

## Local Policy Guide

In order to create a permanent change in the national food system; nonprofits, community stakeholders, and state & federal governments must commit to building more equitable distribution chains that support underserved producers and invest in innovative partnerships.



- It is important to pursue partnerships that promote the connection between regional farmers and community members.
- Equitable distribution is centered around the health and engagement of partnering agencies and the agency of recipients.
- Improved purchasing initiatives should value sustainable production practices and support historically underserved farmers.
- Promote actions that back farmers, reinvests in economies, and prioritizes community development.

Two key features that stabilize the agricultural economy and increase the accessibility of healthy foods are:

- 1) Resource/land ownership
- 2) Increased market access and skill development

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# Goals

## Objective Outline

The objective of the local policy guide is to create an applicable model that helps different kinds of organizations and institutions build upon their service missions to intentionally apply principles of food sovereignty and community empowerment. This guide assumes the terms “food sovereignty” and “community empowerment” are interchangeable, as you cannot have one without the other. Food sovereignty and community empowerment refers to the idea that an equitable food system is one that allows communities and its members to be self determinate and to control what they produce and consume in a way that is not only more ecologically sustainable but is capable of responding to their community’s needs. The goal is to give small farms and consumers the power to control their own agricultural economies and to be less reliant on an inadequate national food system.

## Key Goals

1. To invest in local economies through better purchasing practices and to promote principles of food sovereignty.
2. Support community farmers who are leaders in equitable and sustainable agricultural practices by providing economic and social opportunities.
3. Build systemic hunger relief that values local food production, nutrition, and sustainability. Create a food system that contributes to consumer agency and community independence by making production and distribution industries more equitable.
4. Contribute to organizations that provide resources and development programs aimed at addressing systemic inequities (i.e. providing education/job training and improving land and technology accessibility)
5. Create mutually beneficial partnerships between producers, food nonprofits, and recipients.



6. Establish purchasing policies that prioritize the health and wellness of our partners and recipients.

## Partnerships

### Purpose

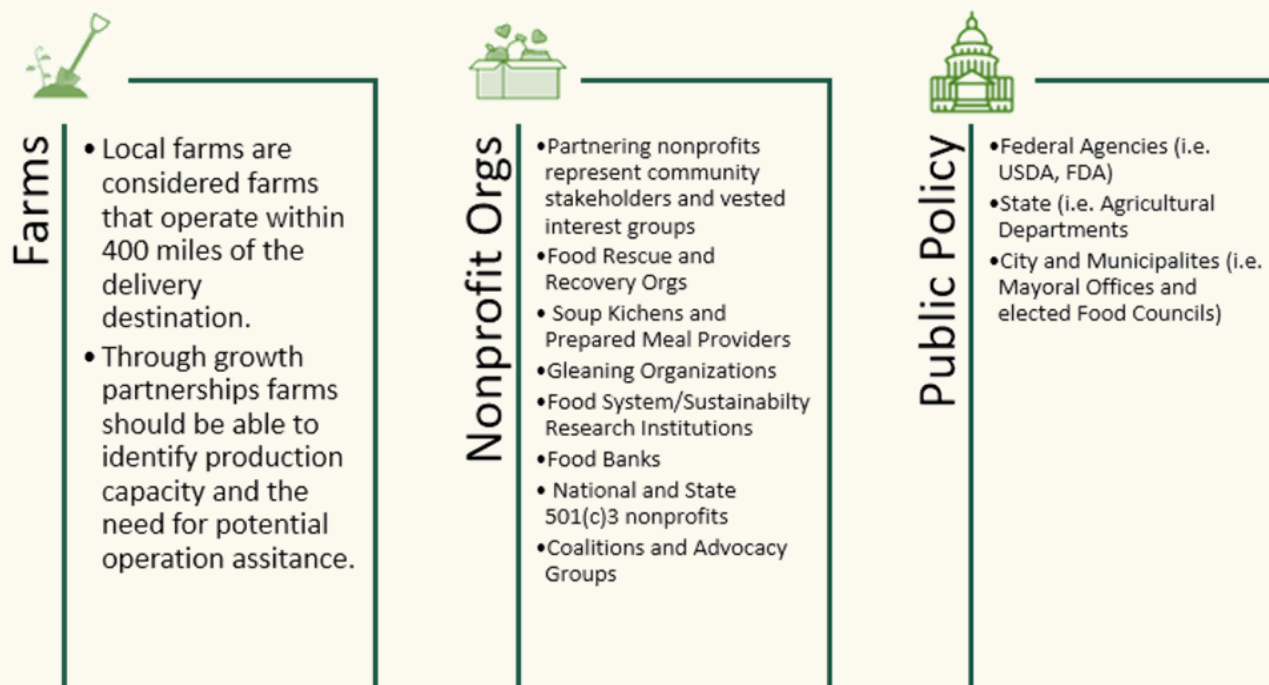
Closer economic and service relationships between community stakeholders and consumers can be strengthened by non-profit investment and all levels of government policy. If institutions build intentional and effective partnerships that seek to support and facilitate community growth, it would create a shift in what the food industry values. The current food system is built to protect large scale producers (who are oftentimes the biggest contributors to food waste, climate change, and unfair labor practices) and in doing this, the nationwide food structure exacerbates social inequities. Allowing the food system to prioritize regional production and distribution gives agricultural networks the opportunity to stabilize and empower agency. Stronger partnerships within food production would allow recipients to be less reliant on food assistance and for consumers to be more independent from the fragility of the current food industry. Furthermore, partnerships should be established to support organizations that contribute to education/job training, equitable funds/technology/information sharing, and resource reallocation as these services aim to address the circumstances around food inequities. Community empowerment and food sovereignty are one of the same, and in order to create systemic change in food insecurity then vested stakeholders across public and private sectors must invest in these principles.



