Made possible through funding from the Department of Health and Human Services: Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW). CPPW is a joint project between the Cook County Department of Public Health and the Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago.

The findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of the writers/report team alone and do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of the officers and/or trustees of Northern Illinois University. For more information, please contact Patricia Inman, pinman@niu.edu or Katherine Davison kdavison@niu.edu.
REPORT TEAM

Members of the Cook County Food System Steering Committee

Lindsey Arenberg
Fresh from the Farm Manager, Seven Generations Ahead

Patsy Benveniste
Vice President of Community Education Programs, Chicago Botanic Garden

Daniel Block
Professor of Geography, Chicago State University
Director, Neighborhood Assistance Center

Jim Bloyd
Regional Health Officer, Cook County Department of Public Health

Martha Boyd
Program Director, Urban Initiative Angelic Organics Learning Center (Chicago)

Sheila Castillo
Associate Director, Midwest Latino Health Research Training and Policy Center, University of Illinois - Chicago
Principal Investigator, Center of Excellence in the Elimination of Disparities

Andre Garner
Project Director, Cook County Bureau of Economic Development

Bona Heinsohn
Cook County Farm Bureau

Lori Heringa
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

Debbie Hillman
Chairperson, Evanston Food Council

Darryl Holmes
Planner, Cook County Bureau of Economic Development

Kate Maehr
Chief Executive Director, Greater Chicago Food Depository

Nancy Pollard
Unit Educator, Horticulture, University of Illinois Extension

Bonnie Rateree
Director, Harvey Cultural Center, City of Harvey

Barbara Rose
Civic Participation Facilitator, Angelic Organics Learning Center

Sandra Streed
Director, Illinois Center for Food Safety

Tanya Triche
Senior Counsel, Illinois Retail Merchants Association

Staff

Lara Jaskiewicz
Program Manager, Suburban Cook County Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW)
Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago

Thanks to the following for support on this project:

Jim Braun
Illinois Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Council

Mari Gallagher
Mari Gallagher Research

Ms. Ruth Zeldenrust
Cook County Farm Bureau

Debbie Hillman
Chairperson, Evanston Food Council

Darryl Holmes
Planner, Cook County Bureau of Economic Development

Kate Maehr
Chief Executive Director, Greater Chicago Food Depository

Nancy Pollard
Unit Educator, Horticulture, University of Illinois Extension

Bonnie Rateree
Director, Harvey Cultural Center, City of Harvey

Barbara Rose
Civic Participation Facilitator, Angelic Organics Learning Center

Sandra Streed
Director, Illinois Center for Food Safety

Tanya Triche
Senior Counsel, Illinois Retail Merchants Association

Staff

Lara Jaskiewicz
Program Manager, Suburban Cook County Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW)
Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago

Writers

Patricia Inman
Senior Research Associate, Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University

Katherine Davison
Research Associate, Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University

Reviewer

Melanie Megara
Assistant to the Vice President for Outreach, Engagement, and Information Technologies at Northern Illinois University
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Assessment Process</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profile of Suburban Cook County</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We Can Do Better: Defining a Sustainable Food System</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Does Suburban Cook County Measure Up to Those Principles?</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Suburban Cook County Food System</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food System Components</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste Management</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking to the Future</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Assessment</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food as an Economic Driver</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination and Education</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is a Food Policy Council?</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Establish a Food Policy Council?</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Healthy, Fair, and Sustainable Food Systems:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful Local Food Policies, Projects, and Partners</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Seminal Reports</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Public Input Survey</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The suburban half of our nation’s second-largest county is home to more than two-and-a-half million people, many of whom do not have access to healthy, fresh foods. The results are staggering: Over the past two decades, obesity rates in suburban Cook County have doubled for adults and tripled for children – and lack of fresh food has been cited as a major contributor to that trend.¹ In the poorest parts of suburban Cook County, food insecurity rates top those in the poorest sections of the city of Chicago. Yet aggregated data that portrays the entire suburban county area masks the severity of fresh food scarcity in these isolated areas.²

The complexity of a food system that hinders access is not always obvious. The American Dietetic Association, the American Nurses Association, the American Planning Association and the American Public Health Association have established consensus on the principal characteristics of a health-focused food system: health promoting, sustainable, resilient, diverse, fair, economically balanced, and transparent. An analysis of data related to these elements in suburban Cook County shows dramatic inconsistency between and among various communities. Food insecurity rates within the county range from the low single digits in wealthy areas such as Kenilworth and Burr Ridge to 45% – 55% in the municipalities of Ford Heights and Robbins.³ Not surprisingly, rates of unemployment and low income follow this same geographic pattern.

