GREATER CINCINNATI REGIONAL

STATE OF LOCAL FOOD

2018 Report Update

June 2019

Green Umbrella
REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY ALLIANCE
**Green Umbrella** is a non-profit organization working to improve the economic vitality and quality of life in the region around Cincinnati by maximizing the collective impact of individuals and organizations dedicated to environmental sustainability.

Green Umbrella facilitates collaboration among over 300 area non-profits, businesses, educational institutions, and governmental entities focused on the environmental aspects of sustainability. With its members, Green Umbrella aims to meet the environmental, social, and economic needs of today while preserving the ability of future generations to do the same. Green Umbrella is the “backbone organization” that helps all member organizations work better together to promote a more environmentally sustainable region.

The Green Umbrella Local Food Action Team brings together local farmers, distributors, farmers markets, cooperatives, community gardeners, community supported agriculture organizations, health professionals, restaurants, extension services, educational organizations, processors, and governmental entities to develop strategies to increase the demand for local foods, increase production, and identify new markets for local foods.

**Report Author:** Kristin Gangwer, Local Food Research Consultant

For additional information about this project, please contact Green Umbrella: 
5030 Oaklawn Drive, Cincinnati, OH, 45227 * info@greenumbrella.org * (513) 541-1538

Thank you to the members of the State of Local Food Update Planning Committee for their expertise, time, and support:

**Michaela Oldfield,** Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council  
**Robin Henderson,** Cincinnati Office of Environment & Sustainability

Green Umbrella also acknowledges the many community members and organizations whose contributions made this effort possible.

Cover photos: Top Left/Bottom Right -- Produce Perks Midwest, Top Right/Bottom Left – Our Harvest Cooperative
In 2013, the Green Umbrella Local Food Action team published “The State of Local Food in the Central Ohio River Valley,” a report that identified stakeholders in the regional food system, synthesized existing food-system research, and identified fourteen recommendations for action. Five years later, the Team decided it would be beneficial to catalogue and celebrate the progress that has been made on the 2013 report recommendations, to catalogue and synthesize any research that has been conducted since the 2013 report was published, and to identify updated recommendations for action.

Since 2013, significant progress has been made in the realms of distribution, consumption, and access with two food hubs now operating, two incubator kitchens supporting food artisans, and numerous year-round markets and food access programs launched. Strong support for community gardens continues to exist, and numerous agricultural training programs and higher-education offerings were created.

However, certain sectors of the local food system, like land preservation and access, have received less attention and many important initiatives currently lack funding. While institutional demand has grown markedly, the value chain to support those sales needs further development. And of the numerous food access programs founded in the past five years, all but one have since been discontinued. New year-round markets have also closed or struggle to attract enough customers to achieve sustainability.

On the research front, production-related research has focused on county-level measures of production, as well as the visualization of community-based food production. However, broader mapping and measurement of larger-scale agricultural production is still lacking. Since 2013, four independent efforts have documented the preferences, challenges, and lessons learned from regional institutional purchasing efforts. Much research has been conducted on healthy, local food consumption and access – spanning the categories of health, food insecurity and access, SNAP and incentive sales, points of local food consumption, food asset mapping, and local food markets. And extensive research continues to be conducted on healthy food access, with five studies measuring or mapping food access in some way in the last five years.

The documentation of progress made since 2013, interviews and surveys conducted with 39 food-system stakeholders, and a review of current research led to the creation of ten updated recommendations. The recommended projects and activities were selected in part because they would be well-served by collaborative efforts that can leverage expertise and generate positive impacts for numerous stakeholders. More detail on the following recommendations can be found in the Recommendations chapter.
2018 UPDATE RECOMMENDATIONS

PRODUCTION
*Improve Land Access for Farmers*
- Increase farmland preservation and implement other creative strategies to improve land accessibility

DISTRIBUTION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
*Support Institutional Purchasing*
- Build the institutional value chain by designing and implementing a producer training, coordination, and technical assistance program
- Hire an individual to coordinate institutional supply and demand

CONSUMPTION AND ACCESS
*Build Demand for Local Food*
- Increase nutrition and agriculture education offerings in public schools and improve coordination of existing programs
- Support cooking and nutrition education efforts for adults, particularly in areas with limited access to healthy food
- Implement a large-scale, long-term campaign aimed at driving behavior change that utilizes best practices, examples from other industries, and creative/fun/modern tools

*Increase Access to, and Affordability of, Healthy, Local Food*
- Evaluate and strengthen current food access programming and engage deeply with communities to increase access to healthy, culturally-appropriate foods
- Increase retail outlet and farmers’ market participation in nutrition incentive programs

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY
*Increase Food System Investment*
- Identify and cultivate new funders, increase coordination and impact of current funders, and engage with leadership of healthcare networks and other institutions who interface with the food system in order to increase food system investment

FOOD WASTE AND RESCUE
*Reduce Wasted Food*
- Scale up current food rescue efforts
# Executive Summary

**Cincinnati Regional Food System by the Numbers: 2013-2018**

## Production
- **50** farm interns/apprentices trained (2013-2018)
- **62+** students completed an agricultural major or certificate program (2013-2018)
- **104** community gardens and Cincinnati urban ag sites (2018)
- **306** vegetable farms in the 9-county region (2017)
- **875** vegetable acres harvested in the 9-county region (2017)

## Distribution & Infrastructure
- **$1,324,346** in sales via two food hubs (2018)
- **20** institutional customers purchasing from local food hubs (2018)
- **198** food businesses supported by incubator kitchens (2013-2018)
- **1** school district adopted the Good Food Purchasing Program (2019)
- **3** processors working with local fruits and vegetables (2019)

## Consumption & Access
- **$595,732** in Produce Perks redeemed statewide (2013-2018)
- **26** farmers’ markets accepting Federal food assistance programs (2018)
- **18** year-round farmers’ markets (2018)
- **89** restaurants sourcing local food (2018)
- **1,037,979** pounds distributed via Freestore Foodbank’s Produce Pop Ups (20-county region) (2018)

## Organizational Capacity
- **2,044** food system stakeholders identified (2016)
- **4** food system support positions created (2013-2019)
- **90+** schools with share tables (2019)
- **910,670** pounds of food rescued by La Soupe (2014-2019)
- **.324** pounds wasted on average per K-12 student per meal (2019)

*Data sources and detail available in Appendix C.*
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1: PRODUCTION</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2: DISTRIBUTION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3: CONSUMPTION AND ACCESS</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5: FOOD WASTE AND RECOVERY</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview/Survey Tool</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Subjects and Survey Respondents</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food System By the Numbers Data Sources</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

In 2013, the Green Umbrella Local Food Action team published “The State of Local Food in the Ohio River Valley,” a report that identified stakeholders in the regional food system, synthesized existing food-system research, and identified fourteen recommendations for action. By providing a shared vision and common goals for our food system, the 2013 Report fostered collaboration among stakeholders that created measurable impact and drove progress towards the Team’s goal of doubling the production and consumption of fruits and vegetables within our region by 2020.

Five years later, the Local Food Action Team decided it would be beneficial to document the work that has been done since the 2013 report was published and the impact that work has had on the local food system.

Thus the goal of this update is threefold:

- To catalogue and celebrate the progress that has been made on the 2013 report recommendations
- To identify and synthesize any research that has been conducted since the 2013 report was published
- To identify updated recommendations for action

Nationally, much has changed since 2013: a changing climate is increasingly unpredictable, food-shopping behaviors have trended sharply towards convenience, and a new Farm Bill was passed in 2018. Regionally, significant progress has been made in the realms of distribution, consumption, and access with two food hubs now operating, two incubator kitchens supporting food artisans, and numerous year-round markets and food access programs launched. Strong support for community gardens continues to exist, and numerous agricultural training programs and higher-education offerings were created.

However, certain sectors of the local food system, like land preservation and access, have received less attention and many important initiatives currently lack funding. While institutional demand has grown markedly, the value chain to support those sales needs further development. And of the numerous food access programs founded in the past five years, all but one have since been discontinued. New year-round markets have also closed or struggle to attract enough customers to achieve sustainability.

On the research front, production-related research has focused on county-level measures of production, as well as the visualization of community-based food production. However, broader mapping of larger-scale agricultural production is still lacking. Since 2013, four independent efforts documented the preferences, challenges, and lessons learned from regional institutional purchasing efforts. Much research has been conducted on healthy, local food consumption and access – spanning the categories of health, food insecurity and access, SNAP and incentive sales, points of local food consumption, food asset mapping, and local food markets. Extensive research continues to be conducted on healthy food access, with five studies measuring or mapping food access in some way.
For this report update, 12 key informant interviews were conducted and 27 food system stakeholders completed an electronic survey. (A comprehensive list of key informants and survey respondents, as well as the interview questionnaire/survey tool used, are included in Appendix A and B.) Information is included, when available, for the nine counties that comprise the Green Umbrella region: Ohio (Hamilton, Warren, Butler, Clermont), Indiana (Dearborn, Franklin), and Kentucky (Boone, Kenton, Campbell).

We hope this report can benefit all food system stakeholders by:

- Providing a shared vision and common goals for our community around transforming our food system
- Providing an opportunity to collaborate and partner within a network of local food system stakeholders
- Creating synergy and reducing redundancy in efforts
- Providing an opportunity to inspire leaders to champion food system efforts and projects
- Increasing awareness and support in our community for food system issues
- Supporting grant applications and leveraging of funds for project and planning efforts
- Promoting food system planning in our community and aligning with other regional plans
- Providing an opportunity for community recognition of stakeholder efforts
- Identifying relevant data-collection opportunities

We have a lot to celebrate! Impressive progress has been made in the past five years, yet there is still much to do. Only by working together can we create the food system we want – one that is humane, just, healthy, fair, equitable, and environmentally sustainable.
CHAPTER 1: PRODUCTION

The 2013 State of Local Food report presented information on regional food production and sales levels, challenges facing producers, and strategies for strengthening production, ultimately landing on the following recommendations:

2013 Production Recommendations:

| 1. Support Existing Local Growers | Provide technical assistance to growers  
Facilitate new educational opportunities  
Support land leasing or purchase for expanded production  
Support new production partnerships  
Increase farm labor pool  
Raise awareness about existing financial resources and develop new funding opportunities for growers and food-related businesses |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2. Develop New Growers and Other Food Businesses | Expand educational programming  
Support new farmer incubation programs that go beyond internships and/or classroom training  
Strengthen ties to existing business development programs  
Support land leasing or purchase for beginning production  
Develop start-up funding mechanism for new growers  
Create new community gardens and educate backyard growers |
| 3. Increase Local Food Production at All Levels | Support farm preservation and transfer  
Explore transition to specialty crops  
Support growers interested in extending the growing season or scaling up their operations  
Increase number of community gardens and backyard gardeners |

Production Highlights: 2013-2018

Successes: Since 2013, education and technical assistance for existing and beginning farmers has continued to develop through apprenticeships, non-profit programming, and higher-education offerings. Community and school gardens have received dedicated support through organizations like the Civic Garden Center and Turner Farm.

Opportunities for Growth: Nonprofit programs and apprenticeships that support existing and beginning farmers currently lack funding. Farmer support around land acquisition, labor, and financing has received limited attention. Relatedly, limited work has been done to increase preservation of agricultural land.
Research: Production-related research has focused on measures of production (land in farms, number of farms, vegetable acres, City-owned sites, number of urban ag and community garden sites, etc.), as well as the visualization of community-based food production. However, broader mapping of larger scale agricultural production is still lacking. According to the USDA’s 2017 Census of Agriculture, in 2017, vegetable farms represented 4.8% of all farms located in the nine-county study area. Since 2007, the number of vegetable farms in our region had increased from 270 to 306, and the average vegetable farm size had decreased 35% (from 4.38 acres to 2.86 acres) (USDA NASS 2007, 2017). (For a detailed review of Production-related research, see Chapter 6: Research.)

**Production By the Numbers: 2013-2018**

- 50 farm interns/apprentices trained (2013-2018)
- 62+ students completed an agricultural major or certificate program (2013-2018)
- 104 community gardens and Cincinnati urban ag sites (2018)
- 306 vegetable farms in the 9-county region (2017)
- 875 vegetable acres harvested in the 9-county region (2017)

*Data sources and detail available in Appendix C.*

**Production Progress on 2013 Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1: Support existing local growers through technical assistance, education, land acquisition, building the farm labor pool, and connecting food producers with financial resources**

**General Training and Technical Assistance**

Founded in 2015 with funding from Interact for Health, Cultivate! Ohio Valley (formerly Our Harvest Research & Education Institute) is a nonprofit with the mission to inspire, educate, and support Ohio Valley Farmers. Cultivate! strives to create a more vibrant and equitable food system by providing educational opportunities specific to the needs of current and future farmers in the Ohio Valley. Since 2015, Cultivate! has offered training opportunities for
existing farmers such as high tunnel construction, seed starting, advanced propagation, crop planning, organic certification, and more. The organization also works to facilitate resource sharing, group supply ordering, and social networking for farmers. They operate a farmer listserv and distribute a quarterly newsletter.

The Organic Association of Kentucky (OAK) is a non-profit, membership-based organization dedicated to improving the health of the environment and the citizens of Kentucky. OAK field days give farmers a chance to be "on the ground" with other farmers, academics, and other experts who have knowledge and experience with techniques, equipment methods, and additional resources that make sustainable and organic growing more successful. Through a matching grant with the USDA NRCS, OAK also provides “transition trainers,” one-on-one advisors who can coach farmers through their transition to become certified organic. Transition trainers help with paperwork, farm planning, resources and marketing. The service is free to OAK members.

The Ohio Ecological Food and Farms Association (OEFFA) was founded in 1979 and provides a variety of supportive services for existing farmers, including an annual conference, annual farm tour and workshop series, organic certification, and a statewide listserv that serves as a farmer-to-farmer communication platform.

Both local food hubs, Local Food Connection (LFC) and Our Harvest Cooperative, share information via email with their producer suppliers – connecting them with relevant resources and training opportunities.

The Cincinnati Permaculture Institute has the mission to educate individuals and organizations on Permaculture in order to catalyze a resilient culture in the Cincinnati Bioregion. Since 2008, over 150 people have been trained as Certified Permaculture Designers.

The Farm Bureau, which has chapters throughout Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio, is a membership-based organization that works to support the food and farm community. Chapters offer a variety of educational programs for farmers and hobbyists, including topics like raising chickens, container gardening, equipment use, soil fertility, and on-farm safety, among other topics. The Farm Bureau also provides a range of benefits for members, including insurance policies and leadership-development opportunities.

The Ohio State University, Purdue, and University of Kentucky Extension offices in our nine-county region offer education, technical assistance, and online resources for regional farmers on topics ranging from crop production, farm business management, estate planning, marketing, and farmland rental to soil testing, pest management, and season extension. The Warren County, OH office organizes the Southern Ohio Specialty Crop Conference each year. In 2014, Central State University in Wilberforce, OH was recognized as a land grant institution. CSU Extension operates in line with the rest of the Extension services around the country offering education and programming on 4-H, Agriculture & Natural Resources, and family & consumer sciences.

Soil & Water Conservation Districts throughout KY, OH, and IN work with landowners to provide education, outreach, and technical assistance around land conservation. Agricultural
programs support conservation easement planning, cover crop application, best management practices, and other general agricultural assistance.

The Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council has worked on production-related policy issues related to zoning, water access, and composting since 2016.

Note: Information about training and education related to food safety can be found in Chapter 2: Distribution and Infrastructure.

