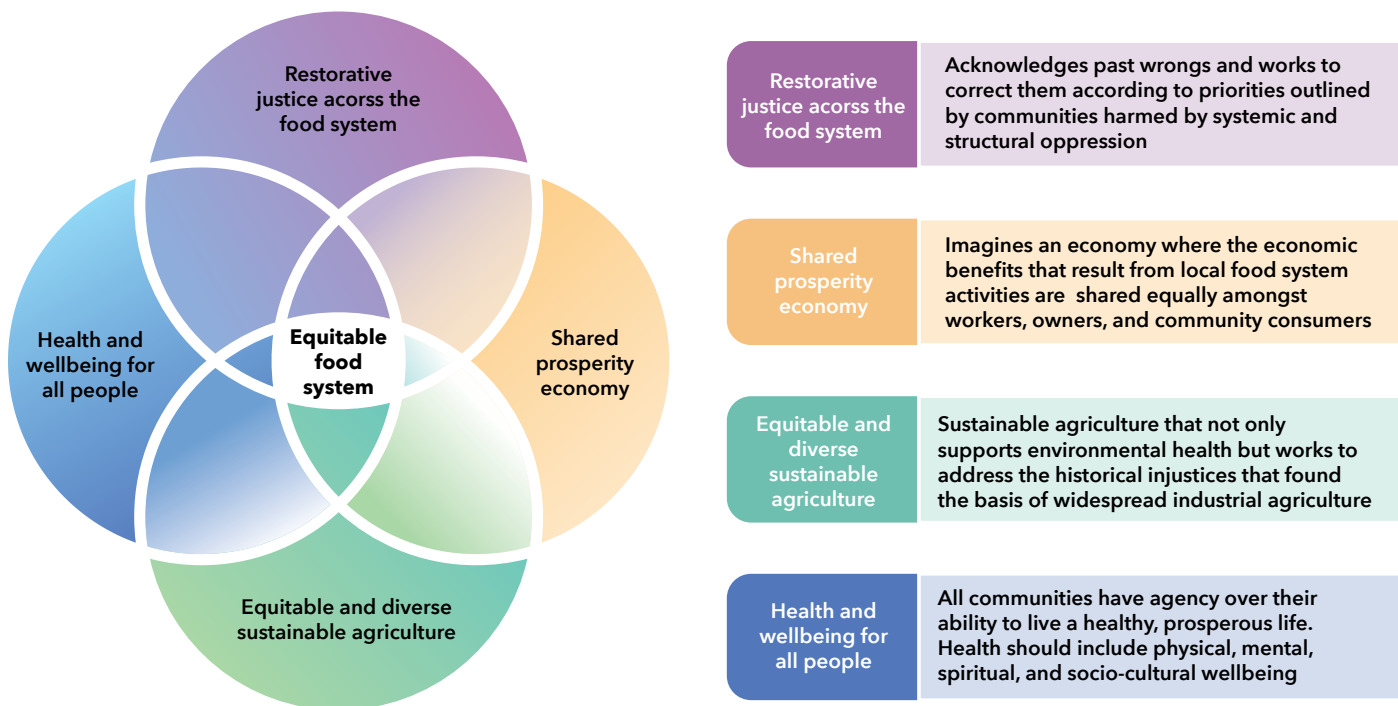
Data gathered from the community listening activities included both quantitative data (where participants ranked statements based on their importance to them) and qualitative data (interview notes, sticky notes and more). Members of the Sacramento Food Policy Council synthesized community feedback to create seven equitable local food system goals. These goals were then explored in depth to identify useful assessment indicators and then key data is presented, where available, to better understand each goal's current status for Sacramento County.

# VISIONS

In the initial phase of the Sacramento County Food System Assessment (FSA), our partner organization, the UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (UC SAREP), facilitated three gatherings with key community project partners. These sessions aimed to establish a foundational focus and shared visions to help understand what an equitable food system might look like from different perspectives. This was intended to set the stage for survey development, robust community engagement, and the subsequent creation of community-informed goals to guide future activities. A collaborative process between project partners integrated perspectives from the three gatherings, developing the four outlined Vision areas below. These Visions were collaboratively drafted to ensure they represent the dynamic characteristics of an equitable food system (Figure 4).

These Vision Statements will be referenced throughout this report and serve as the central organizing framework from which the food system assessment was developed. They are intended to provide a clear but adaptive framework for shaping future food system policies and investments, establishing public and cross-department priorities, and defining programmatic standards and metrics. Below is a detailed overview of the four Visions, their role in promoting a fair and just food system, and specific characteristics that reflect each realized Vision in the food system.

Figure 4





## Restorative Justice

The ability of a community to access fresh, high-quality, and culturally appropriate foods is directly influenced by systemic and structural forces that define our modern food system. Despite efforts to achieve Justice and equity, racist and classist elements persist, leading to ongoing systemic food insecurity and limited self-determination in food systems. These challenges disproportionately affect BIPOC and low-income communities in Sacramento. Creating equitable food access is a crucial step toward addressing these injustices. But it is also important to envision a Sacramento where communities regain sovereignty over their food systems, and we work to heal the injustices through practical, emotional, economic, and spiritual means.

Throughout workshops with partner organizations, **Restorative Justice** clearly emerged as a core vision underlying efforts to create a fair food system in Sacramento. In the context of this assessment and future food system work, we define **Restorative Justice** as a process that is rooted in a deep understanding of past and current structural forces that underpin food injustices. Restorative Justice must be at the heart of any work being done to support communities exercising their right to grow and sell their own food, access culturally relevant, fresh, and high-quality foods, steward agricultural spaces, and actively engage in local food system activities

A framework for equitable food systems work that is grounded in **Restorative Justice** recognizes that the tangible inequities and harms that exist today didn't emerge naturally. These issues are the result of deliberate policies and practices rooted within the dominant racial capitalist system, which prioritizes the accumulation of wealth, land, and resources by predominantly white, wealthy men and their descendants. This framework helps explain why people of color and impoverished communities are so disproportionately impacted by issues such as hunger, limited access to healthy food, diet-related illnesses, and a broad lack of control over their food systems.

One example is the term "food desert", often used to describe areas with limited access to healthy and affordable foods. However, this term and its applications suggest these "food deserts" occur naturally, disregarding the racial and class-based disinvestment in community food infrastructure that leads to a neighborhood's classification as a "food desert." It can also elicit a skewed framing of these communities - often comprised of people of color - ignoring robust food cultures and efforts made by these communities to address their own food needs (Walker, J. (n.d.) 'Food desert' vs. 'food apartheid'). In contrast, movements for food justice and sovereignty offer unequivocal examples of **Restorative Justice** work that grounds itself in the structural contexts of our food system, recognizing the tireless work stewarded by people of color and poor communities at both local and international levels. This work calls for a deliberate restructuring of resources and power to tackle challenges within the food system.



Given this, Sacramento's food system work must pursue a vision of **Restorative Justice** not only to achieve equitable outcomes now, but also to work to repair historical injustices experienced by community members. Below highlights how **Restorative Justice** may translate to tangible characteristics or actions for local food system work.

Restorative policies that:

- Recognize and dismantle systemic advantages and disadvantages among stratified groups by race, gender, sex, disability, and socio-economic status that may intentionally or unintentionally result from policy choices
- Explicitly outline goals of repairing past and present harms experienced by oppressed and underserved communities.
- Are driven directly by the needs, priorities, and interests of communities who experience discrimination, oppression, and systemic disadvantages

Restorative resource alignment that:

- Makes reparative financial investments to systematically discriminated against groups
- Reallocates resources with the goal of making amends and compensating oppressed and underserved community members for past and present harms
- Transfers control of land and other resources to Indigenous and other oppressed communities

Healing and accountability that:

- Explicitly acknowledges past and ongoing harm against oppressed and underserved community members
- Centers the accountability aspect of healing to repair broken relationships
- Dismantles and reimagines the paternalistic, extractive, colonial relationships of the past
- Prioritizes reciprocity within communities as well as between community members and decision-makers

Self-determination that:

- Ensures that efforts to address inequities are led and directed by oppressed and marginalized community groups
- Elevates the community leaders of underserved and oppressed groups from across the food system
- Empower communities with appropriate resources and support to define their local food systems and food policy



## Shared Economic Prosperity

The United States continues to be a country of tremendous economic opportunity, but this opportunity is not shared equally among the nation's residents. Across the food system, the economic benefits of activities from the farm field to the dinner table are disproportionately accumulated by those who own the businesses rather than those who grow, process, distribute, prepare, and sell food. This accumulation of economic productivity is further exacerbated by the monopolization across our food system.

- Four or fewer corporations own more than 50% of the market share for 79% of groceries in the supermarket (Lakhani et al., 2022).
- 25% of grocery stores across the US are owned by one corporation (*Merging Grocery Giants Threaten Americans' Food Security*, 2024).
- Four companies control 85% of all beef, 66% of all pork, and 54% of all poultry production (Reich, 2022).

These examples of immense consolidation are found across the food system. While the monoculture farming practices utilized by large food producers have stark environmental implications, this consolidation of land, resources, and economic productivity also jeopardizes food security by weakening the ability of local farmers to compete, leading to the shutdown of family farms and thus limiting access to food choices – thereby perpetuating corporate monopolization.

Significant racial and class disparities also accompany the unequal distribution of wealth. The workers driving the immense corporate productivity are often women, Indigenous people, immigrants, people of color, and those from low-income communities in both urban and rural areas. These workers are almost universally underpaid in wages and unfairly denied employee benefits while frequently over-burdened with debt, rents, taxes, and - if operating food-related enterprises - permitting fees. Additionally, working conditions in the food production industry are often grueling and physically dangerous; the US Bureau of Labor Statistics reports a rate of 23 work-related deaths per 100,000 – seven times higher than the national average for other workers. Without a significant change in how economic productivity is both generated and distributed, working conditions, economic inequities, and the impact of corporate consolidation across the food system will continue to deteriorate.



Emerging from the partner gatherings was a clear imperative to transition away from the current, highly consolidated food system and unfair working conditions. The new vision is to create a food system focusing on Shared Economic Prosperity as a core principle. This system would strive for a more equitable and just food system by incorporating characteristics outlined by community partners and discovered in community listening events.

For this assessment, **Shared Economic Prosperity** is defined as a food economy that fairly shares the benefits of economic productivity among workers, community consumers and owners and prioritizes successful and dignified livelihoods for those employed in food production. Additionally, an equitable food system that addresses the impacts of our highly consolidated and unfair food sector must also find ways to localize the creation, management, and benefits of the food economy. The following outlines characteristics of an equitable food system built around the vision of Shared Economic Prosperity.

### **Food system policies that:**

- Are driven by community needs and priorities
- Are responsive and adaptive to community concerns
- Support community organizing efforts around local food system work

### **Investments in:**

- Regional production, aggregation, and distribution infrastructure to support local agriculture
- Cooperative business establishment and support
- Community resources such as cold storage, commercial kitchen space, food processing equipment, small-scale agricultural plots and other identified needs
- Education and mentorship opportunities for those interested in agriculture and food-related careers

### **Community ownership of:**

- Locally owned food businesses
- Agricultural and retail cooperatives that prioritize local and culturally relevant product
- Equitable access to diverse local markets for all farmers and ranchers that include:
  - Direct markets
  - Wholesale markets
  - Institutional markets
  - Equitable financing

### **Valued food system workers that have:**

- Economic security
- Occupational health and safety
- Pathways to advancement and ownership



## Agricultural Equity and Diversity for Sustainability

The vast majority of food produced in California - both for with-in and out-of-state consumption - relies on synthetic fertilizers, toxic pesticides, and hybrid crops grown in large-scale monocultures that maximize agricultural productivity. This industrial model of agriculture is highly extractive and externalizes the majority of its negative impacts on both the natural environment and the communities who work and live in agricultural areas (Marshall & Brewer, 2021). Widely documented environmental impacts of industrial agriculture include pollution of surface and groundwater sources, degradation of soil, local and global air pollution, and loss of plant and animal biodiversity. The result is un-drinkable water, perpetually polluted air, hazardous working conditions, and poor health outcomes - particularly for people of color and other marginalized, low-income communities.