During an eight-month period, the writers worked closely with the Suburban Cook County Food System Steering Committee to strategize and develop this document. The perspective reflected is that of the steering committee, with public input obtained through a survey tool and a community-wide forum. In the interest of inclusivity, issues identified in the survey and at the forum are listed throughout the report and have driven much of the supporting data.

The ability to address inequality in access to fresh food is complicated by the complexity of the food system. Five main functions move food from farm to table: production, processing, distribution, access, and waste management. The interdependency of those functions creates a confusing and largely invisible web. Making food systems more visible allows regions to bring appropriate partners to the table for collaboration and helps government agencies make informed policy choices.

Comprehensive food policies can also have dramatic impact on local economies. Public input from both the survey and the public forum indicate that Illinois residents want more locally-grown food. However, only about four percent of what we eat is produced in this state. Illinoisans annually spend $48 billion on food imported from other states, so policy changes that encourage more local production have strong economic development implications as well.⁴

The environmentalist mantra – “Think globally, act locally” – could well be applied to the challenge of achieving greater food equality and better health for the residents of suburban Cook County. With the largest number of municipalities of any state in the U.S. (and widespread commitment to ‘home rule’), meaningful change on any issue requires a focused, regional approach. For example, the metropolitan Chicago area is the truck and rail freight center of North America, yet fresh food shipments often pass through impoverished sections of suburban Cook County on their way to stores and restaurants in the city of Chicago. Food systems are not defined by municipal jurisdictions, yet without transparency and regional coordination, disenfranchised communities will remain ‘food poor.’

¹
²
³
⁴
This report is a snapshot of the current food system in suburban Cook County and lays the groundwork for broader regional planning around local food. Discussion papers in the past have typically focused on the city of Chicago. Suburban Cook County has much in common with Cook County as a whole, yet the area offers unique assets and challenges in the development of a healthy food system. While this report focuses on suburban Cook County, its conclusions call for county-wide collaboration around creation of a food system that is health-promoting, sustainable, resilient, diverse, fair, economically balanced, and transparent. Recommendations for achieving this fall under three main areas.

1. **RESOURCE ASSESSMENT**
   Increasing food production by utilizing available traditional and non-traditional land for production.

2. **FOOD AS AN ECONOMIC DRIVER**
   Supporting the development of food-related businesses that increase fresh access and develop sustainable economies for low-income communities.

3. **COORDINATION AND EDUCATION**
   Increasing transparency of local food systems to facilitate regional collaboration.
INTRODUCTION

While earlier initiatives have addressed food system needs in the city of Chicago, little attention has been paid to underserved populations in the remainder of Cook County. A superficial look at data from the suburban portion of Cook County would indicate adequate access to fresh food, yet closer analysis of specific communities, particularly in the south and southwest suburbs, tells a different story. This report provides background information to support the development of a coordinated health-focused food system, and includes a description of current issues and conditions of the suburban Cook County food system.

The Assessment Process

During an eight-month period, the authors worked closely with staff from the Communities Putting Prevention to Work initiative (CPPW), as well as with the Suburban Cook County Food System Steering Committee charged with developing this document. The process included:

- Review of written reports and policies from all government levels and multiple agencies that affect food systems.
- Review of reports from both academic institutions and food system advocates.
- Compilation of maps relevant to the food system principles and elements.
- Review of food policies, ordinances, and reports from other municipalities within the U.S. and Canada.
- In-person and phone interviews with staff from various county and municipal government agencies, as well as non-profit agencies serving suburban Cook County.
- Facilitation of six steering committee meetings during which members provided input and direction regarding the content of this report.
- Continued conversation through an on-line forum between meetings.
- A public on-line survey sent to various advocacy and municipal groups.
- Facilitation of a public forum on October 6, 2011 hosted by CPPW.
- Preparation of various drafts with comments submitted by the steering committee.