Connecting Producers with Financial Resources

Local Loans for Local Foods (LL4LF) is a Slow Money peer-to-peer lending network with the mission to connect people who have capital available to lend with local food enterprises that have the need for low-interest loans. LL4LF does not make loans – they work to get potential lenders and potential borrowers in the room together, where they can meet, hear each other and (hopefully) begin a longer-term relationship. Financial arrangements are made directly between the individual lender and the individual borrower. This volunteer-led group was active from 2013-2016, hosting more than ten networking events to connect local farmers and food producers with financial resources during that time; however, the effort has been on hiatus for the past few years.

The City of Cincinnati provides financial grants to new and existing agricultural producers working within the Cincinnati city limits. For Fiscal Year 2019, the City’s Office of Environment and Sustainability (using Cincinnati Urban Agriculture Program dollars) partnered with the City’s Department of Community and Economic Development (utilizing DCED’s CDBG-funded Vacant Lot Reutilization Program) and enhanced the funding for urban agriculture in the City. Existing sites were funded for $20,795 and 4 new sites were funded for $21,026 (Green Cincinnati Plan, 2017).

The Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (KCARD) is a non-profit organization established to strengthen agricultural and rural businesses in Kentucky. Their Agribusiness Grant Facilitation Program helps Kentucky agricultural businesses learn about, and apply for, funding by identifying funding options, explaining grant requirements, assisting with necessary registrations, and reviewing grant applications. They also help new businesses with business and marketing plans and feasibility studies, and existing businesses with business plan review, marketing analysis, management and operations analysis, and recordkeeping assistance.

OEFFA has partnered with Kiva, an online fundraising platform, and is able to serve as a Trustee to endorse zero percent interest loan requests from individual borrowers to Kiva’s community of lenders. The purpose of this program is to help entrepreneurs access the financial services and lower fees and interest rates they need to make borrowing affordable, and to cultivate community between borrowers and lenders.

The USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) operates in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana and offers two programs – Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) – that help producers protect the environment
while promoting agriculture. EQIP funding can be received for a variety of conservation practices, including minimizing erosion, constructing high tunnels, managing forest land, improving pasture, conserving wildlife habitat, reducing energy use, etc. The CSP program provides financial incentive payments for the implementation of approved conservation practices. Additional funds in both programs are available for beginning, limited-resource, and socially-disadvantaged farmers.

**Nontraditional Workforce Partners**

The Camp Washington Urban Farm (CWUF) was created in 2013 with the mission to increase access to locally-produced food for residents of Camp Washington, a food desert. The farm is about 2.5 acres in size, not all of it farmed, and the organizers plan on harvesting between 1,500 and 3,000 pounds of produce in 2019. CWUF recently applied for a USDA grant to provide a 100' x 30' high hoop house to extend their growing season. They have a partnership with River City Correctional Center, which is located next door: RCCC provides work crews to help with farming efforts, allows for the harvest of water from their garage roof for use on the farm, and serves as a backup source of water via hose in case of drought.

The Newport Community Gardens project was started in 2014 by the Brighton Center and the Doug and Shelia Bray Foundation, with support from Sidestreams. Eight different community garden plots were built throughout Newport, ranging in size from two to 90 garden beds. From 2014-2017, Sidestreams helped supervise and teach basic gardening skills to inmates at the Campbell County Detention Center (CCDC) production garden. Time spent learning and working in the garden was applied to an inmate work-release program. During that time, nearly 3,500 pounds of produce was grown at the CCDC garden and sold to the Neighborhood Farmer’s Market of Northern Kentucky, local restaurants, and individuals. An additional 2,000 pounds of fresh produce was donated to the Brighton Center, food pantries, and individuals.

**Recommendation 2: Develop new growers and other food businesses through education, apprenticeship/internship programs, and other beginning farmer support**

**Apprenticeship/Internship Programs**

From 2015-2017, Cultivate! Ohio Valley operated a specialty crop apprenticeship program that provided 2,000 hours of paid, on-farm training, as well as tuition for a series of three vegetable production courses at Cincinnati State. During that time, Cultivate! graduated two apprentices, who now continue to work full-time in farming. The organization lost funding for the apprenticeship program in 2017, so it has been on hiatus since that time. During winter/spring 2016-2018, Cultivate! operated an entrepreneurial seed-starting program called CincySprouts, which offered beginning farmers the opportunity to learn valuable planning, propagation, sales, and marketing skills.

The Food & Growers Association (FGA) in Southeastern Indiana was formed out of the clear connection between community health improvement, sustainable agriculture, and a viable
local economy in Southeastern Indiana. With the support of Interact for Health, and in partnership with Ivy Tech Community College, in 2017 the FGA developed the Southeastern Indiana Farmer Training Initiative (SIFTI), a pilot program designed to prepare local farmers to grow enough specialty crops for Southeastern Indiana institutions. The program featured two legs: coursework/curriculum developed by Ivy Tech and a mentorship program connecting the students with experienced farmers. With Interact for Health’s shift away from food-related funding, SIFTI was put on hold for 2018 and beyond while FGA works to identify new funding sources and refine the program to better meet the diverse needs of area farmers/students.

OEFFA’s Begin Farming Program provides aspiring and early career farmers (those farming 10 years or less) the support they need to understand what it takes to get into farming and grow their businesses. The goal of the program is to increase the number of successful sustainable and organic farmers in Ohio. Program offerings include an apprenticeship program, a farm vision course, a production information line, beginning farmer field days, a beginning farmer Facebook group, the Heartland Farm Beginnings Training Course, a mentoring program, and educational offerings at the annual conference.

That Guy’s Family Farm in Clarksville, OH operates an internship program, hiring two farm interns each growing season who are involved in all aspects of the farm operation. Interns are paid a stipend, and housing and a daily lunch are provided.

Each year, Turner Farm hires five full-time, seasonal (April – October) garden crew interns who are interested in pursuing a career in agriculture. They are involved in every aspect of vegetable production, from soil preparation to farmers’ markets. Up to ten hours per month is spent working with livestock, learning basic animal husbandry. Turner Farm provides four to five hours per week of "classroom" instruction in addition to field instruction, and monthly visits to other farms provide an opportunity to experience different farming techniques. All apprentices are asked to choose a specialization for the season in one of the following areas: Greenhouse Management, Mushroom Production, Farmers Market Sales and Management, On-Farm Market Management, Floriculture, and CSA & Volunteer Management.

The current incarnation of Turner Farm’s Veteran to Farmer Training Program started in 2013 and is designed to provide the training and resources necessary to help military veterans transition into successful careers in agriculture. This paid, full-time training opportunity lasts two years and takes place at Turner Farm and the farm’s VFTP incubator garden. First-year VFTP trainees complete a season of hands-on work and classroom education with the Turner Farm crop production staff and interns. Second-year trainees are responsible for running their own small business at the VFTP incubator garden. This includes crop planning, marketing, and sales. Six veterans have completed the program since 2013.

High School and Higher Education Offerings

In 2013, Cincinnati State Community & Technical College began offering its Sustainable Agriculture Management Certificate Program, which leads to career opportunities in specialty crop growing operations, farmers’ markets, and other urban agriculture initiatives. The
program is designed for completion in one year (three semesters) as a full-time student. Students are involved in continuous, hands-on learning at a local farm throughout the program. Coursework includes soil and plant science, specialty crop production, and an introduction to raising small animals, along with the financial, marketing, and management skills needed to successfully run an agriculture business. The program has graduated more than 20 students since its inception.

In 2014, Xavier created its Land, Farming, and Community undergraduate degree program. Coursework covers the agroecology, biology, history, economics, and philosophy of food and farming. Two students have graduated from the program since 2014, with two more set to graduate in May 2019.

The University of Cincinnati’s College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning (DAAP) offers a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture, as well as a Certificate in Urban Agriculture. The certificate in urban agriculture responds to contemporary issues in horticulture, urban design, livability and quality of life, food security, and sustainability. Since 2013, approximately 55 students have graduated with Horticulture degrees, and 40 students have received the certificate in urban agriculture (from a variety of majors).

Miami University’s Institute for Food is a Provost Interdisciplinary Innovation project to engage the Miami University community around issues of food, health, and sustainable agriculture. The Institute for Food operates a sustainable farm on the historic Austin-Magie Farm and Mill District, which serves as a living laboratory for experiential learning, collaborative research, and community engagement, and also cultivates extensive partnerships with community organizations both in Oxford and the Greater Cincinnati area. Miami will begin offering a Food Systems & Food Studies co-major in Fall 2019. The Food Systems & Food Studies co-major will provide an interdisciplinary examination of food, exploring the complex path food follows from farm to fork and beyond. Combining courses on agricultural ecology, nutrition, health, and culture with real-world experiences, students will develop a broad understanding of food from a biological, economic, political, social, cultural, and environmental perspective.

The Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Biosciences program at James N. Gamble Montessori engages students in grades 7-12 in hands-on, project-based learning that challenges their minds, bodies, and spirits. The school has a Land Lab that includes an orchard, herb garden, community garden, and memorial garden and is managing a woodland habitat. Courses range from introductory agriculture and natural resources classes to food safety, business management, and food marketing and research.

Similarly, Clark Montessori offers a Horticulture pathway that is part of Cincinnati Public Schools’ Agricultural and Environmental Systems career path.

**Recommendation 3: Increase local food production at all levels by supporting farm preservation and transfer, exploring transition to specialty crops, supporting season extension measures, and increasing number of community gardens and backyard gardeners**
Land Preservation and Access

Cardinal Land Conservancy has over 45 years of collective experience protecting lands in southwest Ohio, holding 34 easements covering 4,551 acres in six counties. These sites include both farmland and nature preserves. Cardinal Land Conservancy protects agricultural, scenic and historic values on Turner and Meshewa Farms in Indian Hill. Cardinal is very proud of the farmers they have worked with in the past and hopes to continue to be a good partner for people doing this essential work and who want to preserve their family lands and the rural character of Ohio.

OEFFA hosts workshops on farm succession and land transition planning and also informally collects information to help connect aspiring and beginning farmers and others looking for land with established farmers with land to lease or to transition to new ownership. A list of landowners and land seekers can be found online.

The Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council developed an agriculture land preservation policy recommendation in 2017, which encourages the preservation of agricultural land, as well as the creation of land banks and trusts.

A series of conversations about agricultural land preservation in Cincinnati took place in 2016 and 2017, centered around the purchase and protection of the Kettler farm property on Winton Road and potential creation of an agricultural corridor from the Wooden Shoe Hollow up to Bahr Farm on North Bend Road. Additionally, interested stakeholders convened a conversation about creating an agritourism district in Cincinnati in March 2019.

Indoor Growing

Founded in 2013, Waterfields is a social mission-driven year-round grower of premium microgreens, edible flowers, and other specialty produce.

80 Acres Farms is an indoor farming company providing customers locally-grown, just-picked leafy greens, microgreens, and vine crops. The company delivers high quality and nutritious products at an affordable price. 80 Acres distributes to major national grocers, local retailers, restaurants, and food service companies from its facilities in Ohio, Arkansas, North Carolina and Alabama.

Community Gardens

For over thirty years, the Civic Garden Center's Community Gardens Program has been working with neighborhood residents and community-based organizations to create community gardens and provide technical support and advanced training in growing fruits and vegetables using organic practices. A core component of the Community Gardens Program is the Community Garden Development Training (CGDT) program. The Civic Garden Center currently supports 38 gardens. They are also working to build a Community of Community Gardens, and to develop a HUB Garden Program, whereby well-run, strong gardens will host cooking and growing education programming for other nearby gardens. This
allows education to take place in the gardens, and facilitates the sharing of best practices among community gardens.

The Turner Farm Community Garden Program is committed to connecting people to their food through new collaborative methods and innovative urban land use with an emphasis on sustainable biological agricultural practices, experiential learning, and civic engagement. Turner Farm operates four community gardens -- East End Community Garden (2011-present), Winton Terrace Community Garden (2015-present), Franciscan Community Garden (2009-present), and the East Price Hill Community Garden (2017-present).

500 Gardens, a project of Sidestreams, has the goal of giving Madisonville residents and businesses the chance to grow their own vegetables successfully, for a minimal initial investment. Participants receive a 4x8 foot raised garden bed, are taught basic gardening skills, and are connected with someone to coach them through their first season. Since the project began in 2014, 509 gardens have been built. Similarly, 500 Chickens is dedicated to strengthening Madisonville’s food sources, one chicken keeper at a time.

Covington’s Center for Great Neighborhoods supports two community gardens. Riddle Yates Garden was established in the early 1980s and expanded in 2015-2016, and currently has 20 plots utilized by Covington community members. Redden’s Gardens is a resident-led community garden whose mission is to create a dedicated green haven for vegetable gardening and community knowledge sharing while also promoting and showcasing sustainable practices in action. The garden seeks to be an example of how to garden in the urban core by providing resources, space, community, and education to Covington’s diverse community while serving as a source of local fresh produce for the community. Last year, The Center was able to give the Redden’s Garden a $3500 grant for a mural, along with fruit bearing trees, and vegetable producing plants whose yield is free for the taking.

The Zone 06 Urban Ag Network in Walnut Hills has built five gardens on vacant lots since 2013.

Giving Trees installs edible fruit and nuts plants to create food forests throughout the Cincinnati Tri-State region. Edible forest gardens are perennial, polycultural, and orchard crop systems that will come into full production 3-7 years from their initial plantings. Giving Trees provides trees, bushes, and the necessary planting materials to its partners -- farms, churches, schools, municipalities, community and civic organizations, private landholders, and participating groups – for the purposes of growing edible forest gardens. In 2017 and 2018 combined, 466 perennial trees and bushes were planted.

The Northern Kentucky Health Department Edible City Initiative in Grant County planted fruit trees and berry bushes in a local park and school during the summer of 2018.

Tikkun Farm is an urban farm in the neighborhood of Mt. Healthy in Cincinnati. It hopes to be a place of healing, repair and restoration cultivated through meaningful work and spiritual practices for the restoration of the individual, the community, and creation.
CHAPTER 2: DISTRIBUTION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The 2013 State of Local Food report presented information on the current status of institutional and retail purchasing and distribution, as well as the needs of buyers and distributors, ultimately landing on the following three recommendations:

2013 Distribution Recommendations:

1. **Strengthen Regional Distribution of Local Food**
   - Increase aggregation of local foods
   - Build on existing distribution infrastructure
   - Provide technical assistance and education for growers

2. **Increase Institutional, Retail, and Restaurant Purchasing of Local Food**
   - Facilitate new partnerships
   - Develop incentives for local purchasing
   - Provide technical assistance and education

3. **Construct a Certified, Shared-Use Kitchen**
   - Support current feasibility analysis and planning efforts
   - Provide infrastructure and support for both new businesses and those interested in scaling up

Distribution and Infrastructure Highlights: 2013-2018

**Successes:** Substantial progress was made in all three recommendation areas due to the development of two food hubs and two incubator kitchens, as well as a sizeable USDA grant to support institutional purchasing.

**Opportunities for Growth:** Food hubs need additional support to help farmers prepare for the institutional marketplace. When actualized, institutional demand has the potential to far exceed current regional supply of local food. Establishing a pricing model that works for institutions and local farmers remains a challenge.

