

# The Food System

Our food choices impact every aspect of our society and economy

How we currently get food from the farm to our plates is a mystery to many of us. Food distribution and procurement is a global system. It encompasses farmers, eaters, and all of the industries that link them together. Decisions are made every day by our local governments, businesses, and organizations that influence where our food is grown, how it is prepared, distributed, and served.

Local food systems are composed of all of the interdependent steps and actors that go into producing food that is grown and raised in a region. This includes planting, harvesting, storing, transporting, processing, packaging, and retailing of food.

Consumers seeking out locally grown food is an emerging trend in our region.

From the phenomenal growth in farmers' markets in our country, to the growing interest in school gardens, to the restaurants and grocers selling local foods — members of our community care about what they eat and how it impacts the place they call home.



## WELLNESS

The healthy (or not-so-healthy) foods we choose impact our individual health and can create burdensome healthcare costs for all.

## EQUITY

Not all members of our community have equal access to healthy, quality foods — leaving them vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition.

## ECONOMY

Where we buy food shapes our local economy. Buying locally-grown foods supports local farmers, and helps small and mid-sized agribusinesses create new jobs.

## ENVIRONMENT

Food production and shipping can impact our landscapes and quality of life.



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