It is critical to acknowledge that the dominance of industrial agriculture in California cannot be separated from the historic land theft of the ancestral lands of Indigenous Peoples', followed by the consolidation of farmland and associated resources such as water rights (Nunez, 2019).

The result is the inequitable accumulation of wealth by primarily White landowners, widespread and racialized exploitation of food system workers, specialized markets that undermine community self-sufficiency, and little community control over decision-making related to water, natural resource management, and land use in agricultural regions of California (Willingham & Green, 2019).



Many sustainable agricultural models have been proposed to address the environmental impacts of industrial agriculture. However, to restore ecological health as well as community well-being and to create a truly sustainable model of food production, equity and justice for marginalized groups must be at the forefront. In the series of facilitated gatherings, partners identified the importance of aligning ecological and sustainable agricultural models with equity and justice movements, including environmental Justice, farm worker rights, immigration rights, food justice, climate justice, Agroecology, and food sovereignty.

During the series of facilitated gatherings, partners determined it was necessary for ecological and sustainable models of agriculture to align closely with equity and justice movements encompassing environmental Justice, farm worker rights, immigration rights, food justice, climate justice, Agroecology, and food sovereignty. For instance, Agroecological farming models are founded on the ecological principles of maximizing biodiversity, restoring soil health, and responsibly utilizing resources. Additionally, Agroecology acknowledges that the realization of sustainable models of agriculture hinges on the through



a restructuring of the socioeconomic system that defines our food system. Therefore, advocacy for Agroecology entails calls for the dissolution of consolidation across the food system, the dismantling of unjust policies and economic practices, and the communal oversight of natural resources, land utilization, and agricultural infrastructure by the communities involved in the cultivation, processing, distribution, and consumption of food.

A model that focuses on sustainable agriculture, equity and justice, can help create a more diverse and culturally relevant food supply. This allows for a wide range of food traditions, farming practices, and knowledge systems found throughout California communities. Building on existing movements, the Food System Alliance partners have identified **Agricultural Equity and Justice for Sustainability** as a key vision. While the practical application of Agriculture Equity and Justice for Sustainability will vary from one community to another, the following points outline some key characteristics of this vision:

### **Agricultural policy that is driven by:**

- Community needs and priorities
- Restorative actions addressing past and current harms by industrial agriculture
- Ecosystem stewardship and reciprocity

### **Promote ecologically sustainable farming systems that include:**

- Sustainable pest management to reduce or eliminate pesticide use
- Soil health to restore degraded soil and minimize the use of synthetic fertilizer
- Natural resource and biodiversity stewardship
- Diversified cropping systems

### **Encourage diversity in:**

- Farm size, with an emphasis on small and medium-scale farms
- Ownership and operators by race, ethnicity, class, gender, language, etc.
- Market opportunities
- Cropping system with an emphasis on culturally relevant foods

### **Farmers and ranchers should have equitable access to resources:**

- Land and natural resources
- Political participation
- Technical assistance and other support services
- Community and relationship-building opportunities that facilitate farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing
- Financial planning and capital
- Local markets



## Health and Well-Being

Health disparities in the United States are well-documented, shining a light on deeply entrenched racial and socio-economic systems that result in disproportionately adverse health outcomes for disenfranchised communities. Research consistently demonstrates elevated rates of chronic illness and untreated mental illness within these populations (Achieving Racial and Ethnic Equity in U.S. Health Care, 2021). These outcomes are not the result of individual choices but are directly linked to deeply rooted structural inequalities that bring exposure to environmental hazards, limited access to healthcare, food insecurity and barriers to creating safe and healthy communities (Ndugga and Artiga, 2024).

Our food system plays a significant role in determining health and well-being, and for people of color and those living in low-income communities, these outcomes are characteristically negative. Across the food system, these communities face hazardous working conditions, pollution from industrial agriculture, divestment in their neighborhoods and food infrastructure, limited access to diverse culturally relevant foods, and poor nutrition due to the inaccessibility of diverse, healthy food options. A food system grounded in equity has the potential to not only address past harms but also play a key role in ensuring every individual can live a healthy life. This work is already being carried out locally in Sacramento, with numerous grassroots and community-based organizations supporting access to culturally relevant crops, integrating green space through urban farms and community gardens, and encouraging communities to promote physical and mental wellness through gardening (see box).

While ideas and programs promoting health and well-being have traditionally focused on physical outcomes, partner meetings have shown that health and well-being should be defined in a multifaceted way, encompassing multiple aspects of life. The World Health Organization (WHO) agrees: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (*Constitution of the World Health Organization*). While this is a good place to start, FSA partners reiterated throughout this process that health definitions should explicitly include economic, cultural, and spiritual health. Moreover, there should be a focus on systemic factors that impact health outcomes, and a dynamic understanding that health and well-being are unique to each individual.

The working definition that emerged from the partner meeting for **Health and Well-Being** simply states that all individuals and communities have the power to define and live healthy, prosperous lives. An equitable food system that centers on a vision of health and well-being should empower communities to create infrastructure, programming and support resources to promote all aspects of health. This could include actions that increase access to affordable, fresh, and culturally appropriate foods, green spaces with gardens, urban farming opportunities, funding for essential food access programs, diverse transportation options for accessing food businesses, and activities that build community strength through food. The following highlights some tangible characteristics of an equitable food system that promotes Health and Well-being for its residents:

**Policies committed to community health and environmental Justice that improve and promote:**

- Clean air: fewer toxic pesticides, renewable energy
- Health equity: reduce diet-related disease, social determinants of health and access to health services
- Healthy living environments: increased green space, a variety of social and work environments
- An understanding of local microclimate conditions to enhance climate resilience

**Equitable access to:**

- Healthy and culturally appropriate foods
- Knowledge and skills focused on healthy food production and preparation: gardening, farming, preserving, cooking, nutritional education
- Opportunities to grow food in shared spaces and community gardens

**The alleviation of physical barriers to activities and spaces that promote a healthy lifestyle - green spaces, gardens, and food infrastructure for:**

- Differently abled individuals
- Individuals from broader geographic areas or without transportation
- Unhoused people
- Those living in institutional settings - prisons, schools, hospitals

**The removal or alleviation of economic barriers through:**

- Housing justice and affordability policies
- Emergency food programming (e.g., mutual aid, food bank)
- Living wage policies
- Support for programs such as CalFresh, Wl

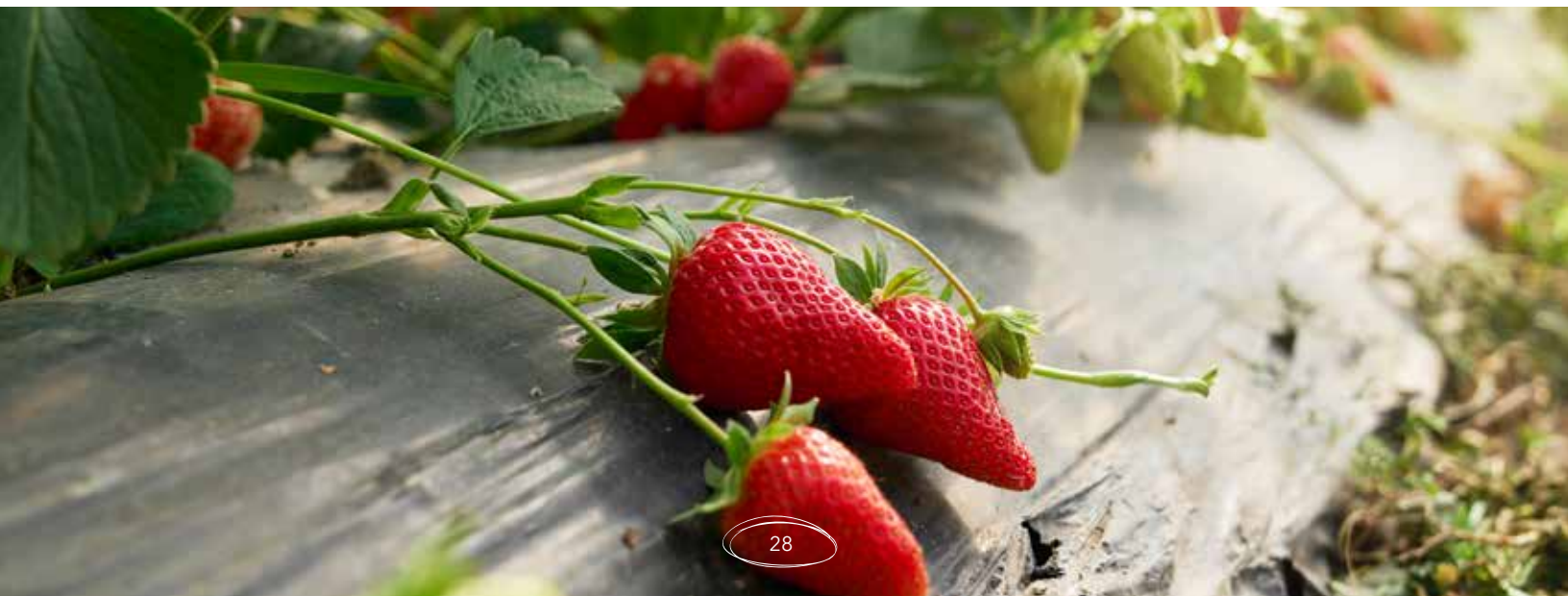




# Overview of Food System Goals

Community feedback informed a set of place-based goals that facilitate forward movement toward a more equitable local food system. Under each of the following goal chapters, the reader will find background information about the goal, a set of proposed indicators that can help to assess progress toward this goal, and the current status of the issue in Sacramento. Our hope is that these goals and indicators inform future policies, programs and investments in Sacramento – and that a future food action plan will more fully address appropriate metrics. We have included a list of existing data sets that were used to explore indicators and current goal status in each section

- 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 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 are available in all jurisdictions.





# Goal 1:

## Equitable Food Access

### Background

This goal was drawn from two sources of community listening sessions. The first source was survey responses from the Sacramento Food Policy Council's 37-question survey that was delivered over many listening sessions. The following statements were ranked as the highest priorities among participants:

*"Decrease disease as well as physical and mental health ailments of immigrant/refugee resettlement communities by ensuring that culturally relevant food is available."*

*"Diversify neighborhood food supply by increasing the number of culturally relevant, healthy, organic, shopping options (i.e. garden deliveries, farmers' markets, supermarkets)" and*

*"Increase the availability of affordable and culturally/religious relevant halal and organic foods in immigrant and refugee resettlement communities."*

The second key source was Lunch Assist's surveys with School Nutrition Directors of K-12 School Districts in Sacramento County. In one survey with eight directors, participants ranked the following statement as a top priority under the "Health and Wellbeing of All People" vision:

Federal child nutrition programs accommodate cultural and religious dietary preferences (i.e. halal, kosher, vegetarian) through intentional and appealing menu planning. Currently, dietary preferences are not required to be accommodated at all, and when they are, they are often an afterthought with limited menu variety and/or creativity.

Access to food has many dimensions. Geographic proximity measures how close someone lives to a supermarket, for example – and is commonly used by governments to quantify access to food. However equitable access is more nuanced. Caspi et al. (2012) suggest that food access has four features. The first is availability, referring to the supply of outlets offering food; this could mean the number of supermarkets near your house, or the quantity of restaurants serving a desired cuisine. The second feature is accessibility, or how easy it is to arrive at a given location. The third feature is affordability, the perceived value of an item relative to its price. The fourth feature is acceptability, referring to people's perceptions of the food environment in relationship to their own standards. The final feature is adaptability, or whether the food supply can shift to meet residents' needs (Caspi et al., 2012). For this goal, we selected several qualifiers to the term "access" to highlight themes identified in community listening processes with various groups: Community members aim for a future in which every individual in Sacramento County has equitable access to culturally relevant, locally produced, healthy and affordable food.