A methodology that incorporated stakeholder input was utilized. The steering committee members represented diverse community roles and served to define issues and guide data collection so that an accurate picture of the suburban Cook County food system emerged.

The process also relied heavily on guidance from food advocate and expert Mark Winne, director of the Food Policy Council of the National Community Food Security Coalition. His focus on the development of food policy councils throughout North America provides much of the organization for this report, particularly his emphasis on the need to look at projects, partners, and policy in the development of community food systems.

This report also considers findings from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) document GO TO 2040, metropolitan Chicago’s first comprehensive regional plan in more than 100 years. CMAP’s Local Food Chapter Outline was particularly helpful in the organization of this report. The focus of both these documents is developing greater access to healthy, locally-sourced foods from the region.

This report is grounded by principles found in the Illinois Food, Farms, and Jobs Act of 2009. The act created a food-based economic development strategy to enrich Illinois families, businesses, and communities (as well as the state’s treasury) by:
- Stimulating economic development by uniting our abundant resources: rich farmland, a temperate climate, a rich farming heritage, and a large, diverse customer population.
- Supplementing long-term public health strategies designed to curb childhood diabetes and obesity.
- Ensuring food supply preparedness in the event of a natural or man-made emergency.
- Providing strategies for sustainable economic growth based on the development of local food systems.

The Food Act strategy included progressive steps toward greater local food production, including:
- Directing state agencies to align their missions in support of this suggested economic development, public health, and emergency preparedness strategy.
- Mandating that state institutions source at least 20% of their food locally by 2020.
- Assembling a team to streamline rules and regulations governing local food production, processing, and marketing.
- Creating an Illinois Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Council to coordinate development of community-based farm and food networks statewide, pooling funds from federal agencies and private entities to build local farm and food networks.

**Profile of Suburban Cook County**

Cook County is the second most populous county in the United States. It is home to 5,194,675 people, or 40.5% of all Illinois residents. Nearly half (48%) of those residents live in the suburban portion of the county outside the city of Chicago. The racial composition of suburban Cook County is fairly homogeneous, with Whites making up 67% of the population, Blacks 16%, Asians 7%, and 8% reporting themselves as some other race. Hispanics or Latinos cross all racial categories and represent 19% of the total population. Suburban Cook County saw minimal change from 2000 to 2010 in any one racial subset and an average increase in Hispanics (see Figures 1 and 2).

![Figure 1: Race in Suburban Cook County](#)
There are more than 130 incorporated municipalities in Cook County, the largest of which is the city of Chicago. Outside of the city limits, suburban Cook County is divided into 30 townships. Township government is unique to Midwestern and Northeastern states and most Canadian provinces. In Illinois, a township is a land parcel six miles by six miles. Townships and municipalities each have powers and responsibilities that are exclusive from one another.

A common theme of disparity in access to healthcare and fresh food emerged in a recent report released by the CCDPH titled: WePlan 2015, Suburban Cook County Community Health Assessment and Plan. One in six residents of suburban Cook County reports lack of access to healthy food. Problems purchasing fresh food doubled for survey respondents reporting income of less than $60,000.00. Over half the adults in suburban Cook County are overweight or obese, as are roughly 40% of children. Three in four adults do not eat the recommended amount of fresh fruits, and a large majority are not physically active. Additionally, obesity and smoking (the leading causes of cardiovascular disease) are higher among the poor, less educated, and minorities. And pockets of poverty are growing. An increase in poverty in suburban Cook County is seen among white men and women who previously had high incomes. Finally, the report identified the need for improved systems and better coordination to address all of the aforementioned problems.

The Greater Chicago Food Depository has provided an even more detailed look at food insecurity in Cook County. The organization released a study in September 2011 providing community-level data in Cook County of the number of individuals who are food insecure. USDA Economic Research Service defines food insecurity as a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food. Data was gathered for all of Chicago’s 77 community areas and 119 Cook County suburbs. The new findings point to strong links between unemployment and food insecurity, and to high concentrations of food insecurity in communities on the West and Southwest Sides of Chicago and in several Cook County suburbs. Among the key findings of that study:

- In the city of Chicago, the overall rate of food insecurity is 20.6%; in suburban Cook County, 15.4%.
- The highest rates of food insecurity in the city of Chicago were in Riverdale (40.8%), Washington Park (34.0%), Englewood and north Lawndale (both at 31.2%). In suburban Cook County, the worst rates were even more dramatic, with Ford Heights (55.5%), Robbins (45.0%) and Dixmoor (38.7%).
In the whole of Cook County, 36% of those who are food insecure - 304,528 individuals - earn more than 185% of the poverty level ($20,146 for a household of one) and are thus not eligible for most federal nutrition programs.