**Research:** Since 2013, four independent efforts have documented the preferences, challenges, and lessons learned from regional institutional purchasing efforts. From these studies, we know that food service directors experience challenges finding enough farmers with the appropriate food safety certifications, physical kitchen constraints, and financial and staff time limitations. K-12 school food service directors in the region are interested in purchasing local, with the products in highest demand being apples (unprocessed), cucumbers (unprocessed), peppers (unprocessed), tomatoes (unprocessed), and lettuce (chopped). (For a detailed review of Distribution and Infrastructure-related research, see Chapter 6: Research.)
**Distribution and Infrastructure By the Numbers: 2013-2018**

- $1,324,346 in sales via two food hubs (2018)
- 20 institutional customers purchasing from local food hubs (2018)
- 198 food businesses supported by incubator kitchens (2013-2018)
- 1 school district adopted the Good Food Purchasing Program (2019)
- 3 processors working with local fruits and vegetables (2018)

*Data sources and detail available in Appendix C.*

### Distribution and Infrastructure Progress on 2013 Recommendations

**Recommendation 1: Strengthen regional distribution of local food by increasing aggregation, building on existing distribution infrastructure, and providing education and technical assistance for growers**

#### Aggregation

**Local Food Connection (LFC)** (formerly Ohio Valley Food Connection) began operating in June 2015, with the goal of increasing the amount of local food purchased in our region by bridging the logistical gap between buyers and suppliers. LFC has created an online marketplace for restaurants, institutions, and households, and provides the logistics of aggregation and delivery. LFC currently serves the markets of Cincinnati, Louisville, Lexington, and Dayton – working with 400 restaurants and institutions, 2,000 households, and 80 farmers and food artisans.

**Our Harvest Cooperative (OHC)** is a worker-owned cooperative farm and food hub that was founded in 2012 as part of the Cincinnati Union Co-op Initiative (CUCI). Since 2013, Our Harvest has increased its vegetable production to 11.5 acres, grown its team from 3 to 11 workers, and built its direct-to-consumer, wholesale, and food access sales channels. The co-op now has five worker owners. Our Harvest partners with other local farmers and food producers to supply its Weekly Harvest Box program, which is available at 15 pickup locations throughout the Greater Cincinnati region.
The two food hubs now share a distribution space inside the Incubator Kitchen Collective in Newport, KY. By sharing space, the two businesses are able to share infrastructure like refrigeration and packing space to keep costs low.

**Processing Infrastructure**

**Creation Gardens** is a wholesale food supplier and distributor to over 4,500 restaurants and chefs founded in Louisville, KY in 1987 – now operating in nine markets in KY, TN, OH, and IN. In 2014 they expanded to Cincinnati and purchased Speiss Specialty Foods (2014), Mattingly Foods (2015), ReFresh produce (2016), and Joe Lasita & Sons (2018). The purchase of ReFresh gave Creation Gardens access to a specialized fruit and vegetable processing operation, which they renamed Prep Kitchen. In 2018, they built a state of the art facility in Cincinnati to house those operations. Creation Gardens works with Cincinnati Public Schools to process the produce items that CPS does not do in-house.

**KHI Foods** is a Kentucky-based food processing company that focuses on the manufacture of value-added shelf stable and IQF frozen foods purchased from local and regional farmers. Currently they process tomatoes, mushrooms, peppers, sorghum, honey, and butternut squash. They have forged processing partnerships with Cincinnati Public Schools, Jefferson County Public Schools, Kenton County Public Schools, Miami University, Norwood Schools, Pompilio’s Restaurant, Madison County Schools (KY), Montgomery County Schools (KY), Jessamine County Public Schools (KY), Covington Independent, Daviess County (KY), Diocese of Lexington, and St Peter and Paul (Lexington). KHI also private labels products for local farmers and farm markets. KHI processed more than 34,000 pounds of produce from Kentucky farmers in 2018.

**Old Souls Farms** in St. Paris, OH recently built a state-of-the art processing facility for fresh-cut produce. They have the ability to customize based on desired cut and package size, and can produce up to 100 bags/minute or 5,000 pounds/hour.

**Grower Education: Food Safety**

In 2017, the Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council’s Distribution & Procurement Workgroup partnered with the Ohio Department of Agriculture to host food safety farm tours for ODA inspectors and farmers alike. These farm tours took place at the Miami Institute for Food and Our Harvest Cooperative – giving ODA inspectors a chance to learn about the realities of farm production in advance of starting on-farm inspections for the Food Safety Modernization Act and also allowing farmers a chance to learn what to expect during food safety inspections.

The Ohio Valley Food Hub Project, a USDA-funded collaboration between Green Umbrella, Local Food Connection, and Our Harvest Cooperative, creates the opportunity for community collaboration and works to provide a convenient and efficient local food distribution solution for both farmers and institutions. The project addresses the need for better market opportunities for local farms and better access to fresh, healthy, local food for consumers in the Greater Cincinnati region. A key element of the project is food safety training and
technical assistance for regional farmers. In the first year of grant activities, 22 farmers from 16 farms in Ohio and Kentucky received food safety training and eight became GAP certified.

In 2017 and 2018, the Ohio Department of Agriculture Division of Food Safety offered a series of produce safety meet & greets and trainings. The meet & greets were an opportunity for farmers to better understand the upcoming produce regulations and get answers to any questions they had before training began. The ODA also continues to offer a variety of food safety trainings for farmers needing to get prepared for the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). Similarly, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture conducts voluntary FSMA On-Farm Readiness Reviews upon request, and the University of Kentucky’s Food Connection facilitates one-on-one consultation and group education classes on federal and private food safety regulations, which prepares producers to successfully complete third-party food safety audits and federal food safety certifications. The Indiana State Department of Health has a produce safety team available to assist with managing food safety risks and to help produce growers comply with new federal regulations around fresh produce. ISDH, in conjunction with Purdue Extension and Indiana State Department of Agriculture experts, is available for on-farm readiness reviews of farming operations.

**Recommendation 2: Increase institutional, retail, and restaurant purchasing of local food by facilitating new partnerships, developing incentives for local purchasing, and providing technical assistance and education for buyers**

**Institutional Purchasing**

As mentioned previously, in 2017, Green Umbrella, in partnership with Local Food Connection and Our Harvest Cooperative, received a grant through the USDA’s Local Food Promotion Program. The purpose of the Ohio Valley Food Hub Project is to bring together two food hubs in the region to increase producers’ sales, increase the number of GAP certified or “Produce Rule” compliant farms and food hubs, and increase the purchasing of locally-produced agricultural products by institutions. Through this project, a consultant was hired to drive institutional sales for the two food hubs. In the first year of grant activities, $60,313 in new institutional sales were generated by 20 institutions.

Institutional sales successes include:
- A local salad bar pilot with the University of Kentucky: six Kentucky farms are working on the contract, supplying lettuce and other fruits and vegetables for the salad bar through the food hubs. This model has been expanded to include the University of Louisville and will potentially expand to other campuses.
- The purchase of 36 acres of Ohio-grown green and purple asparagus that is being processed locally and sold to Cincinnati Public Schools. Columbus City Schools also purchased one meal’s worth of green asparagus for its May Ohio Days program.
- Cincinnati Public Schools purchased Jonathan, Gala, Fuji and Golden Delicious apples for their students in October 2018, December 2018, and January 2019.
- Sales to almost 20 school districts since 2018, with a total of 30 school districts in the pipeline.
Margaret Mary Hospital in Batesville, IN purchases from local farmers each growing season. Purchases since 2013 have totaled $14,561 and have primarily been from Michaela Farm and Lobenstein Farm. In addition to local purchasing for their cafeteria, Margaret Mary is also working at a systemic level to improve community health. They organize an annual local meal for employees, host a farmers’ market in their parking lot every Wednesday, work as consultants to restaurants looking to offer healthier menu options, coordinate eight school gardens, and partner with food pantries to offer dietician-led tastings and bags of local food.

Other healthcare networks around the region have also supported local and healthy food efforts in a variety of ways, including:

- Tri-Health sponsors the Healthy Harvest Mobile Market
- Mercy Health held a farmers’ market at their headquarters in Bond Hill in 2016 and 2017 and partnered with Our Harvest Cooperative to offer the Weekly Harvest Box Program to employees
- Mercy Health is partnering with Produce Perks Midwest on their Produce Prescription Program (PRx) at Sayler Park School in 2019
- Cincinnati Children’s started offering the Our Harvest Cooperative Weekly Harvest Box program to employees in 2018
- UC Health started offering the OHC Weekly Harvest Box program to employees in 2017
- UC Center for Integrative Health partners with Turner Farm to educate students about food as medicine

In 2019, the Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council is working to compile a toolkit to inform and engage healthcare networks around local food systems work. A healthy foods and healthcare symposium is planned for Fall 2019.

K-12

The aforementioned Ohio Valley Food Hub Project has clarified the needs and barriers for K-12 schools in purchasing local foods. Interest from the schools is high; however, additional infrastructure, systems, and policy support will allow them to more easily purchase local products on an ongoing basis. The identification of existing barriers led a working group consisting of Ohio Valley Food Hub Project staff, the Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council, Cincinnati Public Schools, and other food system stakeholders to write a USDA Farm-to-School planning grant application in December 2018.

One notable K-12 success of the Ohio Valley Food Hub Project was Farm-to-School Month 2018. Thirteen schools in OH and KY participated by including local products on breakfast and lunch menus and offering tastings to students. In all, activities generated $12,700 in sales for local producers. Local products included apples, basil, lettuce, peppers, squash, kale, and potatoes, among others. Food Service Directors who participated in the program noted that students loved trying the new fruits and vegetables, and that it was helpful to have good information about where the products came from (farmer profiles).

The Ohio Valley Food Hub project has been progressing in conjunction with local organizing for the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP). The GFPP provides a metric-based, flexible framework that encourages large institutions to direct their buying power toward five core
values: local economies, environmental sustainability, valued workforce, animal welfare, and nutrition.

On January 28th 2019, the Cincinnati School Board unanimously voted in favor of a resolution adopting the Good Food Purchasing Program in Cincinnati public schools – the result of a two and a half year process led by the Cincinnati Interfaith Workers Center/Good Food Cincy Coalition, with strategic support from the Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council.

The adoption of the GFPP builds on Cincinnati Public Schools’ ongoing work to source from local and women/minority-owned businesses. Before adopting the GFPP, CPS defined local as grown/produced in Ohio or an adjoining state. Local purchasing efforts prior to adoption of the GFPP included incorporating a local snack into the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program, Ohio Proud menu days, and an all-local menu in October 2018. That menu included KHI salsa made from Ohio tomatoes and Ohio apples from the local food hubs, among other items. Milk is regularly purchased from Reiter Dairy. CPS is working to increase their local produce purchasing in part by shifting their bid process. In the past, produce was included as part of the annual bid process for all food. This new process splits produce out into a separate bid, which will be for one year with two years renewable. The goal of this three-year bid is to allow more flexibility for planning and working with farmers.

In Kentucky, the K-VIP program, funded by the Kentucky Agriculture Development Board, covers half the cost of Kentucky-grown produce purchased directly from Kentucky farmers for school summer food service programs. Summer feeding and after school meal programs recognized by the Kentucky Department of Education are eligible for K-VIP funding.

Kentucky also started operating the Chefs in Schools program in 2017. The Chefs in Schools program utilizes professional chefs to help Kentucky schools enhance their food offerings and use more local foods. The program aims to reach all Kentucky schools participating in the National School Lunch Program, increase support of the Farm-to-School movement, and reduce hunger in Kentucky. Funding for the Chefs in Schools program is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service and Kentucky Department of Education School and Community Nutrition.

In 2017 and 2018, Eat Healthy NKY hosted a series of three farm-to-school workshops aimed at educating teachers, food service directors, school garden coordinators, and others about building an active farm-to-school program in the cafeteria, classroom, and community. They also organized the Farm-to-School Challenge in October 2018. Fifteen schools participated by serving at least one serving of local produce and providing one farm-to-school educational activity. The challenge will be repeated in October 2019.

New Retail Models

The Center for Closing the Health Gap DoRight! Corner Store Initiative worked directly with corner-store owners to provide support and resources in order for the owners to introduce healthier options in their stores. Our Harvest Cooperative held numerous conversations with
CCHG around distributing produce to their corner stores, and attempted a small pilot distribution system in 2015 with limited success.

In 2014, The Center for Great Neighborhoods and their Plan4Health Partners (The NKY Health Department, OKI, and Kenton County Planning and Development Services) piloted a healthy corner store program in four corner stores located in food insecure neighborhoods of Covington. Each corner store received up to $10,000 in infrastructure, marketing, and programmatic support. Corner store owners were given open air refrigerators for storing fresh produce, freezers for storing frozen produce, dry shelving for fruits, and more.

The Healthy Harvest Mobile Market (HHMM), presented by TriHealth, is a mobile grocery store bringing fresh, healthy, affordable food to Greater Cincinnati communities. The market began operation in 2016 and as of November 2018 was serving 10 communities (two stops per day on weekdays). The HHMM accepts both SNAP and Produce Perks. In fiscal year 2016-2017, the HHMM had total sales of $37,542.32 and distributed ~32,000 pounds of food. Twenty-seven percent of purchases were made with SNAP or Produce Perks via 488 individuals.

Founded in 2016, Liberty Farm Market is located in Liberty Township, north of Cincinnati. Its offerings are provided by cooperative partners – from organic, high-quality grass-fed beef from Grassland Gaze, to produce from Just Farmin’, to all-natural vitamins and supplements from Sandy’s Health and Wellness, Liberty Farm Market is striving to make healthy eating easier.

Harvest Market opened in Milford, OH in 2017 and sells fresh produce, locally sourced products, and various other healthy living and organic foods.

Clifton Market opened as a consumer-owned cooperative in 2017. After struggling financially, co-op members ultimately voted in November 2018 to pursue the sale of the co-op to a new (private) owner.

Education and Technical Assistance for Buyers

Local Food Connection provides a “cheat sheet” for potential buyers that outlines which crops can be expected in which seasons, and what the production timeline is for those crops, so that buyers can better understand the need for advanced planning.

Chefs Collaborative is a national nonprofit network with a mission to inspire, educate, and celebrate chefs and food professionals building a better food system. The Ohio River Valley chapter of Chefs Collaborative organizes educational and social events for consumers and chefs alike.

Recommendation 3: Construct a certified, shared-use kitchen with support services for new businesses and those interested in scaling up
The Incubator Kitchen Collective (IKC) opened their first incubator kitchen in Northern Kentucky in September 2013. In 2016, they moved from their original 4k square foot space in Covington into their current 10k square foot space in Newport. Since inception, they have supported over 100 food entrepreneurs, with 15 incubating out to their own spaces. In addition to commercial kitchen space, IKC has offered support classes on topics like marketing, accounting, and photography. In 2016, IKC opened a second facility, The Hatchery, which is a small space ideal for businesses that are just getting started. Also in 2016, Local Food Connection began operating their food hub out of the Incubator Kitchen Collective’s Newport location, with Our Harvest Cooperative joining them in 2018.

Findlay Kitchen, a $3.1 million and 8k square foot project, opened in April of 2016. Findlay Kitchen is a food business incubator helping entrepreneurs start, grow, and incubate their businesses. The kitchen offers affordable licensed commissary space via 11 kitchens that can be rented by the hour. It also provides storage space and wrap-around business support services -- classes, workshops, mentorship, connections to partner organizations for other resources, and access to exclusive sales channels. From April 2016-December 2018, 98 businesses went through program, 78% of which were women or minority-owned businesses. Seventy entrepreneurs are currently active at the kitchen. Findlay Kitchen’s goal is to continue to make sure they can send out vetted, successful businesses, with owners who have a solid foundation in business. Sometimes that looks like a successful brick and mortar business, other times it means someone has a chance to test their concept and explore a business model and decides they don’t want to proceed – both are considered successes.

In March 2019, Findlay Market announced its newest venture to support food entrepreneurs. Findlay Launch is a storefront accelerator program that allows early-stage food-related businesses crucial mentorship, industry education, and a short-term lease in an open, operating, fully built-out storefront. Findlay Launch is designed to provide entrepreneurs the space and support to get to their needed proof of concept more quickly, or to fail fast.