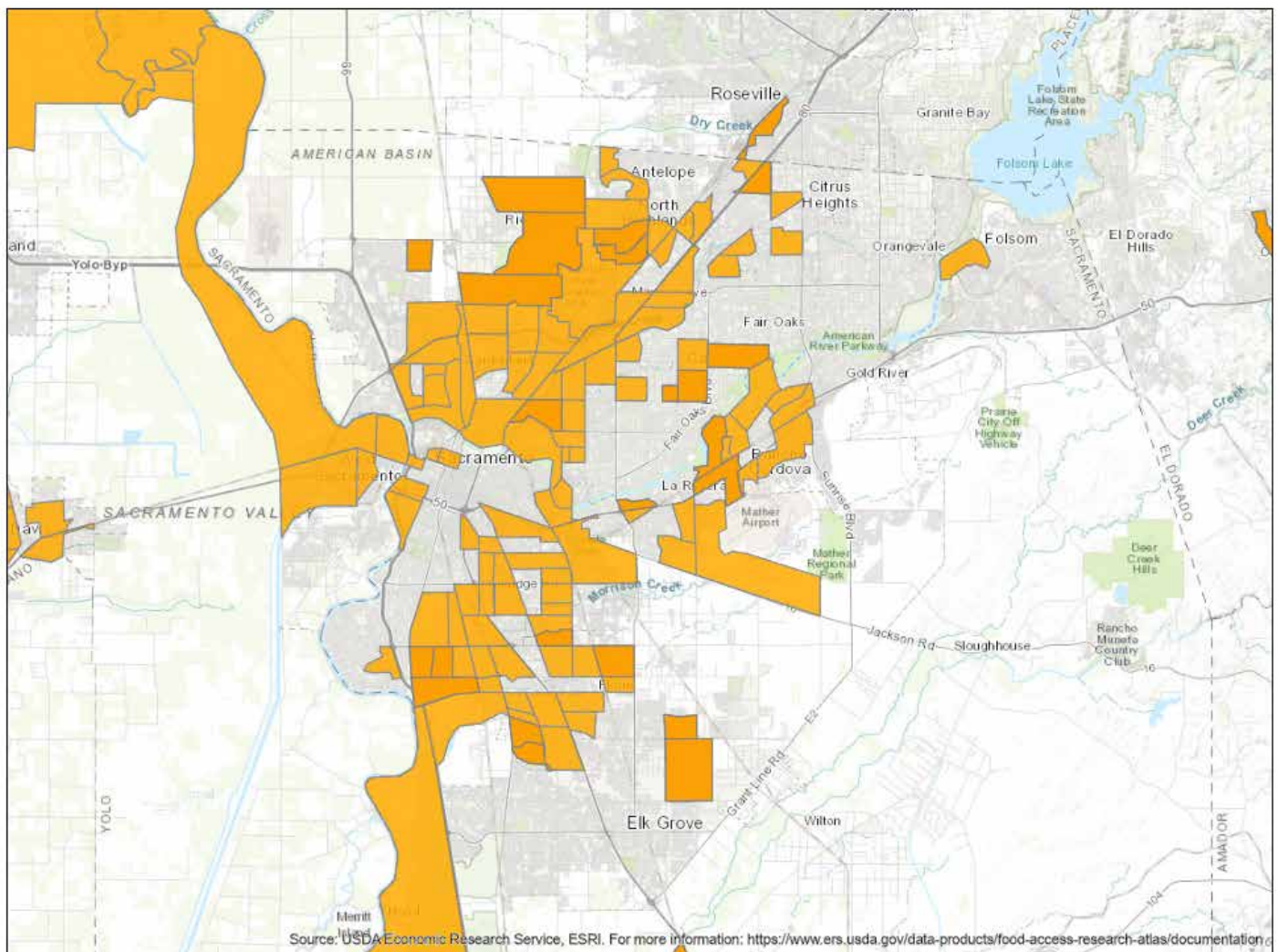
## Current Status in Sacramento County

Sacramento sits at the center of California's most productive agricultural region, yet – above all other food system priorities – participants in our community listening sessions relayed the need for increased access to healthy and affordable food. This need is validated by data that showcases significant food inaccessibility and insecurity across the county (FIGURE, Food Access map). The following data points illustrate some of the dimensions of food access in the county.

### Spatial Measures of Food Access

The USDA's Economic Research Service offers two data tools to measure food access. One, the [Food Environment Atlas](#), defines (USDA ERS - Go to the Atlas) low access in a given county as the "number of people in a county living more than 1 mile from a supermarket or large grocery store if in an urban area, or more than 10 miles from a supermarket or large grocery store if in a rural area." In 2015, in Sacramento County, the percentage of the population with low access to food stores was 13.65 percent (Figure 5, orange indicates geographies with low access). A poll conducted by Valley Vision found that 30% of people within the greater Sacramento region reported being unable or almost unable to afford an adequate food supply. However, the USDA's research has found that higher-income populations tend to live farther from food stores, making proximity a poor measure of need on its own. For this reason, it's important to look at the second tool – the Food Access Research Atlas – that displays census tracts with both significant populations of low-access households and households experiencing poverty. (USDA ERS - Food Access Research Atlas).

Figure 5



### **Certified Farmers' Markets:**

Offering food products verified to be produced locally by participating vendors, there were 28 certified farmers' markets in Sacramento County as of June 202. (Certified Farmers' Markets by County, 2024). Offering customers the opportunity to purchase wholesome, locally produced foods that frequently include culturally diverse items, The CDFA list of Certified Farmers' Markets shows that many also offer programs that allow customers to use WIC/Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program checks, CalFresh EBT (5 markets) or participate in the Market Match program, which dramatically increases purchasing power for CalFresh EBT users (11 markets).

While Sacramento County hosts numerous farmers' markets, there are significant inequities in who can easily attend these markets. Within the City of Sacramento, low-income neighborhoods in South Sacramento and Del Paso Heights do not have easily accessible, culturally reflective farmers' markets. In Sacramento County, few Certified Farmers' Markets are listed in the less affluent areas of Rio Linda, North Highlands, or in the eastern rural areas of the County (CDFA, 2024).

Steps to improve community access to farmers' markets could include examining the promotion of CalFresh and other nutrition assistance programs, seeking community input on how to increase the variety of (desired) culturally relevant food, variety of languages spoken by market vendors and staff, provide accessible transportation to markets and accessible pathways and signs inside the market.

### **Grocery Stores and Markets Selling Culturally Relevant, Local, Healthy, Affordable Food**

There is little to no current data on the percentage of produce – of any description – in grocery stores and markets. However, a 2014 Sacramento Area Council of Governments report estimates that "only two percent of the 1.9 million tons of food consumed within the region is grown within the region." A 2012 report to the California legislature on improving healthy food access [includes](#) a comprehensive list of recommendations around increasing whole produce in stores (SACOG Home, Part 2). The federal and state government have taken steps to encourage fresh produce availability in corner stores; notably, this was a major goal of the state's [Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program \(California Department of Food and Agriculture\)](#).

Importantly, simply establishing a grocery store in a low-food-access neighborhood doesn't guarantee improved food access. Dr. Catherine Brinkley from UC Davis studied 71 attempts to introduce supermarkets in such areas, finding that nearly half of the commercial-driven and one third of government-driven initiatives resulted in canceled building plans or closed stores (Brinkley et al., 2019). In contrast, not a single nonprofit or community-driven stores had closed, highlighting the importance community stakeholders play in successful food-access interventions.

### **Participation in and Accessibility of CalFresh**

The federal **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**, called CalFresh in California, provides qualifying low or no-income individuals and families with financial assistance to purchase food. Sacramento County averaged 136,000 participating households, reaching 86 percent of those eligible as of 2021 (*CalFresh Data Dashboard*, n.d.). Proof of identity, income and residency status, as well as an interview, are required to apply and benefits are based on household size, income and expenses. If approved, funding is distributed through an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card that can be used at participating grocery stores, markets, and various other food vendors including, as previously noted, some farmers' markets.

While these benefits are crucial for those in need, there are significant barriers to SNAP/CalFresh participation (Liu et al., 2023). Many struggle to qualify due to the requirement of earning no more than 200% gross or 100% net of the federal poverty, meaning a household of four must earn no more than \$40,560 to be eligible. The application and renewal process can also be difficult to navigate, especially for non-native English speakers or those who lack computer literacy; for instance, while those over the age of 65 years historically experience the County's highest poverty rate (*Who's in Poverty in California?*, 2024), this age group has a low participation rate in CalFresh (*CalFresh Data Dashboard*).



### Accessibility of Food Banks, Pantries and Other Sites Serving Donated or Recovered Food

Adequate food for every individual in Sacramento County should be guaranteed, regardless of their ability to either purchase food or to qualify for assistance. For those unable to take part in programs such as CalFresh, food banks, pantries and hot meal kitchens are an essential alternative. This assistance should be available at locations easily reachable by foot or public transportation, and in an effort to further remove barriers to healthy food, delivery options should be available.



Currently, there is a lack of data available regarding the availability of free food in Sacramento County. The City of Sacramento maintains a list of approximately 50 food recovery services and organizations as part of its compliance with SB 1383 (*ReCyclist - Food Recovery Organizations and Services*). At the County level, organizations offering free food range from large-scale food banks, such as the Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services and River City Food Bank, to small volunteer-run food mutual aid programs like NorCal Resist. Understanding the full scope and contribution of these sites would involve considering the quality of the free food; donated items may not always be desirable, culturally relevant or in a palatable condition.

### Gleaning Programs

The National Gleaning Project shows that Sacramento has several gleaning programs including Community Fruit, a program of Find Out Farms. In 2021, Find Out Farms diverted

10,000 pounds of fruit, almost doubling that amount in 2022. Their monthly Free Fruit Farmstand in South Oak Park currently focuses solely on the City of Sacramento. And each year, with the help of about 100 volunteers, Soil Born Farm's Harvest Sacramento gathers approximately 7,000 pounds of fruit from 60 sites across the County, fruit which is then shared with various food banks and lockers for distribution (*Harvest Sacramento - Spoil Born Farms, n.d.*).

### Mobile Food Vending

The potential to increase access to healthy food through options such as produce trucks, fruit carts and mobile food vendors is frequently overlooked. Researchers Kaniyaa Francis and Catherine Brinkley (2020) point out the benefits of mobile food vending, which include low capital requirements and the ability to easily move to sites with low-food access (California Journal of Health Promotion). This strategy is already at work in Yolo County, where the Center for Land-Based Learning operates a mobile farmers' market in West Sacramento and Woodland. Yolo County is also home to an innovative reciprocity program, allowing mobile food vendors approved in Sacramento County to operate in Yolo County for a reduced fee; and in Solano County, the Contra Costa & Solano Food Bank uses custom refrigerated trucks to deliver its Community Produce Program. (Center for Land-Based Learning, 2024).

Francis and Brinkley note that mobile food vendors face various policy challenges, including labor, time and land restrictions. Working to implement policies that support mobile food vending could increase the success and prevalence of vendors offering healthy food in low-access areas.



## Indicators

The following indicators are statements of broad condition change that would suggest progress toward the goal: "Every individual in Sacramento County has equitable access to culturally relevant, locally produced, healthy and affordable food."

- Indicator 1.1: Equitable, community-informed spatial distribution of retail businesses selling whole, culturally relevant foods
- Indicator 1.2: Farmers' markets are located in historically food insecure neighborhoods
- Indicator 1.3 Farmers' markets, farm stands and other direct-marketing farms accept nutrition assistance benefits
- Indicator 1.4: Expanded participation in CalFresh and other nutrition assistance programs
- Indicator 1.5: Availability of free food from gleaning programs, pantries and food banks
- Indicator 1.6 Diverse ecosystem of mobile food retail in low-income areas fostered by supportive county policies

## Relevant Existing Data Sets:

- SACOG mapping of distance to grocery stores
- USDA Food Access Research Atlas
- USDA FNS SNAP Retailer Data
- Ecology Center Farmers' Market Finder
- Alchemist CDC Farmers' Market Map
- CalFresh Data Dashboard
- Farmer's Market Nutrition Program redemption rates
- California Food Bank Locator
- City of Sacramento List of Edible Food Recovery services and organizations



## Goal 2: BIPOC Communities Have Tenure and Access to Land and Third Spaces Background

Land provides social, economic, educational, physical, and mental health benefits for individuals across social groups. Collective ownership has historically been an important avenue for land access in the United States through avenues such as farmer cooperatives, livestock organizations, and produce/commodity associations. However, these groups are predominantly comprised of White individuals with privileged access to land and resources, providing little understanding or support to those of a different cultural and socio-economic background. There are, it should be noted, many examples of exemplary cooperative models run by black farmers in the South throughout the last century.