## Mutual Growth Opportunities

The purpose of the local policy guide is to encourage creative and diverse collaborations that will allow partners to identify the potential need for capacity adjustments and will subsequently empower others to be better service organizations in a noncompete manner. In improving locally based initiatives each organization and/or institution should seek to increase their resource, information, and funds sharing. Adopting a local policy initiative allows organizations to create communal action through strategic communication and cooperation.

## Participants



## Roles

Farms: will produce, harvest, and package agricultural goods.



Nonprofits: will provide distribution networks, serve as connectors between producers and recipients, act as systems change advocates, provide main logistic coordination, and identify community development needs/opportunities.

Public Policy : continue to provide new grant/funding opportunities to service organizations, act as research institute or supporter, establish/enforce systemic policy changes.

## Logistics

The general terms of partner agreements will ensure that each organization will offer logistical support either through training, purchasing, transportation, or distribution (the application of which will be identified on an as-needs basis during partner discussions). The need for logistical details should be identified by collaborating farms and community organizations. Logistical details should list locations, hours of operations, and the potential need for equipment accommodations (like pallet jacks, forklifts, trucking, refrigeration, etc.)

Partners will also commit to be understanding and supportive of the communities they serve and the partners they engage with by applying best service and DEI standards. These standards will include the following:

1. Partners should agree to maintain diverse, equitable, and inclusive practices by committing to educating themselves and growing their community network. Partners should also foster a culture of open communication, understanding, and continuous learning with every organization and their recipients.
2. When needed each service partners will agree to enforce safe food handling and storage standards and make sure that:
  - I. Fresh fruits and vegetables will be kept at 32° - 55 ° F.



- II. Any meat, poultry, or eggs will be kept at 40 ° F or below.
- III. Refrigerated trucks will remain at 41 ° F or below.

## Outcomes

### Measurable Impact Metrics

We can use a wide variety of indicators to measure the economic and agricultural independence of empowered communities. If we create a change in the national food system then the hope would be to see a decrease in food assistance programs, the increased use of small farms, younger farmers, less need for agricultural subsidies and emergency funds, and less food waste along the production/supply chain.

A list of measurable impacts would be:

- A decrease in:
  1. SNAP and WIC applications/use
  2. Food Bank distribution event attendance
  3. Food services like soup kitchens and community pantries
  4. Emergency rescue of food waste
  5. Trucking emissions from shorter distribution chains
  6. Production yields (that farmers will not overproduce)
- A increase of:
  1. Smaller farms
  2. Younger farmers
  3. Small farm profitability

### Contribution to Potential Outcomes

With any social impact research, it is hard to capture the downstream effect of economic changes. It is important to note measurable metrics do not account for individuals who are food insecure and yet do not qualify for federal/state assistance programs; which creates a gap in statistical outcome reporting. The goal of changing



agricultural and distribution economies to prioritize smaller and more sustainable farming and distribution practices is to shift metric evaluations to place a higher value on decreased system outputs. Meaning, will be a sign of success and positive system change if farmers produced less and distributed at more local market spaces and if there was a decrease of food assistance applications/recipients. In order to create a permanent impact our system evaluations must be innovative and allow the food industry, non-profit partners, and state/federal government to shift impact measures to reevaluate what success actually looks like and to be more accurate in reflecting what it means to end hunger.

## Theory of Change