The Center for Great Neighborhoods’ FreshLo Chef Fellowship is a program for home chefs who are making culturally-inspired food and who want to start a food business but don’t have the money/business support to take the plunge into doing it fulltime. With a particular focus on immigrants and refugees, the Center leads entrepreneurs through business classes and then helps them try out their businesses on the Westside of Covington before they decide on a final location. Based on language skills and business ability, they connect the home chefs with someone teaching business classes or place them with a mentor as they get their pilot location up and running. The first cohort was made up of 10 chefs representing seven businesses; the second cohort is seven chefs representing seven businesses.
CHAPTER 3: CONSUMPTION AND ACCESS

The 2013 State of Local Food report presented information on health measures, food insecurity, and food-access mapping efforts, ultimately landing on the following recommendations:

**2013 Consumption and Access Recommendations:**

| 1. Increase SNAP/WIC Purchases of Fresh, Local Fruits and Vegetables | Increase SNAP/WIC acceptance at area farmers’ markets  
Increase redemption of benefits at farmers’ markets  
Facilitate use of SNAP benefits for CSA programs and other creative arrangements  
Increase availability of fresh fruits and vegetables at SNAP-authorized retailers  
Minimize transportation barriers |
|---|---|
| 2. Increase Availability of Local Foods in All Parts of the Community | Increase year-round markets for local products  
Increase healthy, local produce in corner stores and other ‘fringe’ retailers  
Institute and strengthen innovative markets and strategies  
Increase local purchases by existing food buyers (schools, grocery stores, corner stores, etc.)  
Increase provision of healthy, local fruits and vegetables through food pantries and other emergency food providers  
Support ongoing efforts to incentivize healthy food retail in areas of low access |
| 3. Enhance Educational Opportunities for Local Consumers | Provide education at food access points  
Teach basic growing skills for backyard or community gardening  
Teach basic nutrition and cooking skills  
Increase education at schools and childcare centers |
| 4. Conduct an Outreach Campaign to Increase Consumption of Local Food | Develop and implement local food media campaign  
Strengthen support resources for participants |

Consumption and Access Highlights: 2013-2018

**Successes:** Numerous programs aimed at increasing access to healthy, local food were implemented during the last five years, and from those efforts, many lessons have been learned. SNAP sales at farmers’ markets increased markedly, in part due to the creation of the Produce Perks program.

**Opportunities for Growth:** Of the food access programs that were started during this period, only one remains in operation: the Healthy Harvest Mobile Market. New year-round markets have also closed or struggle to attract enough customers to achieve sustainability. For example, Dirt: A Modern Market, the all-local storefront at Findlay Market, was both opened
and closed during this period. Numerous education programs exist, but coordination of programming is lacking.

Research Highlight: Much research has been conducted in the past six years related to healthy, local food consumption and access – spanning the categories of health, food insecurity and access, SNAP and incentive sales, points of local food consumption, food asset mapping, and local food markets. Extensive research continues to be conducted on healthy food access, with five studies measuring or mapping food access in some way. Food insecurity rates in the nine-county region range from 9.5% (Warren County, OH) to 17.8% (Hamilton County, OH) (Feeding America, 2016). (For a detailed review of Consumption and Access-related research, see Chapter 6: Research.)

Consumption and Access By the Numbers: 2013-2018

- 26 farmers’ markets accepting Federal food assistance programs (SNAP, WIC, SFMNP) (2018)
- 18 year-round farmers’ markets (2018)
- 89 restaurants sourcing local food (2018)
- 1,037,979 pounds distributed via Freestore Foodbank’s Produce Pop Ups - 20-county region (2018)

*Data sources and detail available in Appendix C.

Consumption and Access Progress on 2013 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Increase SNAP/WIC purchases of fresh, local fruits and vegetables by increasing acceptance and usage at area farmers’ markets, facilitating use of SNAP benefits for CSA programs and other creative arrangements, increasing the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables at SNAP-authorized retailers, and minimizing transportation barriers to healthy food outlets.
SNAP, WIC, and Nutrition Incentive Programs at Farmers’ Markets

Produce Perks, Ohio’s nutrition incentive program, began through public-private partnership at a handful of Cincinnati markets in 2014. Produce Perks empowers SNAP recipients to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables from Ohio farmers and grocery-retailers across the state. Providing a $1-for-$1 match for shoppers using SNAP/EBT to buy healthy produce, Produce Perks increases affordable access to healthy foods for 1.5 million Ohioans. In 2017, Produce Perks Midwest became an independent 501c3 nonprofit, coordinating the Produce Perks program statewide. In 2018, Produce Perks Midwest received a $2.27 million USDA FINI award to expand the reach and scope of Produce Perks.

In 2018, Produce Perks Midwest also piloted a Produce Prescription Program (PRx) at two school-based health centers within Cincinnati Public Schools: Roberts Paideia Academy and Ethel Taylor Academy. Twenty-eight patients and their families were enrolled in the program, which lasted for six months and consisted of monthly provider visits, prescriptions redeemable for free fruits and vegetables, health data collection, and nutrition education. The PRx prescriptions were redeemable at any participating Produce Perks site. 61% of participating patients increased their daily consumption of vegetables, 57% of patients decreased their consumption of chips per week, and 57% of patients decreased their consumption of sugary drinks per day. Eleven percent of families reported increased food security over the program. In 2019, PPM has plans to expand the PRx program to three new communities in Cincinnati, Dayton, and Canton, OH.

The WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) is a program that benefits both WIC participants and farmers. In the program, WIC participants are given four $5 coupons with which to purchase fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs from authorized farmers at farmers’ markets and farm stands. During fiscal year 2017, Ohio received $447,916 in federal funding, which allowed 24,990 participants to receive farmers’ market benefits. In all, 296 farmers, 23 markets, and 134 farm stands were authorized in 61 counties. The Hamilton County WIC office hosts three WIC farmers’ markets at their office location each summer, where WIC recipients can utilize their coupons to shop from local farmers. The Northern Kentucky Health Department distributes coupons at area farmers’ markets and also holds pop-up markets in the parking lot of some clinics in late July/August.

Findlay Market proper had seen decreases in low-income OTR residents visiting the market due to displacement and neighborhood gentrification, so they began making a concerted effort to balance welcoming new customers with preserving customers who have been living in the neighborhood for generations. After implementing canvassing and promotions activities targeted at neighborhood residents, they saw a 30% increase in SNAP and incentives redemption from 2014-2018.

SNAP for CSA’s and Other Models

As previously mentioned, the Healthy Harvest Mobile Market (HHMM), presented by TriHealth, is a mobile grocery store bringing fresh, healthy, affordable food to Greater Cincinnati communities. The market began operation in 2016 and as of November 2018 was serving 10 communities (two stops per day on week days). The HHMM accepts both SNAP and Produce Perks. In fiscal year 2016-2017, the HHMM had total sales of $37,542.32 and
distributed ~32,000 pounds of food. Twenty-seven percent of purchases were made with SNAP or Produce Perks via 488 individuals.

In 2015, with funding from Interact for Health, Our Harvest Cooperative began distributing food to communities with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables. The original vision was a modified CSA box (the Produce Perks Harvest Box); however, after testing that model it was determined that customers wanted more choice. From that, a new distribution model, Harvest Day, was created. The Harvest Day model was based on partnerships with community-based anchor institutions and allowed individuals to purchase fresh, local produce at wholesale prices. From 2015-2017, Our Harvest distributed produce via a variety of partner organizations, including the Brighton Center (NKY), Peaslee Neighborhood Center, Working in Neighborhoods, Evanston Recreation Center, Elm Street Clinic, Gabriel’s Place, Healthy Harvest Mobile Market, Findlay Market Farmstands, Northside Farmers’ Market, Lettuce Eat Well Farmers Market, and Walnut Hills. In 2018, Our Harvest operated one Harvest Day site at Working in Neighborhoods. Our Harvest also operates an annual on-farm market for bulk greens (collards, kale, cabbage sprouts, mustard, and turnip greens) sales to low-income seniors living in College Hill and beyond.

The Findlay Market Farmstand Program, which was funded through a USDA grant, had the goal of increasing the availability of healthy, local food in communities where food access was a challenge. The Farmstand program was implemented in three food desert neighborhoods starting in 2015: Evanston, Price Hill, and Walnut Hills. In each community, a shipping container was outfitted as a marketplace, stocked with local produce and other products, and opened for business one day per week. Challenges included finding community partners to get the word out, building community ownership of the program, and pricing. In year two of programming, HHMM and Our Harvest’s Harvest Day came about and had better infrastructure for sourcing, aggregating, etc. The Corporation for Findlay Market ultimately made the decision to end the program in 2018.

In 2016, the Brighton Center in Newport, KY received a USDA Farmers’ Market Promotion Program grant to develop a farmstand program for the individuals who utilize their services. The Center operated four markets at their Clothing Closet, Two Rivers, Bright Days, and Boone County Public Library locations. Staff partnered with other organizations like Crigger Farm and Our Harvest Cooperative to provide produce and other local products. The program was discontinued after the grant period ended in 2017.

The Madisonville Garden Market is a collaboration between Sidestreams and Lighthouse Community School (LCS), developed to increase healthy food access in the community and teach people where food comes from. The market accepts SNAP benefits and Produce Perks. The market sells produce and eggs all raised on site by youth and volunteers, serving as a job-training program for youth who gain experience in growing, customer service, and sales.

Fruits and Veg at SNAP Retailers

In 2018, Produce Perks expanded to include independently-owned grocery retailers who accept SNAP. Produce Perks is now accepted in 15 retail locations across the state, including Madison’s at Findlay Market.
Note: Healthy corner store initiatives are described in Chapter 2: Distribution and Infrastructure, as well as later in this chapter.

Transportation Barriers

The HHMM and other community-based food access programs described above were designed, in part, to address transportation barriers to healthy food. Additionally, a handful of pilot projects have been developed to specifically address this issue.

In 2016, Northside Farmers’ Market conducted a transportation pilot aimed at decreasing barriers to market attendance for low-income and transportation-limited community members. A bus was hired to make a 15-minute loop, stopping at key community destinations identified by community partners. The market bus was promoted through door hangers and market bags containing route information. The pilot met with limited success, in part due to the type of bus used (a yellow school bus) and minimal bus signage, which limited visual recognition and awareness of the program. Organizers also noted that engaging more partners who worked with the target audience might have improved program participation.

Food Forest is a startup currently in development that has the goal of allowing people to order supermarket priced food through their mobile device for free pickup at a convenient neighborhood location. Food Forest plans to offer 1000 SKUs, and the ability to pay with SNAP. A pilot will begin in Walnut Hills in Spring 2019.

A 2019 People’s Liberty-funded project, Freshmen will be a community delivery service that uses minimal technology and offers grocery pickup to Avondale residents limited by resources, ie: access to healthy food, reliable transportation and technology.

Recommendation 2: Increase availability of local foods in all parts of the community by increasing year-round markets for local products and supporting healthy, local produce in corner stores, other ‘fringe’ retailers, and emergency food providers. Support ongoing efforts to incentivize healthy food retail in areas of low access.

Year-Round Markets

In 2015, Findlay Market launched Dirt: A Modern Market, a storefront carrying exclusively local products. Envisioned as a way for farmers to be able to sell their products without having to be present, Dirt carried local produce, packaged goods, and prepared foods. In 2017, feeling that the need for a year-round local storefront was being met through other venues, Findlay market closed the Dirt store.

Findlay Market also operated Pop-Up Markets, which were a wellness initiative that brought a miniature version of Findlay Market to corporations, hospitals, and other institutions once a week. The program ran until 2018.
Founded in 2016, Liberty Farm Market is located in Liberty Township, north of Cincinnati. Its offerings are provided by cooperative partners – from organic, high-quality grass-fed beef from Grassland Gaze, to produce from Just Farmin', to all-natural vitamins and supplements from Sandy's Health and Wellness, Liberty Farm Market is striving to make healthy eating easier.

Local Food Connection operates a year-round online marketplace for households to purchase local food, with 10 pick-up locations around the Greater Cincinnati area.

Our Harvest Cooperative operates a year-round Community Supported Agriculture program with 15 pick-up locations around the Greater Cincinnati area. Both programs include local produce, eggs, meat, and other local products.

Harvest Market opened in Milford, OH in 2017 and sells fresh produce, locally sourced products, and various other healthy living and organic foods.

Clifton Market opened as a consumer-owned cooperative in 2017. After struggling financially, co-op members ultimately voted in November 2018 to pursue the sale of the co-op to a new (private) owner.

Through the Hamilton County Public Health WeThrive! program, 15 communities worked on strategies related to food in some way. Some projects included:

- Cheviot
  - Expanded the St. Vincent DePaul community garden at St. Vincent de Tours
  - Created a “healthy eating on a budget” resource to give out to the community, listing locations/resources to help residents access healthy foods
  - Explored adding a community garden that is accessible to all people, even those with disabilities
- Reading
  - Started the Little Free Pantry
  - Piloted a farmers’ market and will continue it in 2019
  - Reading/Lockland Presbyterian church worked with La Soupe to offer cooking classes to kids at their location
- Woodlawn
  - Planted a community garden in 2018 and will continue it this year
  - Started a gardening club
- Winton Woods
  - Winton Woods Schools launched the Nutrition is the Mission summer food bus for kids in 2018
- Addyston
  - Planned a community garden for kids
  - Partnered with Three Rivers Area Ministries on a food pantry
- Forest Park, North College Hill, and Whitewater all held cooking classes with OSU extension
- Forest Park
  - Worked with Our Harvest to offer Harvest Day boxes to residents
  - Will be doing a Produce Pop Up with Freestore in May 2019
• Montgomery
  o Began accepting SNAP at the farmers’ market
  o Farmers’ market extended its season into December
  o Offered more healthy options at their pool concession stand
• Arlington Heights
  o Developed a community garden with help from a grant
  o Offered healthier options at their annual Easter Egg Hunt
• Anderson
  o Transitioned its farmers’ market from township-run to vendor-run
• Evendale
  o Improved healthy food offerings at their pool concession stand
• Lockland
  o Worked with Our Harvest to explore the Harvest Day program at a local church
• Mt Healthy
  o Began offering water and healthy(er) snacks at their community movie nights and soccer concession stands
  o Mt. Healthy schools have offered free produce bags at various school events thanks to Freestore Foodbank
  o Is starting a farmers’ market in June
• Lincoln Heights
  o Offers mobile pantry days for residents via Freestore Foodbank
  o Fanci’s Mini Mart opened
• St. Bernard
  o Is exploring starting a farmers’ market

Corner Stores

The Center for Closing the Health Gap DoRight! Corner Store Initiative worked directly with corner-store owners to provide support and resources in order for the owners to introduce healthier options in their stores.

In 2014, The Center for Great Neighborhoods and their Plan4Health Partners (The NKY Health Department, OKI, and PDS) piloted a healthy corner store program in four corner stores located in food insecure neighborhoods of Covington. Each corner store received up to $10,000 in infrastructure, marketing, and programmatic support. Corner-store owners were given open-air refrigerators for storing fresh produce, freezers for storing frozen produce, dry shelving for fruits, and more. Plan4Health also initiated a Healthy Bucks program for elementary-aged school children to grab a healthy snack at any of the participating stores – over 800 healthy snacks were redeemed.