Land is an incredibly valuable resource. It can be used to grow food for a household or to share with a neighbor, to sell as a source of income, to build community connections, and to create a space for knowledge exchange and movement building – amongst many other activities. Facilitating BIPOC stewardship of land and third space - by removing traditional barriers - enables disenfranchised people the opportunity to share cultural knowledge, network, to share resources, and to have agency over their food that may not be available elsewhere.

### Current Status in Sacramento County

Land tenure and access for Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color in the United States continues to be shaped by institutional racism and cultural biases which perpetuate and sustain inequities. With a [history](#) of colonization, disinvestment, and gentrification, Sacramento County is no different (*Segregating Sacramento*, 2022). Redlining was a particularly impactful practice in which government programs and businesses ranked neighborhoods according to racial makeup. Those with significant numbers of racial and ethnic populations were "redlined" and deemed undesirable and unsuitable for government-guaranteed loans.

This resulted in lower property values in neighborhoods with residents of color, something exacerbated by predatory real estate agents and lenders. These communities continue to experience divestment, schools receive less funding, and health implications are stark: One study has found associations between historically redlined neighborhoods, air pollution and cancer, asthma, poor mental health, and people without health insurance. The same study also found that residents in certain historically redlined areas were close to twice as likely to have poor health when compared to areas that did not experience redlining (Radley et al., 2021 p.389).



At the County level, Information on land access and farming by specific demographic groups is difficult to find. The USDA Census of Agriculture shows only 37 percent of all farmers in California are female, and only 9% are BIPOC. Further, just 1.4% of farm owners nationwide are Black (2017 *Census by State* | 2022 *Census of Agriculture* | USDA/NASS). In 2020, the California Department of Food and Agriculture found that such farmers and ranchers often lack stable access to land, which negatively affects the long-term sustainability of their businesses. Equitably increasing stable access to agricultural land in California will promote farmers' economic resilience, a robust food system in the state, and healthy natural and working lands.

At the State level, the legislature passed AB1348 (Aguiar-Curry, 2017), which aims to increase resource equity among historically underserved farmers. This led the California Strategic Growth Council to appoint twelve inaugural members to the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force in May of 2023 (California, 2023). The role of the task force is to "develop policy recommendations to increase access to agricultural land for food production and traditional tribal agricultural uses" in an equitable manner. The task force will "meet every quarter over three years and submit a full report of policy recommendations to the State Legislature and Governor by January 1, 2026" (California Strategic Growth Council, 2023). Certainly, increasing equitable access to agricultural land in California will promote economic resilience for farmers state-wide, contribute to a robust food system in the state, and support the health of natural and working lands, and equitable land-access advocates across the state are eagerly awaiting these recommendations.

### **Community Gardens/Urban Farms in Food-Insecure, Predominantly BIPOC Areas**

Gardens and urban farms play a crucial role in improving access to healthy, affordable food, promoting food sovereignty, and enhancing the health of those who eat from those gardens (Palar et al., 2019). Whether it be a home garden, community garden plot, or urban farm, growing food for household use is a cost-effective way to provide additional nutritious, whole foods.

Sacramento has a climate suitable for year-round farming and food production, providing an ideal environment for gardeners. Community gardens not only provide land access for residents to grow food, but are spaces for gathering, education, and food sharing. While a comprehensive list of community gardens in Sacramento County – including publicly and privately owned - does not currently exist, gardens are scattered throughout the County, with many located in the City of Sacramento. City of Sacramento-owned community gardens are largely concentrated the midtown and downtown area, with significant gaps in South Sacramento and Del Paso Heights, both of which have high rates of food insecurity and a lack of critical food infrastructure (*WoodPark Future Community Garden*). The cost for a plot in a community garden ranges between \$25-60 a year, and many have a waiting list.

### **Prevalence and Accessibility of Garden and Urban Farm Educational Resources**

Local resources for gardeners are available through the University of California Master Gardener program, two of Sacramento County's urban farms, and Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services, which offers courses on gardening and urban farming either free or at a low cost. Currently, these resources are only available in English. The University of California Cooperative Extension, small farms advisors serving the Sacramento region, offer technical assistance to commercial farmers in Spanish, Hmong, and Mien. Prices for courses range from \$0-\$30. (Resources, n.d.)

### **Number of Vacant Lots Available for Individual and Community Use**

Studies have shown that vacant lots can provide space for ecological productivity, enhanced biodiversity, and "non-capitalist commodity production," certainly including food and other social benefits (Kremer & Hamstead, 2015). Sacramento County has numerous vacant lots embedded in high and medium-density neighborhoods that are underutilized and have great potential for food production prior to further development. While the City of Sacramento has a tax incentive program allowing landowners to enter into a 5-year agreement with the City to utilize vacant lots for urban agriculture, as of 2022 only two parcels have taken advantage of this program (Wingo, 2022). There are currently no publicly available databases



that provide information on publicly and privately owned vacant lots across the city or county. West Sacramento, a city in Yolo County directly neighboring Sacramento, has been slightly more successful with a program to lease vacant lots to new and beginning urban farmers in partnership with the Center for Land-Based Learning.

One organization advancing solutions in this category is the Sacramento Community Land Trust (SacCLT), which formed in 2016 and recently received its 501c3 nonprofit designation. The Trust is a nonprofit organization with the aim of stewarding land for the permanent benefit of low-income communities. Its mission is to "prevent displacement and build historically discriminated neighborhood power to combat deterioration and market speculation by fostering equitable development for generations to come." This land is community-controlled, with its use directed by residents and neighbors. Possible identified uses include affordable homes for purchase, price-stable rental and cooperative housing, commercial space that benefits the community, childcare and eldercare, urban agriculture and public greenspace.

### **Public/Government-Owned Acres for Autonomous Indigenous Use and Management**

Indigenous people are the original stewards of Sacramento County and were critical in fostering the balanced ecosystem of the landscape for over millennia, and recent studies have shown that Traditional Ecological Knowledge, the landscape practices of native peoples, is vital to combating climate change and fostering resiliency (Pfeiffer, 2022). Discriminatory laws and stolen land have led to Indigenous people having high levels of food insecurity, poor health and economic hardship (Maillacheruvu, 2022). In most categories of preventable illness, Native Americans die at higher rates than any other population group. Prior to COVID-19, Native Americans and Native Alaskans already had a life expectancy roughly five years less than all other racially defined groups; post-pandemic, the disparity is even greater, with the average lifespan for American Indians and Alaska Natives dropping from 71.8 years in 2019 to 65.2 by the end of 2021 (Kelliher, 2023). Having the ability to manage and use natural landscapes increases food sovereignty and could significantly improve access to ancestral food sources, mitigating the impacts of food insecurity while also increasing opportunities for community members to share inter-generational teachings.

## Indicators

The following indicators are statements of broad condition change that would suggest progress toward the goal: *"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."*

- Indicator 2.1: Home gardens, community gardens and urban farms located in food-insecure and BIPOC communities
- Indicator 2.2: Abundant and accessible education resources for gardening and urban farming
- Indicator 2.3: Extended land tenure for gardens and farms across Sacramento

## Relevant Existing Data Sets

- CAFF California Farm Directory
- Black Farmers' Index
- USDA Agriculture Census
- City of Sacramento – vacant lot inventory





## Goal 3:

### Food and Farm Business Support Distributed Equitably

## Background

Food and farming businesses have a variety of challenges: Obtaining access to land and space, finding funding for equipment purchases, identifying local markets, adapting to climate change and a post-COVID food industry, and navigating ever-changing technology. While the needs of farmers are unique from those of restaurant owners, chefs and other food entrepreneurs, concerns are especially pronounced for BIPOC business owners, who find that inequities persist across the food-delivery chain.

According to the Federal Reserve, 80.2% of white business owners receive at least some percentage of the funding they request from a bank, compared to only 66.4% of BIPOC business owners. Additionally, the Minority Business Development Agency reports that "minority firms paid 7.8% [in interest] on average for loans, compared with 6.4% for non-minority firms" (Fairlie et al., 2010).

Given these marked disparities, it is important to recognize the impact that BIPOC businesses have on the overall economy. In October 2023, the California Office of the Small Business Advocate released the State's first-ever research report on the economic, fiscal, and social impact of diverse firms across California (California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, 2023). Led by members of the State's minority chambers of commerce and produced by Beacon Economics, the report revealed that:

- Minority-owned small businesses contribute nearly \$193 billion in economic output per year, an amount greater than the annual GDP of 18 U.S. states.
- Annually, minority-owned small businesses in California generate \$28.7 billion in tax revenue.
- Minority-owned small businesses in Sacramento currently support 2.56 million jobs annually across California



Sacramento County communities do benefit from several established programs that aim to provide services specifically to small-scale businesses, such as Sacramento Valley Small Business Development Center (SBDC), which is hosted by California Capital Financial Development Corporation. The SBDC receives federal funding from the U.S. Small Business Administration and state funding from the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz). Their programs include free workshops, training, and one-on-one business advising to local small businesses to initiate operations or to grow (Sacramento Valley SBDC, n.d.). While County-level data is not publicly available, empirical evidence suggests that Sacramento County's BIPOC communities struggle to access this type of business support.

The not-for-profit organization Alchemist Community Development Corporation runs the Alchemist Microenterprise Academy (AMA) and Alchemist Kitchen Incubator (AKIP), which help train, equip, and empower under-resourced entrepreneurs to start their own food businesses. The AMA is a 12-week business training course that teaches the basics of starting a food business. The Incubator Program then provides in-depth assistance, customized to specific business needs, including technical assistance, mentorship, and marketing and co-branding opportunities to build public awareness of their products. To help them safely and legally prepare their food, participants also have access to a shared-use commercial kitchen.

Both the City (2015) and County (2017) of Sacramento have adopted ordinances intended to support urban agriculture. The City's ordinance allows for small-scale agricultural operations in most zones of the city, promoting sustainable farming practices within the urban environment. Urban food producers are also allowed to have backyard chickens now. In addition to facilitating easier access to urban agriculture, Sacramento also introduced tax incentives through the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone Ordinance, which created a supportive environment for city-based farming initiatives. Tax incentives serve as a motivator for turning underused parcels into productive agricultural land, thus contributing to community health, economic development, and environmental sustainability. However, the success of this tax incentive is debated, as only two parcels have entered the program. Sacramento County's approach to urban agriculture extends beyond the city limits, with county-wide policies designed to benefit local communities; the County's Urban Agriculture Ordinance permits the establishment of market gardens on vacant lots, allowing for the cultivation of crops for both personal consumption and for sale (Urban Agriculture Ordinance, n.d.).

Valley Vision's 2021 Food System Action Plan report notes that along with the SBDC and Alchemist CDC, UC Davis and the Center for Land-Based Learning (CLBL) (both based in Yolo County) have programs that support business growth and incubation for small business farmers and food entrepreneurs, as well as business planning and financial assistance through organizations like CAFF, Kitchen Table Advisors, California Capital, and Business Environmental Resource Center (Valley Vision & Sacramento Region Community Foundation, 2021). While these organizations are making good strides, additional targeted outreach is needed to connect this support with BIPOC and other under-resourced entrepreneurs.

## Indicators

There were minimal to no publicly available data sets to explore the distribution of business support for local businesses across the food system – including accessibility of these resources based on community demographics. The following indicators and datasets may be starting points to provide some context:

- Indicator 3.1: Access to diverse business support workshops, trainings, and technical assistance opportunities for the wide range of food system businesses in Sacramento
- Indicator 3.2: Fair and equitable access to loans and capital for food and farm enterprises
- Indicator 3.3: accessible permitting and licensing for food and farm enterprises and support for compliance
- Indicator 3.4: Food and farm business ownership reflects the diversity of Sacramento

## Relevant existing data sets

- CDFA grantee lists
- USDA grantee lists
- USDA Agricultural Census
- Program data from UC Cooperative Extension programs
- County permits
- Coordinated Rural Opportunities Plan (CROP) - Sacramento County Profile





## Goal 4: Strengthened Local Food Purchasing Opportunities

### Background

Residents of Sacramento deserve and desire reliable access to the wide variety of locally grown food that this region produces. In Valley Vision's 2021 Resiliency Poll, 88% of people within the region stated that it is important to live in an area with local agriculture, signifying a desire to eat locally produced foods and support local growers (Valley Vision et al., 2021). For farmers, selling their products locally allows for a quicker turn-around and a nimbler supply chain, increasing the viability of their businesses. However, barriers do exist - the widespread presence of large food corporations, in combination with a lack of local food-industry infrastructure, often make it difficult for both the consumer and the farmer to find a connection point.