Emergency Food

Founded in 2014, La Soupe bridges the gap between food waste and hunger by using a chef-based model to rescue perishable food, transform it into delicious and nutritious meals, and share it with the food insecure and other community members. Since inception, La Soupe has rescued 910,670 pounds of food by partnering with Crosset, Kroger, Jungle Jim’s,
SugarCreek, and multiple local farmers to rescue over-ordered or “ugly” produce. 545,558 servings have been donated to agency partners like schools, community groups, pantries, and more. 7,907 gallons of soup have been produced by local chefs via La Soupe’s bucket brigade – all of which are donated. Originally located on Round Bottom Rd., La Soupe will be moving into a new space in Walnut Hills in 2019. This new space will also include a front-of-house cooking school. Since formation, La Soupe has transitioned from solely providing soups to also creating pan meals and snack packs. La Soupe also operates the Cincy Gives a Crock program, which operates 8-week classes in five different locations (usually schools, sometimes churches).

Since 2017, the Freestore Foodbank has placed a renewed focus on increasing its distribution of fresh produce, with the goal of increasing produce distribution by over a million pounds in their 2017-2018 fiscal year. They planned to reach this goal by increasing the amount of produce distributed by partner food pantries and offering mobile produce pantries to partners lacking facilities to offer regular produce distribution. Part of this effort to increase produce distribution is achieved through the Freestore’s Produce Pop Up program. Produce Pop Ups bring a variety fresh fruits and vegetables, along with the option to add other items such as bread, to communities in need. These free of charge, one-day “Pop Ups” provide valuable access to fresh items and can be hosted by community organizations, churches, and/or schools. In 2018, the Freestore held 464 Produce Pop Ups across their 20-county region, distributing 1,037,979 pounds of produce.

The Freestore also uses pop-up produce mobiles to deliver fresh fruits and vegetables directly to school sites in order to reach children and their families. School Pantry pop-up produce mobiles distribute up to 20 pounds of produce per family. This is especially important for School Pantry sites without refrigeration. Some School Pantry sites are planning to offer these pop-ups monthly; others will request them in conjunction with a specific event, like parent-teacher conferences or arts night.

Churches Active in Northside (CAIN) offers a choice pantry encourages fresh produce and nutritional choices. Through their partnership with Northside Farmers’ Market and Apple Street Market, CAIN has offered community dinners, tastings, budget recipes, and education to pantry shoppers and community members.

Glean & Share was a pilot program conducted in 2018, led by VITALITY Cincinnati and Our Harvest Cooperative, funded by Green Umbrella’s Cincy Save the Food Fund, and supported by the Society of St. Andrew. The program consisted of one training session and six on-farm Glean and Share events that resulted in 900 pounds of swiss chard, kale, blueberries, and tomatoes being harvested by 25 gleaners. Fresh farm produce was shared with 14 locations in seven communities, which were spread throughout four counties. In 2019, the Society of St. Andrew decided to officially establish a presence in SW Ohio and will be hiring someone to lead gleaning efforts in the region going forward.

Feeding Kentucky operates the Farms to Food Banks program. In 2018, 349 farmers from 64 counties in Kentucky sold surplus portions of their crops, as well as seconds, to the Farms to Food Banks program.
Healthy Food Retail in Areas of Low Access

When it opens, Apple Street Market will be a full service grocery store located in the former Save-A-Lot building in Northside (4145 Apple St.). Organizing for the market began in 2014. In early 2019, Apple Street Market hit multiple funding roadblocks, and the community is now conducting a fundraising campaign to determine if the project will be able to move forward.

With the closing of the Walnut Hills Kroger in 2017, the Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation (WHRF) has worked with community partners to identify ways to increase access to healthy foods for community members. They have engaged community members via public meetings, interviews, etc. and have piloted a variety of food distribution models, including: the Healthy Harvest Mobile Market, the Findlay Farmstand Program, Our Harvest’s Harvest Day, and healthy-food distribution to a corner store. WHRF currently has an open RFP seeking a grocery operator for the neighborhood.

Recommendation 3: Enhance educational opportunities for local consumers by providing education at food access points, teaching gardening, cooking, and nutrition skills, and increasing education at schools and childcare centers

Education at Food Access Points

Both the Civic Garden Center and Turner Farm community garden programs are working to incorporate healthy cooking programming into their community garden work.

Regional farmers’ markets offer a range of cooking demos and educational programming geared towards informing market shoppers about ways to use their market purchases.

In partnership with St Francis Seraph Ministries, Cooking for the Family offers a 5-week, hands-on culinary program where parents learn how to cook healthy and affordable meals for their family using locally-grown produce. Each student learns eight different cooking skills, creates a full meal to enjoy during class, and receives fresh produce to take home. Each recipe taught can serve a healthy meal to a family of four for under $10. At the end of the five weeks, if the student attends four of the classes, they also receive a cooking equipment kit (chef’s knife, knife sharpener, cutting board, cast iron skillet, reusable shopping bag, and Produce Perks Incentive card) to help participants get started cooking healthfully and affordably. Cooking for the Family has partnered with food access programs like the Healthy Harvest Mobile Market to offer classes to residents of communities where the mobile market stops.

SNAP-Ed is a free nutrition education program serving participants and low-income individuals eligible to receive SNAP benefits or other means-tested Federal assistance programs throughout Ohio. Snap-Ed disseminates educational information through public service announcements, basic food and nutrition demonstrations, newsletters, fact sheets, individual consultations, and group educational sessions with displays and videotapes. Educators use curriculum materials selected for the audience’s unique diversity.
In the Field partnered with Madisonville community organizations to run the Madisonville Cooks program in 2017, offering culinary education for adults and youth at the Lighthouse Community School (site of the Madisonville Garden Market).

Gabriel’s Place, located in the Avondale neighborhood of Cincinnati, operates a community garden, offers free community meals through the Share A Meal program, and maintains a community kitchen offering culinary training.

Culinary Education

Tablespoon Cooking Co. teaches home cooks of all skill levels how to cook good food through hands-on cooking classes and culinary events.

The Learning Kitchen in West Chester, OH offers hands-on cooking classes for all skill levels, using seasonal, local produce when possible.

The Turner Farm Teaching Kitchen offers cooking classes and a state-of-the-art learning experience where chefs and other food and wellness educators make sustainability and mindfulness into a delicious and edifying experience. Built in a renovated 100-year-old, two-story barn, cooking classes in the kitchen offer space for a chef to work with as many as eight different two-person teams at a time. Additionally, the space features closed-circuit TV, with two cameras capturing the lecture for an enhanced learning environment for 50 guests. The Teaching Kitchen was built in consultation with the Culinary Institute of American and is intended for cooking classes geared toward using fresh-grown ingredients in such a way that promotes bodily health and mental well-being. It is also a regular host of the University of Cincinnati Center for Integrative Health and Wellness to teach medical students and other health professionals valuable nutrition information, culinary skills, and self-care practices.

The Cincinnati VA’s Healthy Teaching Kitchen was created for veterans interested in learning about general healthy eating and meal preparation. The Healthy Teaching Kitchen offers an interactive cooking group led by a Register Dietitian Nutritionist that includes six sessions, hands-on cooking experience, and healthy recipes geared towards weight management.

Local Food Education

In 2018, the Lloyd Library hosted an exhibit exploring gardens from the 1600’s to the present. As part of the exhibit, the library hosted a series of educational events on topics ranging from hot peppers and food deserts, to container gardening, permaculture, and garden tours.

Numerous regional organizations – including OEFFA, Northern Kentucky Conservation Districts, and the Food and Growers Association in Indiana – offer farm tour series intended to get people out onto farms so that they can better understand where their food comes from. Similarly, Butler County Farm Day, organized by Butler County Soil and Water Conservation District and OSU Extension, serves as a way to educate Butler County residents about farm life and agricultural operations.
Regional farmers’ markets offer a range of cooking demos and educational programming geared towards informing market shoppers about ways to use their market purchases.

The Talk Local series is a monthly online article series hosted by the CORV Local Food Guide with the goal of bringing a wide range of informational, research, persuasive, and opinion pieces related to agriculture and food to the public.

Slow Food Cincinnati’s mission is to promote good, clean, and fair food for all in the Greater Cincinnati region. Slow Food Cincinnati awards the Snail of Approval to those exceptional producers, purveyors, and artisans who contribute to the quality, authenticity, and sustainability of food in Cincinnati. Since 2013, nine farms, eight food artisans, nine restaurants, and two organizations have received the Snail of Approval. Slow Food also engages consumers and builds demand for local food through events.

The Organic Association of Kentucky works with partners to help consumers understand the benefits of eating organic food and to increase access to organic foods, through consumer-oriented outreach and education programs, and a workplace wellness CSA.

Farm-to-School

Hamilton County ESC is operating a Farm to Family program in coordination with Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District, with funding from the state of Ohio and the Hamilton County Farm Bureau.

All County Extension offices (OSU, Purdue, University of Kentucky, Central State) operate a 4-H program, a non-formal educational, youth development program offered to individuals age five and in kindergarten to age 19. Ohio 4-H youth development reaches more than 240,000 youth each year – helping kids “learn by doing” through hands-on activities. Though not all 4-H activities are agriculturally focused, many are – leading youth through projects from livestock raising to beekeeping.

The Lighthouse Community School Urban Ag program was born out of a partnership with Lighthouse Community School (LCS) and Sidestreams. Sidestreams provides materials for building projects, seeds, soil, and starts for their garden. They also help coordinate and train volunteers to supplement student labor. In class, students learn how to start plants from seed and are able to sell their plants for a small profit gaining hands-on agribusiness related education. Students learn the basics of planting and harvesting, and caring for chickens. The class also incorporates planting to beautify the surrounding area and occasional cooking with vegetables from the garden.

The Greenacres Agriculture Education Program offers programming for K-12 students, but the majority of visitors are K-5. They tailor programs to teacher requests and the standards being taught. In general, they try to tie students into what is happening seasonally on the farm with their garden production and livestock departments -- for example, they might chit potatoes, harvest late peppers, feed alfalfa in the winter to cows, plant sunflowers, or pull chickweed to take to the chickens. In the fall, they might process and dry popcorn, pick beans, or check on worm tubs inside. Lessons also focus on preparing soil (for example, sheet mulching) and making compost.
The Civic Garden Center School Garden Program (CGC) offers educational programming for K-12 students within the I-275 loop. Lessons are seasonal, outdoor, hands-on and Ohio Revised Science standards-based gardening lessons. They also offer free School Garden Teacher Workshops bimonthly on the second Thursday at CGC.

Granny’s Garden School provides garden education programming for Grades 1-4 within Loveland, OH schools. They also offer curriculum that meets CORE standards on their website.

MetroParks of Butler County offers agriculture-related programming for students from Pre-School to Grade 5. Many different hourly programs are offered, but the three most aligned with farm-to-school are: 1) Pizza Parts (investigate where food comes from through songs, games, sensory activities, and imagination; learn the life cycle of plants from seed to plant to plate; plant a seed to grow a part of a pizza), 2) Busy Bees (explore the world of pollinators and pretend to be a beekeeper working with a beehive; learn what plants are pollinated that humans eat and drink), and 3) Calling All Farm Hands (recognize different examples of farms, farm animals, and their uses; compare adult to baby farm animals and recognize their feed; learn farm skills through wheelbarrow races, games, and live animal demonstrations).

Sunrock Farm offer school tours for Pre-K to High School students. Their program is designed to deepen children's understanding and feelings for nature by hands-on experiences such as planting seeds, milking a goat, holding baby chicks, and hand-feeding sheep. The Friends of Sunrock Farm Scholarship Fund provides partial funding to qualifying schools. School tours are two to four hours long, but may be tailored to each group's needs. Sunrock can also "bring the farm" to schools.

Gorman Heritage Farm has a mission to educate about agriculture, nutrition, sustainability and the environment. Gorman is a 122-acre working farm that grows local vegetables for a CSA program and sells eggs, chicken, pork, beef, turkey, and honey. This working farm is a campus for their education programs, with over 9,000 children visiting in 2018 through school field trips, special events, summer camp, and other education programs. Gorman offers the Farm in your Classroom program for Pre-K-High School students with experiences that include cooking/tasting fresh produce, eating the rainbow, planting seeds, learning parts of a plant, meeting composting worms, meeting a chicken, meeting a rabbit, dissecting an egg, hatching chicks, and starting a school garden. On-farm school field trips are also offered, with age-appropriate programming that supports Ohio learning standards.

Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District offers programming for Pre K-High School students within Hamilton County. Classroom Programs for Pre K-8 include: Composting 101 and Food is a Valuable Resource. Classroom Programs for Jr. High/High School include: Preventing Wasted Food, Your Future Depends on It!, and Composting: Why and How?

The Eat Healthy Challenge is a school-wide campaign appropriate for elementary schools (Pre-K-8th grade students) and includes school staff as well. During the week-long challenge, students and staff use a tracking chart to reach a goal of eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables plus another goal, or getting in 30 minutes of exercise daily. Winning students, staff, and classes at each participating school win prizes from local sponsors and
Recommendation 4: Conduct an outreach campaign to increase consumption of local food

The 10% Shift Campaign, in which people pledge to shift 10% of their food budget to purchase local food, was started by the Green Umbrella Local Food Action Team in 2012 and was continued through the work of Green Umbrella’s Local Food System Advocate position. However, support for the campaign had lagged after funding for the Local Food System Advocate position was lost. In 2018, renewed energy was put into the campaign with a focus on tabling at farmers’ markets, social media, and restarting the 10% Shift newsletter that offers monthly resources to individuals who have taken the pledge. At the end of 2018, 1,026 individuals had taken the 10% Shift pledge.

Three regional publications help spread the word about local eating:

Butler County Local Food Directory: A list of local growers and producers of meat, produce, fruits, berries, and cheeses published by OSU Extension’s Butler County office. The most recent version lists approximately 60 local growers and producers.

Central Ohio River Valley (CORV) Local Food Guide: A grassroots effort to connect community members with local growers and fresh, healthy local food. The annual guide contains listings of local farmers’ markets, farmers, CSA’s, food artisans, restaurants sourcing local, etc.

Edible Ohio Valley: A quarterly magazine about the people that grow, raise, and produce food close to home. Edible Ohio Valley models an alternative to the industrial food system by telling stories of those in the community - farmers, ranchers, food artisans and others - who are doing things differently. The definitive resource guide for home cooks, culinary professionals, and passionate locavores, they celebrate our region with seasonal recipes and inspired stories, sharing advice and blazing a path towards more sustainable and healthy lifestyles.
CHAPTER 4: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The 2013 State of Local Food report presented information on previous efforts to host annual food system gatherings, collect data, undergo strategic planning, and form a food policy council, ultimately landing on the following recommendations:

2013 Organizational Capacity Recommendations

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Improve Stakeholder Communication, Information-Sharing, and Partnerships | Host an annual gathering of food system stakeholders  
Create a searchable online database of food system stakeholders and assets |
| 2. Reestablish the Regional Food Policy Council | Collect and maintain data and establish and identify additional community assets  
Create actionable strategies, timelines, and partner commitments  
Develop, implement, and maintain financial support strategies to sustain local food initiatives |
| 3. Develop a Long-Term Strategic Plan | Create position responsible for leading local food system activities |
| 4. Create a Staffed Local Food System Advocate/Specialist Position |Organizational Capacity Highlights: 2013-2018

Successes: The Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council was founded in 2015 and continues to play an integral role in food-system development and stakeholder connectivity. Our region’s strong stakeholder network is also supported and connected by entities like the Green Umbrella Local Food Action Team, Eat Healthy NKY, and the Creating Healthy Communities Coalition. Since 2013, four food system support positions have been created.

Opportunities for Growth: The original Local Food System Advocate position lost funding, and continued funding streams need to be developed in order to sustain the work of the other remaining positions. More comprehensive and granular data collection and mapping related to production could be useful. Interact for Health, a key funder of food-system activities, stopped funding food-related work in 2017, so additional funding mechanisms need to be developed.

Research Highlight: Since 2013, three studies have catalogued food system stakeholders, captured our region’s extensive food system history, and diagrammed the
interconnectedness of local organizations. (For a detailed review of Consumption and Access-related research, see Chapter 6: Research.)

Organizational Capacity By the Numbers: 2013-2018

2,044 food system stakeholders identified

4 food system support positions created

*Data sources and detail available in Appendix C.

Organizational Capacity Progress on 2013 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Improve stakeholder communication, information-sharing, and partnerships, by hosting an annual gathering of food system stakeholders and creating a searchable online database of food system stakeholders and assets, among other mechanisms

Convening Food-System Stakeholders

Since 2016, the Midwest Regional Sustainability Summit has convened stakeholders throughout the Ohio Valley region and adjoining areas to exchange best practices, provoke thoughtful discussion, celebrate the work that is currently being done throughout the Midwest and identify models for future regional collaboration that can be replicated throughout the United States. The Summit attracts participation from across the Midwest including Dayton, Louisville, Lexington, Cleveland, Columbus, and Indianapolis. Each year, at least one breakout session has focused on food-related issues.

The Forum for Food Waste: A Strategic Regional Conversation occurred on November 4, 2016 at Xavier University’s Cintas Center. The goal of the Forum was to engage key
stakeholders in a strategic conversation and identify priorities and actions for the prevention, recovery, and recycling of food waste in our region. A follow-up forum is being planned for Fall 2019.

Since 2015, the Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council has hosted monthly/bi-monthly meetings that bring together food system stakeholders to work on the issues the Council is addressing. Each spring, the Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy council hosts its annual meeting, which is a forum for food system stakeholders to review accomplishments and discuss plans for the coming year.

From 2016-2017, a series of six Rooted in Food conversations were held to build community and discuss feelings, needs, dreams, and plans related to food.

The Green Umbrella Local Food Action Team continues to host monthly meetings that bring together stakeholders from all segments of the local food system to network, forge collaborations, and learn about food system developments.

With funding from the American Planning Association, The Kenton County (Kentucky) Plan4Health Coalition (KCP4H) was formed in 2015, with a goal of increasing access to nutritious food across the county. The Coalition, which was made up of Kenton County Planning and Development Services, the NKY Health Department, the Center for Great Neighborhoods, and OKI, pursued four initiatives: (1) a countywide assessment of food deserts; (2) a healthy corner store program aimed at providing healthier food options with urban corner stores; (3) a countywide outreach campaign to educate members of the public about healthy food options and; (4) forming a food policy working group in Kenton County to pursue future work related to food access.

As part of the Coalition's work, in 2016, Kenton County Plan4Health Coalition and Eat Healthy NKY hosted a Food Summit at Turkey Foot Middle School. This was an opportunity for the Northern Kentucky community to learn more about the local food system – with free local produce tastings, children’s activities, educational booths, and panel discussions.

The Kenton County (KY) Plan4Health Coalition also created Eat Healthy NKY, which was originally a campaign to educate the public about healthy food options. Eventually, the campaign became the Eat Healthy NKY Collaborative, which holds quarterly meetings hosted by the NKY Health Department. The group works to reduce barriers to healthy food, provide education, and collaborate on projects related to healthy eating. Since its inception, Eat Healthy NKY has been focused on schools, which led to the three farm-to-school gatherings held in 2017 and 2018.

In September 2017, as part of the EPA's Local Food, Local Places technical assistance program, Working in Neighborhoods convened Federal partners, community partners, city staff, residents, and other stakeholders in the South Cumminsville neighborhood of Cincinnati for two days of discussion and planning with the goal of improving access to fresh foods, creating jobs in new food enterprises, redeveloping underused brownfields in industrial areas, and improving local transportation options.
The Cincinnati Health Department’s Creating Healthy Communities Coalition creates sustainable transformations by improving nutrition, increasing physical activity, promoting tobacco cessation, and providing chronic disease prevention and education. The Coalition meets monthly and includes a healthy-eating subcommittee.

LiveWell NKY is a movement of community-wide initiatives designed to improve the health of Northern Kentucky residents through changes in policy, systems and environments. The Health Department supports LiveWell NKY, as does the Northern Kentucky Regional Alliance (formerly Skyward), the Center for Great Neighborhoods, and St. Elizabeth Healthcare.

Searchable Online Database

From 2014-2015, the Central Ohio River Valley (CORV) Food Guide hosted the information from their annual print guide on their website in a searchable format; however, due to software changes and a cost increase, they stopped doing so. They are currently exploring options for providing that service again.

The Green Umbrella website hosts pages for the Local Food Action Team and Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy council. Both include food system resources. It also previously hosted a local food map (more detail in Chapter 6: Research).

Recommendation 2: Reestablish the Regional Food Policy Council

Founded in 2015, the Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council’s mission is to advance a healthy, equitable, and sustainable food system for all within Greater Cincinnati’s ten-county region through policy, systems, and environment change. The council currently has three workgroups focused on healthy-food access, agrifood literacy, and healthy soils. Since its foundation, the GCRFPC has developed production-related policy statements, facilitated the adoption of the Good Food Purchasing Plan by Cincinnati Public Schools, and worked on urban agriculture zoning in Cincinnati, among other policy issues.

Recommendation 3: Develop a long-term strategic plan that includes data collection and identification of community assets, as well as strategies to develop and maintain financial support strategies to sustain local food initiatives

Data and Community Assets

In 2016, Green Umbrella created a metrics committee to support each action team in defining and collecting annual metrics. Local food system metrics are now collected annually. These include: number of farms, community gardens, urban ag sites, CSAs, markets, markets accepting assistance, restaurants, artisans, wineries, and people taking the 10% Shift Challenge.
**Food Mapping** is a participatory exercise that engages communities in creating art, while mapping food sources, resources, and community assets. This activity invites conversation about the personal health, community, economic, and ecological impacts of our food systems. Since 2016, Dr. Alan Wight has partnered with community partners to create participatory food maps for Camp Washington, Covington, Northside, Madisonville, and Walnut Hills (more detail in Chapter 6: Research).

A **food system stakeholder database** was compiled by the UC Community Design Center in 2017. The database includes stakeholders in the following categories:

- Food System Activities (production, processing, distribution, retailing)
  - Infrastructure and Transportation
  - Anti-Hunger Resources and Services
  - Institutions and Organizations
  - Public Policy Planning
  - Media

The database identified 2,044 food system stakeholders and currently exists as an Excel spreadsheet.

**Strategic Plans**

In 2013, Angie Carl completed a **2014-2016 Strategic Plan** for the Green Umbrella Local Food Action Team. An adapted and updated plan for **2017-2018** was then created by the Local Food Action Team.

The **Greater Cincinnati Food Waste Action Plan** came out of the 2016 Food Waste Forum. This document is intended to be a roadmap for our region to achieve the goal of reducing food loss and waste 50 percent by 2030. The Action Plan incorporated the feedback and inputs of those in attendance at the Forum, as well as the additional work and dedication of the Food Waste Forum Planning Committee.

**Financial Strategies**

From 2013-2018, **Interact for Health** provided critical funding and leadership for food system efforts. However, in 2017 they refined their giving priorities and moved away from funding food-related work. Other local foundations who have supported food efforts include the Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr./U.S. Bank Foundation, the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, the Medsweda/Turner Farm Foundation, and the Greenacres Foundation.

In 2016, the Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council awarded six local food-related projects a total of $39,500 through its **Cincy Good Food Fund**, which was designed to support innovative and promising projects that could make a positive impact on Cincinnati’s food system. Cincinnati Public Schools received funding for its Aeroponic School Garden Pilot Program, which tested the potential of incorporating education about nutritious food into its curriculum by using indoor aeroponic gardens. La Soupe’s Cincinnati Gives a Crock Cooking Classes received funding to expand its high school education program, which helps kids from food insecure families learn to create tasty, fresh, and nutritious meals from food donated...
from local food businesses and farmers. Northside Farmers Market’s Summer SNAP Outreach Pilot Program received funding for its multi-pronged approach to reducing the barriers for those who use SNAP benefits to access fresh food at Northside Farmers Market. Ohio Valley Food Connection received funding to help increase the availability of fresh, locally produced food through an online food hub that will facilitate the logistics of farm-to-table. Our Harvest received funding to increase the availability of its Harvest Day Program, which provides affordable fresh fruit and vegetables at natural distribution points like schools, churches, and community centers. And St. Leo the Great Church received funding to help address food insecurity and community engagement by establishing a community garden in North Fairmount.

Also in 2016, the Cincy Good Food Fellows was a collaboration between the Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council, Miami University, the University of Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky University, Xavier University, and Cincinnati State Technical and Community College. Faculty advisors selected a student from each school to intern for the 2016-17 academic year with local food system organizations to work on specific projects to help the organizations and gain practical experience. Additionally, the cross-school system collaboration increased awareness and understanding of various programs related to the food system in each institution. These programs were modeled after similar programs in Indianapolis.

The Cincy Save the Food Fund was a re-granting initiative created by Green Umbrella in 2018 to incentivize local food organizations and businesses to develop innovative and realistic food recovery efforts. Funding totaled $50,000.

Green Umbrella also administered two rounds of funding via the Energy-Efficient Refrigeration for Local Food Systems re-granting initiative, with money from the Duke Class Benefit Fund. In 2017 and 2018, $75,000 per year was granted to local organizations to support efforts to increase refrigeration efficiency in the local food system.

**Recommendation 4: Create a staffed local food system advocate/specialist position**

A Local Food System Advocate position was created at Green Umbrella and staffed from 2015-2016. The goal of the position was to lead the 10% Shift Campaign, with a particular focus on GU members, worksites, and WIC/SNAP consumers, and to provide leadership and support for the Greater Cincinnati region on local food issues, including program implementation and coordination, stakeholder engagement, analysis, and tracking.

In addition to that position, numerous other positions have been created that support collaborative local food system efforts:

- **Local Food Consultant** (Ohio Valley Food Hub Project) – 2017-2020
- **Local Food Research Consultant** (State of Local Food Report and 2018 Update) – 2013 and 2019
- **Director, Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council** – 2015-Present
CHAPTER 5: FOOD WASTE AND RECOVERY

The 2013 State of Local Food report did not include discussion of food waste/recovery. However, since that time, food waste has been identified as a key issue and a concerted effort has been made to increase food recovery in our region.

Food Waste and Recovery Highlights: 2013-2018

Successes: In the last few years, food waste and recovery has risen to the forefront of food system discussions, planning, and action.

Opportunities for Growth: Many activities have continued since the Food Waste Forum occurred in 2016, but it is time to reconvene stakeholders to evaluate the progress that has been made and re-establish a plan for collective action.

Food Waste & Recovery By the Numbers: 2013-2018

- 90+ schools with share tables (2018)
- .324 pounds wasted on average per K-12 student per meal (2019)

Food Waste & Recovery Progress Since 2013

The *Forum for Food Waste: A Strategic Regional Conversation* occurred on November 4, 2016 at Xavier University’s Cintas Center. The goal of the Forum was to engage key stakeholders in a strategic conversation and identify priorities and actions for the prevention, recovery, and recycling of food waste in our region. A follow-up forum is being planned for Fall 2019.
The *Greater Cincinnati Food Waste Action Plan* came out of the 2016 Food Waste Summit. That document was intended to be a roadmap for our region to achieve the goal of reducing food loss and waste 50 percent by 2030. The Action Plan incorporated the feedback and inputs of those in attendance at the November Forum, as well as the additional work and dedication of the Food Waste Forum Planning Committee.

The *Cincy Save the Food Fund* was a re-granting initiative created by Green Umbrella in 2018 to incentive local food organizations and businesses to develop innovative and realistic food recovery efforts. Funding totaled $50,000.

For the past two years, Green Umbrella’s Waste Reduction Action Team has focused their efforts on reducing wasted food in schools and at home via their *Save the Food Campaign*.

Founded in 2014, La Soupe bridges the gap between food waste and hunger by rescuing perishable food, transforming it into delicious and nutritious meals, and sharing with the food insecure and other community members. Since inception, La Soupe has rescued 910,670 pounds of food by partnering with Crosset, Kroger, Jungle Jim’s, SugarCreek, and multiple local farmers to rescue over-ordered or “ugly” produce. 545,558 servings have been donated to agency partners like schools, community groups, pantries, and more. 7,907 gallons of soup have been produced by local chefs via La Soupe’s bucket brigade – all of which are donated. Originally located on Round Bottom Rd., La Soupe will be moving into a new space in Walnut Hills in 2019. This new space will also include a front-of-house cooking school. Since formation, La Soupe has transitioned from solely providing soups to also creating pan meals and snack packs. La Soupe also operates the Cincy Gives a Crock program, which operates 8-week classes in five different locations (usually schools, sometimes churches).

In 2018, La Soupe hosted their first fundraiser – *WASTEd in the City*, a progressive dinner at restaurants featuring bites made from rescued produce.

The *Food Rescue US* app is being implemented in the Greater Cincinnati area through a partnership between La Soupe, Green Umbrella, and Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste. The app facilitates the transfer of food from businesses who produce too much to people who have too little, and it is currently being administered by a La Soupe employee.

JEE Foods is a nonprofit led by students from Ross High School, which has partnered with local grocers and companies like Kroger to collect food that would otherwise be wasted. They reprocess and redistribute these donations in the form of value added meals. They also provide employees and volunteers with training and certification.

Fourth Harvest keeps good food out of the landfill by sourcing visually imperfect produce and selling it at a discounted price via the Local Food Connection platform. Fourth Harvest made its first sale in Winter 2019.

In 2018, a diverse set of partners organized a public screening of the film "*Wasted! The Story of Food Waste*,” followed by a panel discussion and food tasting.

Go Zero offers food waste collection for composting to commercial buildings, events, and residences.
In 2017, Kroger announced its Zero Hunger, Zero Waste social impact plan to end hunger in their communities and eliminate waste across their company by 2025. At the end of 2017, Kroger had achieved 77% waste diversion from landfills company-wide, 2.26 million tons of waste were diverted from landfills, and 34 of 36 Kroger-operated manufacturing plants were zero waste.

As part of a Partners for Places grant that Green Umbrella received in 2018, work has been done to expand the usage of share tables in the greater Cincinnati region. Share tables are places where students can leave food they don’t want and take food they do want during their lunch period. Food left on the table at the end of lunch service is taken to the school nurse for students to eat later. While more may exist, 90+ K-12 schools in SW Ohio and NKY have been verified as having share tables.

As part of this project, food waste audits were conducted in 2018 at eight K-12 schools, with an average of .324 lbs wasted per student per meal.
CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH

Production Research Update

Since 2013, production-related research has focused on measures of production (land in farms, number of farms, vegetable acres, City-owned sites, number of urban ag and community garden sites, etc.), as well as the visualization of community-based food production.

Production Measures

In 2017, a new national Census of Agriculture was conducted, providing us with updated data on agricultural production in our nine-county region.

As of 2017, vegetable farms represented 4.8% of all farms located in the nine-county study area. However, the amount of acreage used to produce the vegetables on those farms accounts for only .13% of the total land in farms in the region. Since 2007, land in farms has decreased 2.2% and vegetable acres have decreased 26% (USDA NASS 2007, 2017).