Enabling measures that address these barriers and identifying pathways to solidify connections between local food production and consumption is an indispensable component of any local food system. In the context of this project, the realization of an active local food system centered on equity and justice directly aligns with all four of the identified vision areas.

There are a wide range of activities and infrastructure that could strengthen and build these connection points across a local food system. For example, infrastructure that strengthens direct connections between local food production and consumption include farmers markets, roadside farm stands, urban farming, cooperative grocery stores, food hubs, and restaurants. Programs and policies that are powerful in strengthening connection points include institutional local food purchasing policies, CSA (community-supported agriculture) programs, and increasing incentive supports for purchasing local foods (e.g., market match for CALFresh EBT). While these activities and infrastructure are foundational to having an active local food system, special attention must be paid to ensuring all residents are able to not only participate in but contribute to the creation of their local food system.

### Current Status in Sacramento

Playing on its qualities of being the Capitol of California, surrounded by diverse agriculture, and a historic hub for trade and food processing, Sacramento markets itself as the Farm-to-Fork Capitol. Certainly, agriculture is a tremendous driver of the regional economy: In 2022, Sacramento County agriculture was valued at \$602,751,000 (Agricultural Commission, Department of Weights & Measures, 2022). Despite this tremendous agricultural productivity, the majority of this economic value is actually in commodity crops that are not directly contributing to a local food system. With the county's primary crops being wine grapes, nut crops, livestock, field crops and nursery stock, it isn't surprising that a study from 2014 found that only 2% of food grown in the county was consumed locally (Heft, 2022). While progress made since 2014 cannot be ascertained, efforts to enhance our local food system do exist. There remains a need for more substantive actions to strengthen connections between local food producers and consumers, from both the household to the institutional level, with local institutions and governmental bodies providing incentives.

There also remains a significant emphasis on Farm-to-Fork activities, which are highly exclusive and not reflective of local community needs. One example is the annual Farm-to-Fork Festival and Tower Bridge Dinner, which highlight local farms, chefs, breweries, and wineries (Visit Sacramento). This has brought criticism from food-equity advocates, asking "whose fork?" and noting that most residents and food





system workers cannot engage in these activities, or dine and shop at spotlighted businesses due to their financial and geographic inaccessibility. Instead of promoting events such as the Tower Bridge Dinner, resources should be directed toward enhancing accessible and practical connection points between local producers and consumers across Sacramento County.

To better understand the current conditions of our local food system, a comprehensive overview of the current conditions will be invaluable to understanding what meaningful, specific actions will strengthen connections between producers and consumers at all levels. The following section summarizes currently available and "on-the-ground data," outlining the central characteristics of our local food system infrastructure.

### **Number of Local Farmers' Markets**

Farmers' Markets are often positioned as a cornerstone of vibrant and active local food systems as they can directly connect farmers and local consumers. Currently, Sacramento has [28 certified farmers'](#) markets across the County, of which 21 operate year-round (Certified Farmers' Markets by County as of April 1, 2024, 4 C.E.). Many of them also offer programs that allow customers to use just [CalFresh EBT](#) (5 markets) or also participate in the Market Match program, which dramatically increases the purchasing power for CALFresh EBT users (11 markets) (Farmers' Market Finder by the Ecology Center). There are still multiple markets - most located in more affluent neighborhoods - that do not offer any financial assistance.

While Sacramento County hosts many farmers' markets that offer year-round access to locally grown food and small food business products, there are significant inequities present in who is able to efficiently and easily access markets. For example, there are little to no certified farmers' markets located in the Delta region, Rio Linda, North Highlands, or eastern rural areas of the county. Within the City of Sacramento, neighborhoods such as Florin, South Sacramento, and Del Paso Heights do not have farmers' markets that are easily accessible or reflect the large communities that live there (*Farmers' Market Finder*).

### **Number of Grocery Stores with Local Food Products**

Finding locally grown produce in medium to large supermarkets in Sacramento County can be challenging - especially at an economical price. Stores that consistently offer or emphasize locally grown produce include Sacramento Food Cooperative, Corti Brothers, Nugget Markets, and Raleys. Some local residents also source locally grown products in smaller markets focusing on culturally specific foods - such as Asian and Middle Eastern markets; however, data on this is difficult to quantify.



### **Number of Onsite Farms Stands (Urban, Peri-urban, Rural)**

There are an abundance of onsite or roadside farm stands across Sacramento County, offering opportunities for residents to purchase locally-grown produce and to learn more about how their food is produced. This project identified over 30 onsite or roadside farm stands across this region - and there are likely more that do not have an online presence. These farm stands are located across Sacramento County and specialize in a range of produce, including strawberries, stone fruits, mixed vegetables, and Asian specialty crops.

While roadside farm stands are often located in peri-urban and rural areas where agricultural land use is more common, there are multiple urban farms that offer weekly farm stands more easily accessible for urban residents (E.g., Root 64 Farm). Some of these urban farms are located in West Sacramento, which is directly adjacent to Downtown Sacramento. Although not in Sacramento County, these urban farms, such as IRC New Roots and Three Sisters Garden, offer fresh produce that is geographically accessible to many Sacramento residents. Finally, many of these urban farms are also enrolled in the CALFresh EBT program.

### **Number of Prepared-Food Businesses Purchasing Locally-Grown Produce**

Visit Sacramento, the County's Tourism and Visitors Bureau, branded Sacramento as the Farm-to-Fork Capitol and maintains a list of registered restaurants that "utilize the abundance of regionally grown products." The criteria used to determine which restaurants receive the farm-to-fork seal of approval is unclear, and there is no information on the types and amounts of local foods the businesses purchase. It should be noted that there are a significant number of small prepared-food businesses that do purchase local products but do not participate in marketing programs for the Farm-to-Fork Capitol. One example is Majka Pizza, which purchases seasonal local produce to create its pizzas. Additionally, many small food businesses located in Arden Arcade purchase from local farms to prepare a wide variety multi-cultural cuisine.

Currently, there are 136 restaurants on Visit Sacramento's registered list, with the majority (~65%) located in the downtown/midtown area of Sacramento (Visit Sacramento). Although the downtown and urban areas of Sacramento have a developed public transit system, the geographic distribution of restaurants offering locally-produced foods causes inequities in access. None of the restaurants are adjacent to the County's low-income communities, neighborhoods whose residents are predominantly people of color, or are areas with low food accessibility. Further, very few restaurants with the Farm-to-Fork seal of approval fall within an affordable category - making this marketing program inaccessible for most of Sacramento residents.

### **Availability of Food Supply Chain Infrastructure to Support Local Food**

Food system infrastructure that creates connection points between food production and consumption is critical to a vibrant, equitable, and active local food system. This supply chain infrastructure can include food hubs, wholesale distributors, processors, and storage facilities. While farms need support gaining access to local markets, prepared food businesses and grocery stores also need assistance to actualize the purchase and marketing of locally grown commodities. This is a critical aspect of Sacramento's food system that receives little attention and lacks funding and investment.

There are currently no buyers or distributors specializing in food produced locally on small-scale farms in Sacramento County. Further, large wholesale distributors don't often have programs that connect locally produced food with local markets. FSA partner, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, found through interviews that there are significant economic and logistical barriers that make local food infrastructure challenging. Many participants expressed difficulty finding resources to implement the processes necessary to facilitate more direct and small-scale food sales. Other infrastructure, such as commercial kitchens, are available for small businesses to rent in certain areas. This project identified eight such commercial kitchens located in the county - most of which are in or close to the city of Sacramento.

### **Number of county and city agencies and other public institutions with food purchasing policies**

Food purchasing procurement policies could prioritize locally produced food that is sustainably grown and made by women and BIPOC farms and food businesses. However, Sacramento County and its cities (7 jurisdictions) do not have strong local food purchasing policies. Some cities do give priority to local vendors, which indicates a willingness to support local businesses and economies (Table 5). This often translates to purchases from local prepared food businesses rather than directly from local farms. It should be noted that there are examples of policies that could be more widely adopted: In an effort to source and provide local whole foods for K-12 students, the Sacramento City Unified School District has a farm-to-school program, and the UC Davis Medical Center has a vigorous to farm-to-institution program that has become the largest farm-to-fork food service in the area.

Sacramento County, its seven cities, school districts, and special districts (fire districts, municipal districts, etc.) are large employers and serve thousands of people. Almost 450,000 people are either public employees or interact regularly with public entities on a daily basis. This represents an enormous opportunity for governmental agencies to transition to an economic, ecological, and social approach to food purchasing that could benefit both the (small and local) vendors and county residents. Sacramento County's major public institutions that offer some kind of food service include thirteen K-12 School Districts, fourteen Prisons and jails (both public and private), three Public College/University Systems, one County government and 7 City governments.

### **Major Non-Governmental Institutions With Food Purchasing Policies**

Large private institutions such as hospitals, private universities, and sports venues also offer an opportunity to direct large economic activity toward local farms and food businesses across Sacramento County. However, the Golden 1 Center was the only major private institution with a strong and explicit local food purchasing program that is publicly available. The other entities – six hospitals, 4 private universities and nine major sporting venues do not provide any public information about their food sourcing or purchasing policies.





## CASE STUDY

### **Sacramento's Local Food Purchasing Programs highlights**

*The UC Davis Medical Center located in the City of Sacramento is home to the "city's largest production kitchen and serves 6,500 meals a day". The UC Medical Center is intentional about sourcing as much food as possible within 250 miles to directly support local farmers and ranchers.*

*The downtown Golden 1 Center is home to the Sacramento Kings NBA team. From its conception, the Golden 1 Center aimed to be as environmentally responsible as possible and to be the first sporting venue of its kind by aiming to source 90% of its food from within a 150-mile radius. During the 2021-2022 season \$7 million was spent on local farms and ranches and they have generated almost 60,000 meals from diverting left-over food to local food banks over the past 5 years (ibid).*

*Both initiatives were led by Executive Chef Santana Diaz. He took these opportunities to support and showcase local farmers and ranchers through procurement forecasting. He continues to work at the UC Davis Medical Center.*

## Indicators

The following indicators are statements of broad condition change that would suggest progress toward the goal: *"Increase connection points between local farming productions and local market opportunities."*

- Indicator 4.1: Government purchasing priority is given to local, BIPOC, and/or Organic farmers
- Indicator 4.2: Non-governmental institutions have purchasing policies prioritizing local, BIPOC, and/or Organic farmers
- Indicator 4.3: Prepared-food businesses have purchasing policies prioritizing local, BIPOC, and/or organic farmers
- Indicator 4.4: Increased presence and consistency of farmers markets distributed equitably across Sacramento County
- Indicator 4.5: Grocery stores (across scales of operation) prioritize local produce purchasing


## Relevant Existing Data Sets

There are minimal formal data resources that quantify the food system infrastructure present across Sacramento County. Much of the data presented comes from knowledge and networks in the community of business owners, individuals, and organizations that comprise current food systems work. Efforts to document food system infrastructure data would be invaluable.

- Farm to Fork Restaurant Guide







## Goal 5: Equitable, Diverse, Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture System

### Background

As industrialized agriculture continues to expand across California, the consequences will also increase. Large-scale monoculture cropping patterns and synthetic amendments lead to the loss of biodiversity, soil degradation, increased air and water pollution, and significant greenhouse gas emissions. Chemical and fertilizer runoff pollutes the soil and water of surrounding areas, contributing to poor health outcomes for residents – often the men and women who provide the labor for these “mega-farms.”