NASS Data Change Over Time (2007 and 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Land in Farms (acres)</th>
<th>Number of Farms</th>
<th>Avg Size of Farms (acres)</th>
<th>Vegetable Farms</th>
<th>Vegetable Acres</th>
<th>Organic Farms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butler</td>
<td>123,916</td>
<td>127,194</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clermont</td>
<td>97,342</td>
<td>104,691</td>
<td>928</td>
<td>898</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>17,970</td>
<td>21,290</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>90,329</td>
<td>94,348</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boone</td>
<td>78,754</td>
<td>74,750</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbell</td>
<td>46,094</td>
<td>47,335</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenton</td>
<td>36,731</td>
<td>42,544</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dearborn</td>
<td>64,627</td>
<td>65,830</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>133,021</td>
<td>126,322</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL/Avg</td>
<td>688,784</td>
<td>704,304</td>
<td>6,274</td>
<td>6,019</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D=Data withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms

Source: USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service, Census of Agriculture, 2007 and 2017

While we have aggregate data for production in the region, we do not have data on acreage of land used for urban agriculture specifically. The closest measure we do have is the number of City-owned sites and parcels used for agricultural production, which have increased each year.
City Owned Parcels & Sites for Urban Agriculture in Cincinnati

Source: City of Cincinnati Office of Environment and Sustainability, Green Cincinnati Plan, 2018

In 2016, the Green Umbrella Local Food Action Team started collecting annual food production and consumption metrics, including farms with produce, farms with meat, and number of urban ag and community garden sites. The number of farms identified has increased by 40% in that time.

GU Local Food Action Team Metrics (2018)

2018 Local Food Action Team Progress Report
Goal: Double the production and consumption of local food by 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Farms</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farms with Produce</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farms with Meat</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Urban Ag and Community Garden Sites</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funded by City of Cincinnati Urban Ag Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate with City, Not Funded by Urban Ag Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not City Associated Community Garden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Green Umbrella, 2018

Mapping

Since 2013, we have also visualized production in numerous locations, with a focus on community-scale growing. These maps include:

- Green Umbrella Local Food Map (Dickinson, 2016)
• Civic Garden Center community gardens map (CGC website)
• Civic Garden Center school gardens map (CGC website)
• 500 Gardens/Madisonville Gardens Map (Wight and Governanti, 2018)
• Cincinnati Eco-Agro Tourism District Map (Glenn and Oldfield, 2019)
• Northside Fruit Park (Wight, 2017)
• 500 Gardens/Madisonville Wild Edibles Map (Wight and Governanti, 2018)

However, broader measurement and mapping of larger scale agricultural production is still lacking. (Additional mapping of community food assets is included in the Consumption section of this chapter.)

The CORV Talk Local series published an article on local food mapping efforts called “Food Mapping the Nati!” (Wight and Samadi, 2017).

Green Umbrella Local Food Map – Farms, CSA’s, and Herd Shares (2016)

Source: Dickinson, 2016

Farmer Training

In 2016, the CORV Talk Local series published an article “Who Is Training Farmers in the CORV Foodshed?” that outlines farmer-training opportunities ranging from K-12 education and on-farm internships to community colleges and four-year degree programs.

Distribution and Infrastructure Research Update

Since 2013, three independent efforts have documented the preferences, challenges, and lessons learned from institutional purchasing efforts. In 2016, the Greater Cincinnati Regional
Food Policy Council published a case study documenting the institutional purchasing program at Margaret Mary Hospital in Batesville, IN (Kennedy, 2016). Margaret Mary staff identified key challenges as:

- Finding enough farmers with the appropriate food safety certifications and food safety plans
- Physical kitchen constraints like storage space
- Staff time needed to process vegetables
- Budget

In Margaret Mary’s experience, when local products were advertised, customers valued them and continued to request them. Key staff also “realized the importance of having all players be supportive and enthusiastic about farm-to-institution programming. These key players include hospital staff, local farmers, partner organizations, and local government. It is important that kitchen staff is interested in local food and are willing to be especially creative with these products. Margaret Mary staff noted that it is important to identify which foods they want grown and develop recipes to make them taste good” (Kennedy, 2016).

Similarly, the Year 1 grant report for the Ohio Valley Food Hub Project, a USDA-funded collaboration between Green Umbrella, Local Food Connection, and Our Harvest Cooperative, identified key challenges and lessons learned through that project, which has the goal of increasing institutional sales. Key challenges to increasing regional institutional sales, from the perspective of the food hubs, are:

- Identifying optimal warehouse space configuration
- Difficulties becoming approved vendors for food service companies
- Limited farmer interest due to pricing constraints
- Farm-to-School K-12
  - Time to coordinate partners and resources for classroom and community elements
  - Profit margins are lower in this market than for other institutions
  - Logistics require multiple deliveries to each school district
- Extensive sales support needed
- Significant customer service needs

Food hub leaders are also exploring ways to partner with existing distributors further, and to outsource technical assistance and education to another provider. They stressed the importance of finding partnerships and direct vendor relationships with food service companies such as Aramark and Compass.

Leaders of the Ohio Valley Food Hub Project also conducted a survey with 13 K-12 Food Service Directors in order to better understand overall demand of the K-12 market to determine “best fits” for schools in terms of volumes, processing, and pricing. They hoped to use the survey to identify gaps in the supply chain, as a sales tool, and as a crop-planning tool in order to better meet demand. The survey identified that Food Service Directors were most interested in apples (unprocessed), cucumbers (unprocessed), peppers (unprocessed), tomatoes (unprocessed), and lettuces (chopped). They also expressed interest in local marinara.
A stakeholder discussion during the March 2019 meeting of the Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council identified additional challenges for meeting institutional demand for locally-grown produce, which included: having enough GAP certified producers, limited farmer interest in institutional markets, pricing, production volume, and consistency gaps and seasonality. Discussion participants also identified the challenge of getting students to eat the fresh fruits and vegetables once they are purchased.

Finally, the Center for Good Food Purchasing conducted an audit of Cincinnati Public Schools’ food purchases in order to evaluate their baseline status before adopting the Good Food Purchasing Program. During the 2017-2018 school year, 26% of the meat, 19% of the grains, and 2.7% of the milk and dairy that CPS purchased came from local sources (according to the Good Food Purchasing Program definition of 250 miles from source to institution; GFPP also factors in size of farm and ownership structure). Vegetables were at .5%, and CPS noted plans to increase that amount through “the Great Lakes Apple Crunch and Ohio Proud Day, restructuring bids to increase flexibility with local produce sourcing, traceability with vendors, and leveraging technical assistance partnerships to purchase and market local Ohio and Kentucky products” (McKinney and Shelly, 2018).

Consumption and Access Research Update

Much research has been conducted in the past six years on to healthy, local food consumption and access, spanning the categories of health, food insecurity and access, SNAP and incentive sales, points of local food consumption, food asset mapping, and local food markets.

Health

Community Health Needs Assessments were completed in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky in 2016 and 2019. The goal of these assessments was to better understand the health status of our region and to identify ways to improve health for everyone. As part of each assessment, ‘healthy behaviors’ (which includes healthy eating) was included as a priority health issue. For the 2019 assessment, when individual and organizational participants were asked “What can you do to improve your health?” or “What can people, whom your organization serves, do to improve their health?” “eat healthier foods” was the top response, with 172 total mentions (The Health Collaborative, 2019).

Food Insecurity

After the Regional Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) document was published in May 2016, the City of Cincinnati Health Department Leadership Team felt the need to supplement it with local Cincinnati data. Thus, the “City of Cincinnati Community Health Assessment” was published in 2017. The study included data from the Center for Disease Control’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), which found that the proportion of adults living in the City of Cincinnati who report that it is easy to purchase healthy food options is 65.3%, compared to 87.5% for Hamilton County and 81.1% in Greater Cincinnati (City of Cincinnati Health Department, 2017).
Interact for Health’s 2017 Community Health Status Survey found that self-reported access to healthy food also varies by income and race. 85% of people earning more than 200% FPG report that it is easy to buy healthy foods in their neighborhood, compared with 69% who earn 100% FPG or less. Similarly, 64% of African American adults reported that it is easy to buy healthy food in their neighborhood, compared with 82% of White adults (Interact for Health, 2017).

Additionally, Interact for Health found that 1 in 4 adults in our region report being food insecure. In Cincinnati, the number is 31%, northern Kentucky counties 28%. African American adults are almost twice as likely as White adults to experience food insecurity – 38% vs 21%. Only 2 in 10 Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky adults eat the recommended daily amount of both fruits and vegetables, which is similar to 2010 results (Interact for Health, 2017).

Percentage of Adults Who Are Food Insecure, by Region (2017)

In 2016, Feeding America published updated food insecurity statistics for our nine-county study area. According to their measures, food insecurity ranges from 9.5% (Warren County) to 17.8% (Hamilton County).
Food Insecurity by County (2016)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Feeding America, 2016

Healthy Food Access

Five studies explored and mapped physical access to healthy food in our region, with a continued focus on urban areas, particularly Cincinnati.

Cincinnati Food Deserts (2017)

Source: Yildiz, 2017
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>Maps Generated</th>
<th>Objectives/Methods</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Opportunity Research Collaborative (FORC)</td>
<td>West Chester, OH</td>
<td>Individual food access/insecurity maps</td>
<td>Three adults and four youth took GPS devices with them on regular trips through their community, taking pictures of barriers and assets to healthy food access. They were also given $20 to spend on food while mapping their routes.</td>
<td>Barriers identified: access to public transit, sidewalk access, cost of food, diversity of food options in close proximity. Low-income resident suggestions for improving food access: bring in more produce (produce stand or give-a-way), local campaign to bring a grocery store closer to low-income apartments, develop or expand sidewalks, nutrition education program, community garden at apartment complex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYK Health Department</td>
<td>Boone, Kenton, and Campbell Counties</td>
<td>Food deserts, %households on SNAP, %households in poverty on SNAP, SNAP retailer locations, farmers’ markets, farmers’ market vendor locations</td>
<td>Food desert mapping is based on 2015 Census data for low-income and low vehicle access census tracts where a significant number of residents are located &gt;1/2 mile (urban) or 10 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket.</td>
<td>Food deserts were identified along the Boone/Kenton County line, near Erlanger, and in Covington and Newport, among other locations (see Figure 11): 17,380 (12%) of households receive SNAP benefits. 52% of households in poverty receive SNAP benefits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brennan and Schmid, 2018</td>
<td>Cincinnati, with a particular focus on Oakley, Mount Lookout, OTR, and Avondale</td>
<td>All food outlets, small grocery stores and convenience stores, dollar stores and pharmacies, restaurants and other food outlets, farmers/farmers’ markets and produce, supply chain, emergency food providers, SNAP acceptance w/ race, SNAP acceptance w/ median household income</td>
<td>“The primary objective of this study was to quantify the number of food outlets in Cincinnati, Ohio, the accessibility of these outlets for different populations, and compare neighborhoods and the city as a whole to the traditional food desert definition. Food availability was also examined in relation to both race and income, with a specific goal of analyzing access for low-income families who use SNAP.”</td>
<td>“Of the four Cincinnati neighborhoods we analyzed in-depth, we found that those that were not classified as a food desert by the USDA did not exhibit any food desert qualities. The one neighborhood that was labeled a food desert had food outlets that would counteract the traditional definition. We conclude that the scope of the traditional definition for food deserts used in food access research should be changed to be more inclusive of all types of food outlets. For Cincinnati specifically, more research needs to be done regarding food access, especially because of the changing landscape of the city due to widespread gentrification. All 51 neighborhoods should be individually analyzed for the true scope of food they provide. Both altering the definition of food desert and further investigating the spatial distribution of food in Cincinnati would help guide the location of food assistance resources and inform future food policy.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yildiz, 2017</td>
<td>Cincinnati, with a particular focus on Avondale, Hyde Park, East Price Hill, and Northside</td>
<td>Part 1: Visualization of Avondale and Hyde park: food sources, demographics, mobility, and health disparities. Part 2: Mapping of Cincinnati: access to grocery stores, closest facility analysis, income distribution and locations of chain groceries, locations of FSG and LSG, closures of chain groceries in low-income neighborhoods, access to FSG with 7.5-min drive, 15-min bus, 15-min walk, service areas of FSGs</td>
<td>Part 1 of this study aims to compare the conditions of four Cincinnati neighborhoods based on socio-economics, mobility, food resources, health status, and institutional resources. Part 2 of this study aims to understand where the spatial disparities exist for accessing grocery stores in Cincinnati by conducting Arc GIS based spatial analyses.</td>
<td>Part 1: Hyde Park has 11.28 square feet of full-service grocery store per resident, while Avondale has 2.15 square feet per resident. However, “the two neighborhoods do not show extreme differences in selected diseases such as the overweight rate in Hyde Park (37%) compared to Avondale (34%). Likewise, the depression rate in Hyde Park is 19% compared to 22% in Avondale. On the other hand, health disparities between the two neighborhoods is apparent when we compared rates of obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, poor health days and physical inactivity.” Part 2: “Most of the residents in Avondale, College Hill, Walnut Hills, Evanston, Madisonville neighborhoods have limited food access due to spatial proximity to FSG stores, poverty and lack of car ownership which are common determinants of “food deserts” in US cities...Lastly, this research shows that in addition to spatial barriers, most of the residents have economic challenges that exacerbate the negative outcomes of non-uniform regional allocation policies of FSG stores. This is compounded by the strategic closure of small and mid-size grocery stores in favor of larger and fewer FSG stores located almost exclusively near affluent residential areas. To discuss the overall findings, the last chapter concludes with the outcomes and implications of this study.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meyerhoffler, 2014</td>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>This study uses a regression equation to examine food distribution in Cincinnati, Ohio and evaluate whether that distribution includes a large number of food deserts.</td>
<td>The analysis finds that the high poverty areas in Cincinnati, Ohio have fewer grocers on average than low poverty areas. The effect of increasing the poverty rate is negative but small for the overall population. Among tracts with low population, there is no significant relationship between poverty and the mean number of grocers. Among high population tracts, however, there is a relationship. Among high population tracts, being in a tract with a poverty rate of 20 percent or higher reduces the average number of grocers from 0.42 to 0.12.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As part of the UC Community Design Center’s 2017 report for the Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council, researchers compared the Cincinnati neighborhoods of Hyde Park and Avondale, which have similar populations but substantial income and racial disparities. The figure below visualizes neighborhood data related to socio-economic status, food sources, mobility, health, and institutional resources.

**Application of Food System Model to Avondale and Hyde Park (2016)**

Source: Yildiz, 2017
Notably, Hyde Park has 11.28 square feet of full-service grocery store per resident, while Avondale has 2.15. However, the "two neighborhoods do not show extreme differences in selected diseases such as the overweight rate in Hyde Park (37%) compared to Avondale (34%). Likewise, the depression rate in Hyde Park is 19%, compared to 22% in Avondale. On the other hand, health disparities between the two neighborhoods are apparent when we compared rates of obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, poor health days and physical inactivity" (Yildiz, 2017).

**SNAP Sales at Farmers' Markets**

SNAP sales at farmers’ markets, along with Produce Perks usage, have increased steadily since 2013, as have the number of farmers' markets accepting Federal food assistance programs, with 26 farmers' markets accepting food assistance in 2018.

**SNAP Sales and Produce Perks Redemption (2011-2018)**

![SNAP Sales and Produce Perks Redemption Chart]

*Source: Produce Perks Midwest, 2018*
Consumption Measures

The Green Umbrella Local Food Action Team and the Green Cincinnati Plan both documented points of local food access and consumption, with the number of restaurants purchasing local food increasing more than 700%.

**GU Local Food Action Team Metrics - Consumption (2013-2018)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of CSAs</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Markets</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Round Markets</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markets Accepting Assistance</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Restaurants</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Artisans</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Green Umbrella, 2018*
In 2017, Green Umbrella also published a Regional Indicator Report for Local Food that had the goal of measuring Greater Cincinnati's commitment to local food in comparison to our peer regions by creating a regional indicator index. The report measured number of farmers’ markets, year-round farmers’ markets, CSA’s and food hubs per capita. The Greater Cincinnati area ranked #5 overall and #1 in food hubs.

Food Asset Mapping

In the past five years, Dr. Alan Wight and a variety of community partners have visualized food assets in four communities – Camp Washington, Covington, Madisonville, and Walnut Hills – using a participatory process that capitalizes on resident knowledge of food sources and other community resources. (Information on production-related maps can be found in the Production section of this chapter.)
Markets

Researchers at Northern Kentucky University conducted an in-depth study of farmers’ markets during the 2015 market season. Data collected included location of markets, day of the week, size of markets, percent of vendors that are farmers, products sold, amenities, strategies/location for low-income consumers, manager compensation, manager duties, data collection, and income sources. Researchers found that in 2015, there were 48 farmers’ markets in Green Umbrella’s nine-county region: 48% of those were located in Hamilton County and 70% in the Ohio portion of the region. Of those markets, half of market managers were compensated for their work, nine markets collected vendor sales data, and 17 markets conducted shopper counts. When asked what their biggest challenges were, market managers noted “marketing”, “vendor issues”, and “management.”

In 2017, Miami University students interviewed farmers’ market visitors as part of a project to develop a children’s program for Village Green Farmers’ Market in Fairfield. The survey link was distributed on flyers and through the Fairfield City School District and VGFM websites and was ultimately completed by 113 people. “Through the survey, it was found that ‘Plant Science’ was an attractive topic for all age groups, and ‘General Science’ was considered appealing for the program’s youngest age group. In addition, hands on activities, such as games and crafts, would appeal to all age groups” (Aldrich et al., 2017).
An interdisciplinary team of graduate students from Miami University’s Institute for the Environment and Sustainability conducted a project with the goal of providing the City of Hamilton, Ohio with recommendations on how to increase the amount of locally grown food in Hamilton restaurants. Networking and communication were cited as the primary barriers in a farm-to-restaurant program. Other barriers included pricing, reliability and availability, and the need for marketing. This report provided two sets of recommendations, the first focusing on strategies to develop a farm-to-restaurant program in the City, including supporting an annual meet and greet between restaurants and producers, a marketing strategy supported by the City, and partnering with the local cooperative extension agency. The second set aimed to help guide actions to expand and support Hamilton’s local food system as a whole, including establishing a food policy council or task force, creating a healthy food campaign, and partnering with local and regional organizations (Brocker et al., 2015).

**Consumer Preferences**

Miami students researched shopper knowledge and preferences about local and organic foods in Oxford, OH. Seventy-five survey respondents (randomly-selected Oxford residents) indicated:

- 85% primarily purchased produce at Kroger
- 46% agreed or strongly agreed that they actively attempt to purchase local produce
- 49% defined local as “within the Tri-State” and 42% defined it as “less than 30 miles”
- A majority thought organic produce needs a label, fewer thought so for local produce
- When asked about the importance of certain attributes in their decision to purchase organic and/or local, “freshness” and “health benefits” were the most important factors (compared to environmental friendliness, supporting the local economy, and lower price) (Melling et al., 2015).

**Organizational Capacity Research Update**

Since 2013, three studies have catalogued food system stakeholders, captured our region’s extensive food system history, and diagrammed the interconnectedness of local organizations.

The UC Community Design Center compiled a food system database that includes stakeholders in the following categories:

- Food System Activities (production, processing, distribution, retailing)
- Infrastructure and Transportation
- Anti-Hunger Resources and Services
- Institutions and Organizations
- Public Policy Planning
- Media

The database identified 2,044 food system stakeholders and currently exists as an Excel spreadsheet.
A Cincinnati Farming and Food History (Wight and Metz, 2018) offers a historical perspective on our regional production and consumption by tracking key food-system developments from 1788-2019. This interactive-hyperlinked-timeline documents some of the major food, farming, and business-related histories of the Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana Tri-State region.

Dr. Wight also completed a Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Cincinnati, where he investigated the learning and educational opportunities taking place within Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. The case study data revealed and a rich network of people, organizations, and resources that are working together to build alternative agrifood systems (Wight, 2015).

Flow of Ideas, People, and Money Between Food System Organizations (2015)

Source: Wight, 2015
RECOMMENDATIONS

Since 2013, significant progress has been made in the realms of distribution, consumption, and access – with two food hubs now operating, two incubator kitchens supporting food artisans, and numerous year-round markets and food access programs launched. Strong support for community gardens continues to exist, and numerous agricultural training programs and higher-education offerings were created.

However, certain sectors of the local food system, like land preservation and access, have received less attention and many important initiatives currently lack funding. While institutional demand has grown markedly, the value chain to support those sales needs further development. And of the numerous food access programs founded in the past five years, all but one have since been discontinued. New year-round markets have also closed or struggle to attract enough customers to achieve sustainability.

The recommendations outlined here are based on stakeholder feedback (key informant interviews and stakeholder surveys) and regional research.

Green Umbrella operates on the Collective Impact model, so the following recommendations are activities and projects that would be well-served by collaborative efforts that can leverage expertise and generate positive impacts for numerous stakeholders.

Efforts have been made in this 2018 update to streamline the recommendations in order to more easily focus collective efforts, resulting in fewer suggested actions. Of course, these are not the only steps that can, or should, be taken to improve the Greater Cincinnati Regional food system, but they serve as a starting place for joint work.

In addition to recommendations, proposed initial action steps and potential partners are also included. In order to move forward effectively, initial champions will need to be identified for each recommendation.

Note: recommendations that are in alignment with the Green Cincinnati Plan are noted with a * symbol.

PRODUCTION

Improve Land Access for Farmers*

Goal: Ensure affordable access to quality farmland for regional farmers

Objective: Increase farmland preservation and implement other creative strategies to improve land accessibility for regional farmers
**Initial Action**: Convene and engage broad stakeholder group to develop farmland preservation action plan. Identify funding mechanism for nonprofit programming for land-matching and other land-access services.

**Potential Partners**: GCRFPC, GU Local Food Action Team, GU Greenspace Action Team, Cardinal Land Conservancy, Our Harvest Cooperative, City of Cincinnati Office of Environment and Sustainability, OEFFA, local farmers, Extension, Soil and Water Conservation Districts

---

**DISTRIBUTION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Support Institutional Purchasing**

- **Build Institutional Value Chain**

  **Goal**: Identify and prepare local suppliers for wholesale and institutional markets

  **Objective**: Design and implement producer training and technical assistance program

    - **Initial Action**: Identify funding to develop nonprofit program for supply-chain support

    - **Potential Partners**: Green Umbrella, Local Food Connection, Our Harvest Cooperative, Cultivate! Ohio Valley, Food and Growers Association, Cincinnati State

- **Coordinate Supply and Demand**

  **Goal**: Work with institutional buyers and regional producers to understand and align purchasing needs with production capacity

  **Objective**: Hire individual to coordinate supply and demand and educate institutional buyers

    - **Initial Action**: Identify best location (ex: health department, nonprofit, city or county government) and funding stream for staff person

    - **Potential Partners**: GCRFPC, Local Food Connection, Our Harvest Cooperative, Cultivate! Ohio Valley, City of Cincinnati Office of Environment and Sustainability

---

**CONSUMPTION AND ACCESS**

**Build Demand for Local Food**

- **Education**
**Goal:** Increase education nutrition education and food literacy for children and adults of all socio-economic levels

**Objective 1:** Increase nutrition and agriculture education offerings in public schools and improve coordination of existing programs

**Initial Action:** Identify funds to hire an individual to be point person for communication and coordination of existing efforts and identification of further needs

**Potential Partners:** GCRFPC, Gorman Heritage Farm, Greenacres, Civic Garden Center, Extension, Granny’s Garden School, Eat Healthy NKY

**Objective 2:** Support cooking and nutrition education efforts for adults, particularly in areas of limited access to healthy food

**Initial Action:** Convene current education providers and food access program providers to understand best practices, needs, and gaps in current offerings

**Potential Partners:** GU Local Food Action Team, Cooking for the Family, La Soupe, Civic Garden Center, Turner Farm, SNAP-Ed, Gabriel’s Place

❖ **Public Awareness Campaign**

**Goal:** Increase consumption of local food by building public awareness about the benefits of eating local

**Objective:** Implement a large-scale, long-term campaign aimed at driving behavior change that utilizes best practices, examples from other industries, and creative/fun/modern tools

**Initial Action:** Engage communications firm to help with initial design and planning in order to identify budget, then seek funds for implementation.

**Potential Partners:** Green Umbrella, CORV, Edible Ohio Valley, Eat Healthy NKY, academic institutions, BluEarth

**Increase Access to, and Affordability of, Healthy, Local Food***

❖ **Access**

**Goal:** Ensure that access point(s) for healthy food exist in all communities

**Objective:** Evaluate and strengthen current healthy food access programming and engage deeply with communities to increase access to healthy, culturally-appropriate foods through existing food assets
**Initial Action:** Convene stakeholders to review lessons learned, evaluate current status of programming, and identify current community needs. Develop strategic plan for regional healthy food access work.

**Potential Partners:** GCRFPC, Produce Perks, Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation, Freestore Foodbank/Healthy Harvest Mobile Market, Kroger/8451, La Soupe, Northside Farmers’ Market, food pantries, Center for Great Neighborhoods

- **Affordability**

**Goal:** Strengthen programs that increase affordability of fruits and vegetables

**Objective:** Increase retail outlet and farmers’ market participation in nutrition incentive programs

**Initial Action:** Identify funding streams to sustain and scale incentives.

**Potential Partners:** GCRFPC, Produce Perks, City of Cincinnati, counties

**ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**

**Increase Food System Investment**

**Goal:** Increase long-term, strategic investment in regional food system development efforts

**Objective:** Identify and cultivate new funders, increase coordination and impact of current funders, and engage with leadership of healthcare networks, municipalities, and other institutions who interface with the food system in order to increase food system investment

**Initial Action:** Engage Sustainable Agriculture and Food System Funders (SAFSF) or private consultant to understand best practices for working with funders and develop strategic action plan.

**Potential Partners:** GCRFPC, Jaime Love, SAFSF, Greater Cincinnati Foundation, Haile Foundation, Turner/Meshewa Farm Foundation, Greenacres, City of Cincinnati Office of Environment and Sustainability, community development finance institutions

**FOOD WASTE AND RESCUE**

**Reduce Wasted Food**

**Goal:** Reduce amount of food that is wasted in our region

**Objective:** Scale up current food rescue efforts
**Initial Action**: Formalize current food waste working group and bring in additional stakeholders. Re-visit Greater Cincinnati Food Waste Action Plan to determine best course of collective action.

**Potential Partners**: GCRFPC, GU Waste Reduction Action Team, GU Local Food Action Team, La Soupe, Kroger, Fourth Harvest, Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste
APPENDIX

A) Interview/Survey Tool

In 2013, the Green Umbrella Local Food Action Team published the “State of Local Food in the Central Ohio River Valley,” a report that synthesized current research, profiled stakeholders, and provided food system recommendations. Fundamental to that work were interviews with key informants like yourself – practitioners and stakeholders from all sectors of the local food system.

With this update, our goal is to synthesize new research that has been conducted in the last six years, to provide an update on progress that has been made on the recommendations from the 2013 report, and to generate new recommendations so that we can create an updated plan for moving forward together.

You can find the complete, original 2013 State of Local Food report on the Green Umbrella website. The 2013 Recommendations are attached for ease of your review.

This update is strengthened by your support and participation. Thank you for your help!

***************

Questions:

1) Name:

2) Organization name:

3) What are the key local food programs/projects that you have worked on since 2013?

4) What have been your major accomplishments?

5) Have you had a chance to review the 2013 report recommendations? What updates can you share in regards to these recommendations?

6) What are the biggest changes to the local food system that you have witnessed in the past six years?

7) What challenges do we still face?

8) What needs to be done to strengthen our local food system? Who do you think plays a key role in accomplishing those things? Are you planning to work on any of these issues?

9) What new projects/collaborations do you have planned? Do you have a timeframe identified to accomplish them?

10) Do you collect data or conduct primary research on food or farming (production, consumption, distribution, access, waste)? Do you know of any organizations that do?

11) Are there any studies or reports by your organization or other organizations/agencies that Green Umbrella should look at in regards to this project or related to local food in general?
B) Interview Subjects and Survey Respondents

**Interview Subjects**

Alice Chalmers  
Annie Wood  
Jessica Shelly  
Jim Lowenberg  
Kathy Cooley  
Marianne Hamilton  
Megan Gambrill  
Michaela Oldfield  
Mimi Dyer  
Rachel DesRochers  
Steve Rock  
Tevis Foreman

**Survey Respondents**

Peter Huttinger  
Justin Dean  
Jeffrey Miller  
Lauren Brinkman  
Sam Dunlap  
Robin Henderson  
Anna Raines  
Anna Haas  
John Gray  
Jeff Ashba  
Mimi Chamberlin  
Stephen Dienger  
Anne Schneider  
Penny Shore  
Alan Wight  
Jenny Lohmann  
Susan Jorgensen  
Deborah Jordan  
Elizabeth Schmalz  
Kimberly Chelf  
Ruth Ann Carpenter  
Kymisha Montgomery  
Nicole Gunderman  
Chuck Lohre  
Mike Eck  
Gary Dangel  
Greg Potter
## C) Food System By the Numbers Data Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Point</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Source/Detail</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm interns/apprentices trained (2013-2018)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2-Cultivate, 6-Turner Veteran, 25-Turner, - Findlay, 7-SIFTI, 10-That Guys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students completed an ag major or certificate program (2013-2018)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>2-Xavier, 20-Cincy State, 40-UC Horticulture urban ag certificate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable farms (2018)</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>NASS 2017</td>
<td>9-county region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable acres harvested (2017)</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>NASS 2017</td>
<td>9-county region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food hub sales (2018)</td>
<td>$1,324,346</td>
<td>Local Food Connection, Our Harvest Cooperative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional customers purchasing from local food hubs (2018)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>GU USDA LFPP Grant Year 1 Grant Report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food businesses supported by incubator kitchens (2013-2018)</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>100-IKC, 98-Findlay Kitchen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School districts adopting GFPP (2019)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>CPS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processors working with local fruits and vegetables (2019)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>KHI, Creation Gardens, Old Souls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce Perks redeemed (2013-2018)</td>
<td>$595,732</td>
<td>Produce Perks</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pounds of produce distributed via Freestore Foodbank’s Produce Pop Ups (2018)</td>
<td>1,037,979</td>
<td>Freestore Foodbank</td>
<td>20-county region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food system stakeholders identified (2016)</td>
<td>2,044</td>
<td>UC CDC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food system support positions created (2013-2019)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Local Food System Advocate, Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council Director, Local Food Research Consultant, Local Food Consultant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools with share tables (2019)</td>
<td>90+</td>
<td>Green Umbrella</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pounds of food rescued by La Soupe (2014-2019)</td>
<td>910,670</td>
<td>La Soupe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pounds wasted on average per K-12 student per meal (2019)</td>
<td>0.324</td>
<td>Green Umbrella</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D) References


City of Cincinnati Health Department. 2017. “City of Cincinnati Community Health Assessment.”


Kennedy, Megan. 2016. “Case Study: Margaret Mary Health.” Greater Cincinnati Regional

APPENDIX


Wight, Alan and Margaret Weiner. 2015. “Camp Washington Food and Community Asset Map.”