In addition to the social and ecological impacts, the effects of the corporate consolidation of land are not dissimilar to the model of inherited, familial ownership, generally by those identifying as White. This disenfranchisement began when Europeans and White Americans began to inhabit California and has stripped land stewardship and agricultural systems from Indigenous Peoples. The cultural racism at the core of this process continues to prevent farmers of color from accessing and retaining land.

Consolidation of land and resources also continues to be one of the prominent reasons new generations of farmers across demographic groups do not view agriculture as a viable career. The National Young Farmers Coalition found that accessing affordable land is the number one challenge new and young farmers are [facing today](#) (National Young Farmers’Coalition et al., 2022). In California, this challenge is even more stark: In 2022, the average cost for an acre of agricultural land in California was \$15,880, compared to a [national average](#) of \$4,080, requiring capital that communities of color struggle to acquire (Willis, 2023).

This suggests that a shift in land ownership models and resource availability must be at the foundation of a transition toward more equitable farming. Financial resources and technical support must be directed towards farmers who have traditionally experienced discrimination and are underserved by public programs and institutions, including BIPOC farmers, LGBTQIA farmers, women farmers, and non-English speaking monolingual farmers. As climate change continues to place pressure on our ecology and economy, it is imperative that we shift toward a model of agriculture that prioritizes ecological stewardship, enhances food system resilience, and empowers community agency over food production.

### Current Status in Sacramento

The most recent USDA Census of Agriculture (2022) provides a broad overview of the status of agriculture, as well as a more specific overview of demographic shifts over the last five years. As of 2022, there were 1,118 farms in Sacramento County and approximately 257,000 acres of land in farming (including cropland, woodland, and pastureland), a decrease of 4% and 1%, respectively, since 2017 (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2022). The average size of a farm in Sacramento is 230 acres, an increase of 2% since 2017. While these trends seem relatively minor, this change is in line with broader concerns around decreasing farm numbers - and increasing farm size - as land consolidation continues to impact the agricultural sector. Further, Sacramento County saw a 14% decrease in farms and 23% increase in farm size from 2012 to 2017 (Sacramento County, 2017).



Sacramento County hosts a wide variety of crops, with the most prevalent by acreage being wine grapes, rangeland and pastureland, rice, pears, and tomatoes (Avila et al., 2022). There are diverse fresh vegetable and fruit operations across the county that provide many types of produce throughout the entire year - many of which sell directly to consumers and to businesses in the area (10% of respondents indicated they sell directly to consumers). Very few farms in this area reported in the 2022 Census of Agriculture that they are using more sustainable practices; farms reducing their tillage represented 14% of responses, and farms using cover crops accounted for 6% of responses. Only 1.2% of farms are certified Organic, which translates to 3,107 acres (USDA2022). There is also likely a crossover in reporting as farmers often use multiple sustainable management practices in tandem.

Agriculture in the Sacramento area will become more challenging and tenuous as climate change continues to impact our local and global ecologies. The county has been in D3 level extreme heat and drought intermittently, with increasing consistency, over the past two decades. To adapt to changing conditions and be resilient in the face of environmental stress, it is imperative that agricultural production shifts towards a more ecologically sustainable system and develop deeper connections to the local economy. The following provides an overview of the current status of our local agricultural sector and where it intersects with sustainable farming.

### **Variety of Agricultural Crops Across Sacramento**

Growing a diverse selection of crops is central to fostering an equitable local food system. It significantly bolsters the resilience of local food supplies and facilitates easier access to a wide array of fresh and culturally relevant foods. Further, farms that have a high level of diversity within their operation - farming many different types of crops simultaneously - create multiple income streams, mitigating risk for farmers.

The USDA Census of Agriculture (2022) also shows that Sacramento County currently produces hundreds of different crops on 1,118 farms. Notably, the crops with the most harvested acreage are wine grapes (37,423 acres), a mixture of cropland (134,941 acres), pasture for livestock (107,473 acres), and woodland (2,031 acres), vegetables (6,978 acres), and pears (5,002 acres) (Avila et al., 2022; USDA, 2022). On just 718 acres, Sacramento farmers grow a wide range of fruit crops including apples, apricots, avocados, berries, melons, figs, kiwi, nectarines, peaches, plums, pomegranates, and table grapes. On 2,670 acres, local farmers are growing fresh vegetables such as asparagus, beets, broccoli, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, squashes, herbs, leafy greens, okra, peppers, and market tomatoes (USDA, 2022). While not all of these fresh fruits and vegetables are consumed within Sacramento County, many of these products are sold within our local supply chains. In addition, there is a wide range of animal meat and dairy operations in Sacramento County that include cattle, chicken, goat, pig, sheep, turkey, and aquaculture (Department of Agriculture, Weights & Measures, County of Sacramento, 2022).

The Agricultural Census also shows that in Sacramento, the majority of farms are small; 38% of farms are 1-9 acres in size and 28% are 10-49 acres. While small-scale farmers are often the majority of total farms, their total farmed acreage is only a small portion of total acreage in Sacramento. There are 74 farms, which make up 7% of total farms, that cultivate more than 1,000 acres. Further, 33 farmers cultivate on farms between 500-99 acres (USDA, 2022). These larger farms are often focused on export-oriented commodity production and may not prioritize local food supply chains.

### **Diversity of Farmer Demographics in Sacramento County**

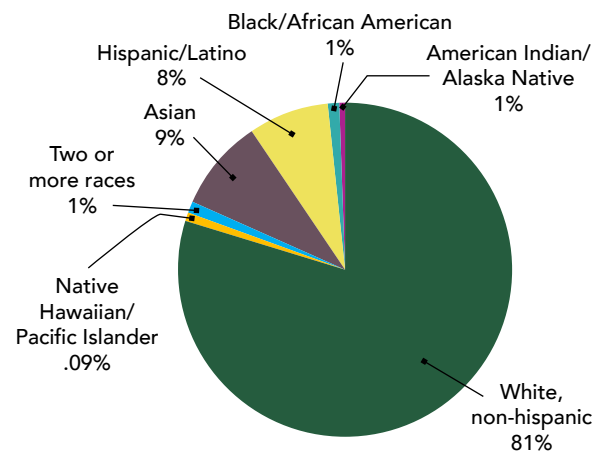
The demographic breakdown of Sacramento County, versus the demographic breakdown of farmers in Sacramento County, reveals serious disparities in the number of BIPOC farmers in the County (46). (Figure 6). According to the USDA 2022 Agricultural Census, 87% of farmers identified as White, while 31% of County residents identified as White. Similarly, 29% of County residents identified as Hispanic, yet only 8% of farmers identified as Hispanic. Further disparities can be noted in the gender demographics of farmers, with 60% of farmers in Sacramento County identifying as men and 40% identifying as women. There is no available data that provides insights into other gender and sexuality identities. Only 7% of farmers were under the age of 35, which correlates to national trends reflecting an aging farmer population and small proportions of younger farmers. The majority of farmers in Sacramento County were between the ages of 35-64 years old (56%) - however, this is not a particularly useful data categorization to better understand the age dynamics of Sacramento farmers (USDA, 2022). Finally, 41% of respondents identified themselves as new and beginning farmers, which is defined as having operated a farm or ranch with less than ten years of experience farming.

### **Number of Sustainable, Ecologically Based Farms in Sacramento County**

Reducing agricultural pollution and transitioning to more sustainable, ecologically based agriculture is critical to becoming more resilient to climate change. More importantly, these steps are necessary to create healthy environments for the people who live in our region. Unfortunately, there are no direct datasets available that provide a comprehensive overview of the status of sustainable agriculture in Sacramento County. However, there are some useful pieces of information that can provide insights into particular aspects of sustainable agriculture. For example, the 2022 Census of Agriculture

**Figure 6**

### **Racial and Ethnic Demographics, Sacramento Farmers (%)**

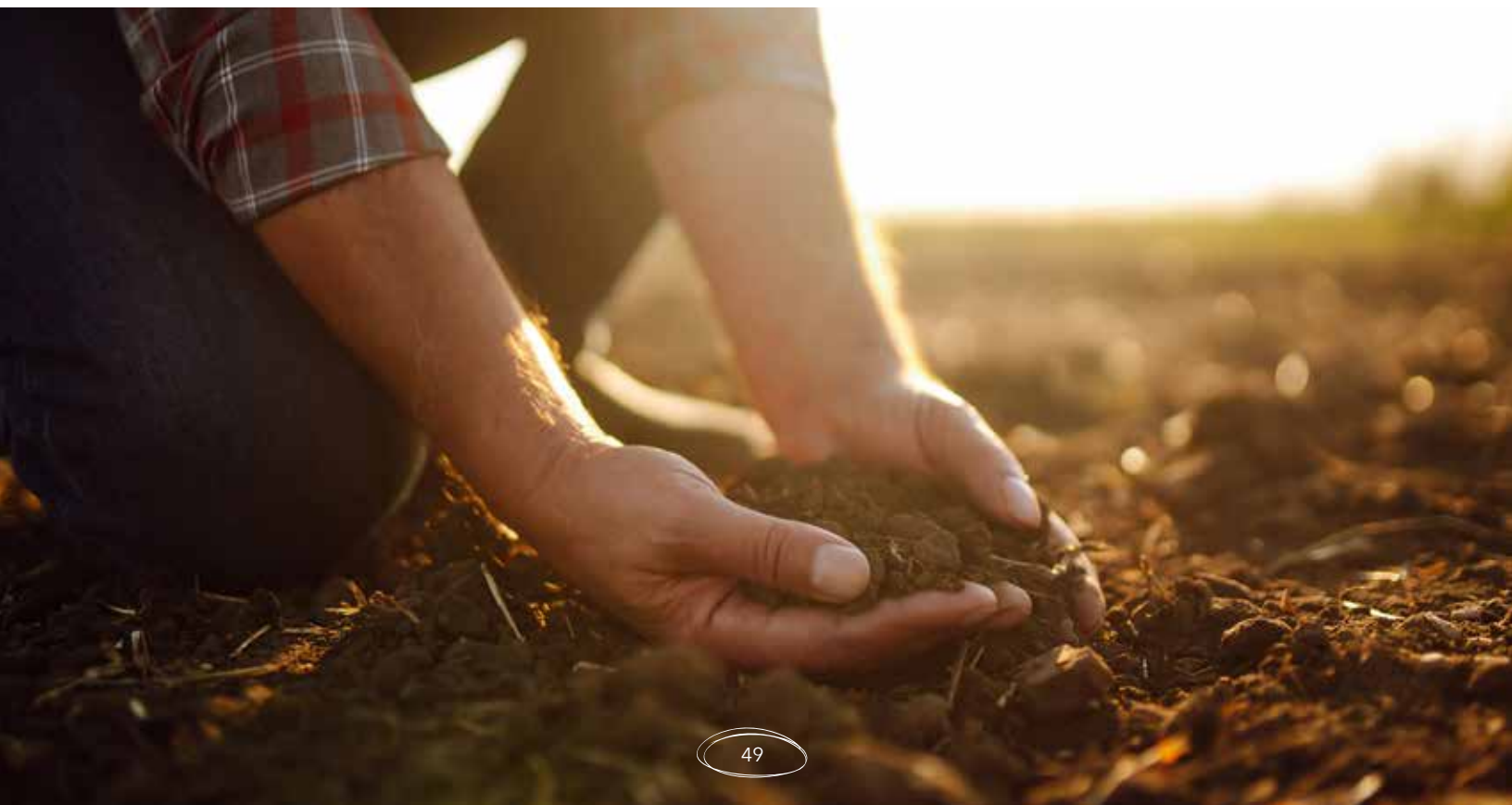


found that 6% of farmers reported using cover crops - which are used to protect soil, build organic matter, and replenish crop nutrients. Further, this survey found that 13% of farms are using reduced or no tillage practices in their operations, which dramatically reduces soil degradation and dust creation.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) also collects information on the presence and types of organic operations in each county, as well as the use of incentive programs that promote sustainable agriculture. The State Organic Program, housed within CDFA, reported that only around 1.2% of farms are certified Organic, making Sacramento around three percentage points lower than the state average of 4.4% of cropland (California Department of Food and Agriculture, 2023). The most common certified organic crops grown in Sacramento include fresh fruits and vegetables (~570 acres), with the majority of certified organic land in field crops (e.g., rice) and pastureland for animals (CDFA). It should be noted that not all farmers who use organic management practices go through the process of certifying their land, so the prevalence of organic agriculture in the County is likely higher than this reported data.

The CDFA does offer some financial assistance to farmers transitioning to sustainable and ecological farm methods. Through the Healthy Soils Program, farmers can get financial assistance for using cover crops, compost and mulches, and by planting pollinator hedgerows, and the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEET) offers financial assistance to encourage the transition to more efficient irrigation systems. Although many farmers have utilized these programs (and others) to adopt more sustainable practices, it is difficult to assess their effectiveness due to the lack of easily accessible public datasets are not easily available to assess their effectiveness. Furthermore, there is a lack of information on the prevalence of sustainable and ecological practices adopted by farmers without available incentives.

In Sacramento County, the support available to farmers seeking assistance with technical aspects of their business, as well as those needing assistance tapping into financial resources, is mixed. Unlike the surrounding counties of Placer, El Dorado, and Yolo, Sacramento County does not have a dedicated Resource Conservation District. However, UC Cooperative Extension staff members can offer technical guidance to various types of farming operations to serve a variety of stakeholders, including vegetable, fruit and nut growers, as well as small organic farms. Other organizations, such as California Alliance for Family Farms, offer technical and financial resources to support farmers and ranchers.





## Indicators

The following indicators are statements of broad condition change that would suggest progress toward the goal: *"Sacramento County will have an equitable, diverse, and environmentally sustainable agricultural system that supports multiple socio-economic and ecological goals."*

Indicator 5.1: Farming populations more reflect community demographics of Sacramento

Indicator 5.2: There is a thriving agricultural sector that supports local food needs

Indicator 5.3: Local food production reflects the diverse dietary needs of communities and emphasizes culturally relevant crops

Indicator 5.4: A large majority of farms utilize ecological management practices that support climate and environmental goals

## Relevant Existing Data Sets

Agricultural Census data (every five years)

County Agricultural Commissioner data (every year)

Program data from UC Cooperative Extension and Resource Conservation Districts

Program data from CDFA programs, State Organic Program, SWEEP, Healthy Soils Programs, EQIP, and more

Program data from organizations offering farm certifications, e.g. Audubon



## Goal 6: Justly Compensated and Professionally Supported Farming and Food Industry

### Background

All individuals have the right to earn fair wages and employee benefits and to live fulfilling lives. Unfortunately, many - if not a majority - of farm and food system workers are not justly compensated or provided with meaningful benefits and worker protections. Feedback from the community highlighted the fact that the workers who support the Farm-to-Fork Capital often do not have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the local food system.

Across the food system, whether it be agriculture, supply chain work, or food service, wages are consistently low, with minimal opportunities for career advancement. Further, many food system workers receive minimum wage, are not represented for collective bargaining, and have experienced workplace violations, such as refusal to pay overtime and inability to take breaks. In one survey, 89 percent of food service workers in California reported experiencing rampant workplace violations. These employees have historically been exempt from minimum wage requirements under the presumption that patron tipping will balance low wages. While California did just pass a \$20 per hour minimum wage mandate – it is [only for fast-food restaurant employees](#) (Terry, 2024).

Farm workers, in addition to being paid low wages, do not have federal recognition for the right to collectively bargain, leading to workplace [abuse](#) and limited access to resources and benefits such as health care and fair wages (Cabrera-Lomelí, 2022). It should be noted, though, that in 2023, California passed a law that makes it easier for farm workers to [unionize](#) (FarmWeek, 2023). Many local family farmers find it difficult to remain viable themselves, often requiring off-farm income streams or additional [financial support from family members](#). In 2021, 84% of US farm households earned the majority of their total household income from off-farm sources (FarmWeek, 2023).

These disparities for farm and food systems workers intersect with race and gender; [80% of food services workers are non-white, and two-thirds are women \(Terry, 2024\)](#). Of farm workers, 92% are Latino and the majority are undocumented - making it difficult to access critical resources and making them particularly vulnerable in their [workplaces](#) (USBLS, 2023). It is clear that an equitable local food system cannot be achieved without addressing the disparities experienced by those who grow, process, distribute, and sell food. Further, the long-term sustainability, benefits, and economic viability of a local food system itself relies on community members being able to earn a dignified living from this work and contribute to local economic activities.

### Current Status in Sacramento County

According to results from The Restaurant Opportunities Center (ROC) FSA work, the Food Service and Food Manufacturing sectors have experienced robust growth in Sacramento County - surpassing pre-pandemic employment levels and outperforming growth indicators in California. As of May 2023, there are now 92,040 food preparation and service workers, making it the second-largest employment sector in the county. Similar trends for food manufacturing were noted with the ROC finding that employment had grown by nearly 40 percent in Sacramento, compared to less than 2 percent across the state. In contrast, the prevalence of farm work has stayed relatively stable, with a reported 3,550 workers classified as crop, nursery, greenhouse, ranch, and aquaculture workers.

The minimum wage in Sacramento is \$16, which is in line with the most current state mandate. However, the MIT Living Wage Calculator proposes that the living wage in Sacramento County for one adult with no children is \$25.19 per hour. This suggests that many workers, single households and beyond, who are receiving minimum wage struggle to make ends meet. As of February 2024, food service workers on average, made \$17.89 per hour or \$37,220 annually, while farm workers made approximately \$17.64 per hour, lower than the living wage index for Sacramento (*Living Wage Calculator - Living Wage Calculation for Sacramento County, California, 2024*). These wages do not enable people to save for the future or have disposable income. Given this, it is challenging for many food industry workers to participate in the local food system to which their labor contributes.

### **Wages of Food System Workers by Specific Position**

The wages for food system workers vary depending on the specific area of service work (USBLS, 2023). Dishwashers, hosts, coffee shop workers, and support staff make around \$17.60 per hour, whereas waitstaff makes \$21.83 per hour. The highest-paid food service worker category, reported by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, was Chefs and Head Cooks, who made \$32.60 per hour on average. In the farmwork sector, workers in the ranching and aquaculture sector (working with animals or fish) make more on average (\$20.59 per hour) than those working in croplands, nurseries, or greenhouses (\$18.24 per hour) (USBLS, 2023). The demographics of those working in the food sector also perpetuate gender, ethnic, and racial wage gaps, with most food system workers being underpaid and unable to secure a living wage. According to the ROC FSA analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics and American Community Survey data for food sector workers in the Sacramento metropolitan region:

- Workers of color make up the vast majority of food service, food production, and food processing workers in Sacramento.
- Women make up the majority of Food Sector workers.
- Men occupy the majority of positions in food production and food processing in Sacramento.
- Young workers, aged 16-24, comprise the majority of the food service sector.
- Workers aged 25-44 are the plurality of those working in the food production and food processing sectors.

There is no data available at the county level that directly assesses the intersection of wages and demographics for the farm and food sector in Sacramento County as a whole. Similarly, there is no available data at the county level that directly assesses the intersection of wages and demographics for the farm and food sector in Sacramento County.





### Benefit Access for Food System Workers

There is no data to assess the status of food system worker's access to benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, and/or other commonly provided workplace benefits (e.g. wellness incentives for Sacramento County).

### Number of Food System Workers Enrolled in Unions

In Sacramento, there are multiple unions that cover unionized food service workers, including United Here Local 49, SEIU 1000, Teamsters Local 150, and United Food and Commercial Workers Golden State. While it is more common for larger chain grocery and food establishments to have union representation, there are still significant gaps. United Farm Workers currently represents over 7,000 agricultural workers across California (Foy, 2023) but there is no public data currently available at the county level on the number of residents represented by farm and food worker unions.

## Indicators

The following indicators are statements of broad condition change that would suggest progress toward the goal: *"Sacramento County will support a food and farming industry that justly compensates a diverse pool of workers and ensures opportunities for professional development"*.

Indicator 6.1: Food system workers earn living wages for the Sacramento area

Indicator 6.2: Benefits programs are more widely available across food system work

Indicator 6.3: Unionization of the food systems workforce is more prevalent

#### Relevant Existing Data Sets

- Restaurant Opportunities Center
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Unite Here Local 49 and SEIU 1000



## Goal 7: Community Education Opportunities

### Background

While equitable food access and a thriving food and farm industry are critical components of a high-functioning food system, food and nutrition education is as well. In order to fully support Sacramento's Farm-to-Fork mission, it is essential to ensure that local, healthy, sustainably grown, and affordable food is easily accessible to everyone. Along with access to great food, it's important for communities to have the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain a well-rounded diet, prepare healthy and culturally important foods, handle food safely, and locate locally sourced ingredients. All are components of food and nutrition education that should be available to all communities. Providing culturally relevant food education in both institutional and non-institutional settings, in traditional and non-traditional educational environments, will empower a wide range of people and support the goals of this assessment.

The Women, Infants & Children (WIC) program is a critical part of the family nutrition education infrastructure. It is designed to "help pregnant women, new moms, and young children eat well, stay healthy, and be active." Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) (Food and Nutrition Services). WIC is mainly funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture and offers WIC recipients receive free, nutritious foods, nutrition education, referrals to community services, and breastfeeding support.

Schools also play a significant role in providing nutrition education. The California Department of Education advises all schools in the state to incorporate nutrition education (NE) into their curriculum for grades PreK–12. The guidance encourages schools to utilize various methods to incorporate NE effectively, such as connecting with the cafeteria, implementing Farm to School programs and instructional gardens, conducting food-tasting activities, offering cooking experiences, and integrating NE into the core curricula:

The California Department of Education (CDE) Nutrition Services Division (NSD) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Nutrition Service (FNS) strongly encourage all California schools to offer an NE class or to integrate NE into the core subjects for grades PreK–12. Ideally, educators would teach NE as a separate subject to ensure that nutrition is taught in a sequential and comprehensive way. When nutrition is the focus, teachers can adequately prepare, schedule instructional time, work on skill-building and behavior change. Then, educators can reinforce NE in other content areas, giving children more consistent exposure to nutrition concepts and messages.

Each school, depending upon grade groups, requirements, and needs, will offer NE in a different way. There are a variety of ways to effectively incorporate NE into each school. NE can be enriched by expanding connections with (1) the cafeteria; (2) Farm to School programs and instructional gardens; (3) food-tasting activities; (4) cooking experiences; and (5) core curricula. NE lessons, paired with garden experiences, and taste-testing can help increase student participation in the Child Nutrition Programs (CNP)." [*Nutrition Education in California Schools - Healthy Eating & Nutrition Education (CA Dept of Education)*].





## Current Status in Sacramento County

Community feedback from the Sacramento Food System Assessment revealed a strong desire for culturally relevant nutrition, cooking, gardening, and agricultural education in underserved neighborhoods. There was also an emphasis on the importance of diverse educational methods to facilitate accessible and effective knowledge sharing. Furthermore, for some participants there was a desire for parent and youth education programming on nutrition and healthy grocery shopping. Finally, the negative impact of heavily processed foods was also raised as a concern during community engagement sessions.

Currently, Sacramento has several nutrition and food education programs serving the community:

- The Melanin Day School Academy has a program for youth to learn about African-American and Black culture that goes beyond what is commonly taught in schools. The program also teaches students about mental health and nutrition to help Black families heal and thrive.
- Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services (SFBFS) hosts classes through their Health and Nutrition department, teaching families how to incorporate healthy and nutritious foods into their diet. SFBFS also partners with other local agencies to distribute health and nutrition information to a wide array of partners.
- The Sacramento County Obesity Prevention Program (SCOPP)'s goal is to lower obesity rates in Sacramento County by increasing access to and consumption of healthy foods and beverages, reducing consumption of less healthy foods and beverages, and increasing physical activity. The program partners with community-based organizations and groups, including Health Education Council, Public Health Institute, Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services, school districts, and community colleges, and focuses on training, technical assistance, and education. The Food Literacy Center works with Sacramento youth to teach them the impact of their food choices on health, the environment, and the economy in a fun, approachable, and practical way.
- Yisrael Family Farms provides food and farm education focused on their farm site in Sacramento using workshops, classes, programs, and other methods, connecting with health and nutrition in a fun way.
- Alchemist Community Development Corporation runs food business education programs, including its Microenterprise Academy (AMA) and Alchemist Kitchen Incubator (AKIP), which help train, equip, and empower under-resourced entrepreneurs seeking to start their own food businesses.



- Luther Burbank High School offers an Urban Agriculture Academy that offers students opportunities to learn fundamental sustainable agriculture skill sets through hands-on experiential learning. Students also explore topics such as environmental justice, food justice, and health and nutrition.
- Soil Born Farms is an urban agriculture and education project that offers numerous experiential educational opportunities with the goal of making healthy, fresh, local food for all a reality. They have educational opportunities tailored to both youth and adults throughout the year, with topics ranging from food preservation to gardening.

There is also a wide range of community-based educational programming) as well as many informal ways that individuals and neighborhoods share food and agricultural knowledge - along with traditional medicine and cultural uses of food and herbs for overall well-being. Unfortunately, informal or cultural nutrition education is often not resourced or documented, as it happens on a hyper-localized level.

## Indicators

The following indicators are statements of broad condition change that would suggest progress toward the goal: *"Robust, non-traditional education opportunities about food and agriculture that are interactive, impactful, and intergenerational are available in all jurisdictions."*

Indicator 6.1: Nutrition education for children is culturally and linguistically relevant

Indicator 6.2: Availability of classes in gardening, farming, and cooking that are culturally and linguistically relevant for community members

Indicator 6.3: Classes and educational opportunities are distributed equitably across the County's urban, peri-urban, and rural areas

## Relevant Existing Data Sets

- Program data from CalFresh Healthy Living programs
- Program data from Women, Infants & Children (WIC) programs
- Program data from Master Gardener classes
- School district nutrition education







# Conclusion

The Sacramento Food System Assessment aims to lay the foundation for action toward a more equitable food system. The visions and goals outlined in the assessment represent the collective desires of hundreds of Sacramento County residents who participated in the community listening process. We are grateful for their participation, and for the partnership of so many organizations that helped create this assessment.

Moving forward, we are hopeful that this report can catalyze progress toward a Food Action Plan for Sacramento County. As part of the County's Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) process in 2024, there is an opportunity to embed the underlying vision and goals of the Assessment in that tangible, community-led process of defining health needs, setting priorities, and creating a plan for meeting them (CHIP is part of the national accreditation process for all public health departments). Sacramento's CHIP has a goal to "Promote access to and consumption of culturally relevant healthy foods through education, advocacy, and community engagement," and a sub-objective to "Reduce food insecurity from 11.7% to 9.0% in Sacramento County." We look forward to seeing the results of this bold collaboration.





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## APPENDIX A:

### Community and Partner Survey Questions

Based on established vision areas, the SFPC and partner organizations developed a scope of inquiry consisting of 37 questions. The 37 questions were designed to obtain categorized responses that address the four vision areas, respectively: A Food Economy that Produces Shared Prosperity (10 questions), Health and Well-being of All People and Communities (8 questions), Restorative Justice Across the Food System (9 questions), and Equitable, Diverse, Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (10 questions).

Recognizing the possibility that 37 questions asked at once could cause survey fatigue, the team set a maximum number of questions per session and tailored each set of questions based on the session's target audience. Many questions were repeated to ensure a broad pool of survey responses. The table below indicates which questions were asked during which session.

Table A1

| SESSION:<br>SURVEY QUESTION  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|
| RESTORATIVE JUSTICE  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |
| 1. What stops you from having locally grown food in your diet?   | * | * | * |   |   | * |   |   | * |    |    |
| 2. How does food help you to build community?  | * |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | * |    |    |
| 3. What do you think about when you buy food?  | * | * |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |
| 4. Many communities have experienced harmful outcomes like food deserts and food insecurity because of historic racism and discrimination. How can these communities be restored for the better? | * |   |   |   |   |   |   | * | * |    |    |
| 5. Use your imagination. What supportive programs might help you feel confident about the choices you make to feed yourself and your family?   | * | * |   |   |   |   |   |   | * |    |    |
| 6. How do you build community when you grow and harvest the food you need?   |   |   |   |   | * | * |   | * |   |    |    |
| 7. What do you think about when you throw food away?   |   |   |   |   | * | * |   |   |   |    |    |

| SESSION:<br>SURVEY QUESTION  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|
| 8. Split: How do you build community when you no longer need the food you have?  |   |   |   |   | * |   |   |   |   | *  | *  |
| 9. Split: How do you build community when you throw away food?   |   |   |   |   | * |   |   |   |   |    |    |
| <b>HEALTH and WELL BEING</b>   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |
| 1. What food options do you want to see in your neighborhood?  | * | * | * |   |   | * |   |   | * | *  | *  |
| 2. How is the health of your family affected by the food choices available in your neighborhood?   | * | * |   | * |   |   |   |   |   | *  | *  |
| 3. If you work in the Sacramento food system, how do your workplace conditions affect your health?   |   |   |   |   | * |   | * |   |   |    |    |
| 4. How can food businesses support the health and well-being of communities?   |   | * | * |   |   |   | * |   | * |    |    |
| 5. If you are a farmworker, what would you need for a better work environment?   |   |   |   |   |   |   | * |   |   |    |    |
| 6. If you are a food entrepreneur, what would you need for a better work environment?  |   |   |   |   |   |   | * |   |   |    |    |
| 7. If you are a food business owner, what would you need for a better work environment?  |   |   |   |   |   |   | * |   |   |    |    |
| 8. How can banks, credit unions, and other financial institutions support the health and well-being of food entrepreneurs and business owners? |   |   |   |   |   |   | * |   |   |    |    |
| <b>AGRICULTURAL EQUITY, DIVERSITY, and SUSTAINABILITY</b>  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |
| 1. Think about WHERE you get your food. Why do you GO TO GET food there instead of other places?   | * | * |   |   |   | * |   |   | * | *  | *  |
| 2. How does access to the internet, phone, or other channels of communication affect your food security?                                       | * |   |   |   |   | * | * |   |   | *  | *  |
| 3. Split: How do your thoughts on climate change, drought, and wildfire affect your food production?   |   |   |   |   |   |   | * |   |   |    |    |



| SESSION:<br>SURVEY QUESTION   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|
| 4. Split: How do your thoughts on climate change, drought, and wildfire affect your food consumption?   |   |   |   |   | * | * |   |   | * |    |    |
| 5. Split: How can food producers prioritize environmental sustainability specifically with how we manage food waste?  |   |   |   |   | * |   | * |   |   |    |    |
| 6. Split: How can food consumers prioritize environmental sustainability specifically with how we manage food waste?  |   |   |   |   | * |   |   |   |   | *  | *  |
| 7. If you are a food business/producer, where do you sell/distribute food?  |   |   |   |   |   |   | * |   |   |    |    |
| 8. If you are a food business/producer, think about where you sell/distribute food. Why do you sell/distribute your food there instead of other places?                                       |   |   |   |   |   |   | * |   |   |    |    |
| 9. Our vision is to build a food system that produces shared prosperity. How can producers with different business sizes, product types, locations, and growing methods be supported equally? |   |   |   |   | * |   | * |   |   |    |    |
| 10. How can the Sacramento County food system better support environmental sustainability?  |   |   |   |   | * |   |   |   |   | *  | *  |
| <b>SHARED ECONOMIC PROSPERITY</b>   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |
| 1. How can food business owners improve working conditions for their employees?   |   |   |   |   | * |   | * |   |   |    |    |
| 2. How can more people benefit from food that is grown, sold, and eaten in Sacramento County?   |   |   |   |   | * | * |   |   |   | *  |    |
| 3. Our vision is to build a food system that produces shared prosperity. What changes in the Sacramento County food system would help us get there?   |   | * |   |   | * | * |   |   |   |    |    |
| 4. Split: If you work in the Sacramento food system, what support do you need to advance your career?   |   | * |   |   |   |   | * |   |   |    |    |
| 5. Split: If you work in the Sacramento food system, what support do you need to improve working conditions?  |   | * |   |   |   |   | * |   |   |    |    |

| SESSION:<br>SURVEY QUESTION   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|
| 6. If you work in the Sacramento food system, what do you need to feel more economically secure?  |   |   |   |   | * |   | * |   |   |    |    |
| 7. Split: If you work in the Sacramento food system, how would owning land affect you?  |   |   |   |   | * |   |   | * | * |    |    |
| 8. Split: If you work in the Sacramento food system, how would owning a business affect you?  |   |   |   |   | * |   |   | * |   |    |    |
| 9. Our vision is to build a food system that produces shared prosperity. What kinds of financial investments are needed to help you benefit economically? |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | * |   |    |    |
| 10. If you are a food business/producer, what shifts have you made to survive COVID-19 and the economic downturn?   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | * | * |    |    |



## APPENDIX B: Example Survey Input

This table represents categorized concerns based on community listening sessions that received the ranking of #1 priority for each vision area

Table B1

| Survey Results identifying Priority 1 Areas of Concern  | Total Responses |
|---|-----------------|
| <b>Economic Prosperity</b>  | <b>54</b>       |
| Affordability of Healthy Food Options   | 7               |
| Create spaces for community knowledge and resource sharing for black and indigenous people.   | 11              |
| Ethical Labor Practices for all workers   | 3               |
| Non-Government Support  | 11              |
| Prioritize neighborhood self-sufficiency by supporting Black communities in growing their own food.   | 16              |
| Student Loan Forgiveness  | 6               |
| <b>Ag Equity Diversity &amp; Sustainability</b>   | <b>118</b>      |
| Affordability of food   | 3               |
| Decrease the distance between immigrant/refugee resettlement communities and culturally relevant, low-cost, convenient, organic, and healthy food options.                      | 41              |
| Designate specific funding streams to support environmental sustainability and land ownership for Black businesses in the food system.  | 11              |
| Diverse Education Methods   | 7               |
| Diversify neighborhood food supply by increasing the number of culturally relevant, healthy, organic, shopping options (i.e. garden deliveries, farmers' markets, supermarkets) | 21              |
| Ethical Labor Practices for Producers and Farm Workers  | 6               |
| Increase the availability of affordable fresh and organic options in neighborhoods that are locally produced.   | 18              |
| Increase the Amount of Money Allocated in Business Grants   | 7               |
| Quality of food   | 4               |



|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Health &amp; Well-Being</b>  | <b>138</b> |
| Convert vacant lands, front yards, and abandoned properties in food deserted neighborhoods into community-owned gardens, pop up farm stands, and farmers' markets.    | 17         |
| Create spaces for community knowledge and resource sharing.   | 10         |
| Decrease disease as well as physical and mental health ailments of immigrant/refugee resettlement communities by ensuring that culturally relevant food is available. | 39         |
| Farmers' markets & grocery stores located in communities  | 5          |
| <b>Financial Support to Reduce Anxiety</b>  | <b>14</b>  |
| Free and Reduced Priced Meals for Those in Need   | 8          |
| <b>Mental Health Support</b>  | <b>9</b>   |
| Prioritizing food access for vulnerable populations.  | 5          |
| Reducing the cost and barriers to fresh foods in indigenous and low-income communities  | 3          |
| Support culturally relevant community-based organizations to assist elders with their food access needs   | 9          |
| Support culturally relevant nutrition, cooking, and gardening educators in underserved neighborhoods.   | 10         |
| Supporting the community in sharing resources like mutual aid, transportation like Paratransit, and carpooling  | 9          |
| <b>Restorative Justice</b>  | <b>93</b>  |
| Access and education related to healthy food options  | 5          |
| Building Community Connections  | 6          |
| Gleaning - allowing for excess food to be shared for free   | 5          |
| improve neighborhood safety by supporting walking buddies programs  | 11         |
| Increase the availability of affordable and culturally/religious relevant halal and organic foods in immigrant and refugee resettlement communities.                  | 38         |
| More collaboration between businesses and communities to redistribute excess food   | 5          |
| Promote unity and cooperative economics in local economic policy by supporting Black people in collectively supporting each other's businesses.                       | 9          |
| Support the growth of entrepreneurs and businesses of color to employ others.   | 11         |
| Transfer corporate-owned land back to Indigenous tribes through thoughtful, time-conscious, and collaborative agreement for sustainable restoration and stewardship   | 3          |
| <b>Grand Total</b>  | <b>403</b> |