Residents of Cook County live in neighborhoods that are highly segregated by race and ethnicity. The Urban Institute found that of the 100 metropolitan areas in the United States, metro-Chicago ranked 91st out of 100 for Latino-White segregation and 98th out of 100 for African-American/White segregation, with a dissimilarity index of 56.3 and 75.2 respectively, reported by Brown University’s US 2010 project, using 2010 Census data. The dissimilarity index ranges from 0 to 100, where 100 reflects complete separation between two groups.

Racial residential segregation has significant detrimental effects on health. According to a 2011 study by Thomas A. LaVeist, et al., this is the case “not because (neighborhoods) are predominantly black or Hispanic, but rather due to higher rates of poverty. Even persons with middle and relatively higher incomes are at greater risk when more of their neighbors are poor.” The study notes that residential segregation “reduces access to the resources necessary to support healthy lifestyles, including nutrient rich food.”

**We Can Do Better: Defining a Sustainable Food System**

The ubiquitous nature of food systems has rendered their workings largely invisible to the average citizen (and to most policymakers). Few Americans know where their food comes from, how it got to their grocery store, or why they have the selections they do in the produce aisle. To further complicate the matter, food policy is made at multiple levels with little-to-no coordination between jurisdictions. It is only recently that the American Planning Association has included food systems for consideration in their work. Making food systems transparent allows regions to bring appropriate partners to the table for collaboration and allows government agencies to make informed policy choices. When addressed in a coordinated manner at a regional level, food policy debate can organize discussion of multiple related issues including job creation, community building, hunger elimination, and improvement of the environment. To that end, the American Dietetic Association, American Nurses Association, American Planning Association, and American Public Health Association have established consensus on the following principal characteristics of a health-focused food system:

**Health-Promoting**
- Supporting the physical and mental health of all farmers, workers, and eaters.
- Accounting for the public health impacts across the entire lifecycle of how food is produced, processed, packaged, labeled, distributed, marketed, consumed, and disposed.

**Sustainable**
- Conserving, protecting, and regenerating natural resources, landscapes, and biodiversity.
- Meeting our current food and nutrition needs without compromising the ability of the system to meet the needs of future generations.

**Resilient**
- Thriving in the face of challenges.

**Diverse**
- Including a diverse range of food production, transformation, distribution, marketing, consumption, and disposable practices occurring at diverse scales: local, regional, national, and global.
- Considering geographic differences in natural resources, climate, customs and heritage.
- Appreciating and supporting a diversity of cultures, socio-demographics and lifestyles.
- Providing a variety of health-promoting food choices for all.

**Fair**
- Supporting fair and just communities and conditions for all farmers, workers, and eaters.
- Providing equitable physical access to affordable food that is health promoting and culturally appropriate.

**Economically Balanced**
- Providing economic opportunities that are balanced across geographic regions of the country and at different scales of activity, from local to global, for a diverse range of food system stakeholders.
- Affording farmers, workers, and eaters opportunities to actively participate in decision making in all sectors of the system.

**Transparent**
- Providing opportunities for farmers, workers, and eaters to gain knowledge necessary to understand how food is produced, transformed, distributed, marketed, consumed, and disposed.
- Empowering farmers, workers, and eaters to actively participate in decision-making in all sectors of the system.¹⁸

**How Does Suburban Cook County Measure Up to Those Principles?**
In addition to those indicators already referenced in the “Profile of Suburban Cook County” section, the following facts provide points of comparison with the principles of a health-focused food system. These indicators were identified by the steering committee and can be used as benchmarks for future assessment. As with other data sets that aggregate the experiences of a highly-diverse area, there are large contrasts between communities not reflected here. While the suburban Cook County assessment shows no glaring inequities, these same indicators could be used at a community level assessment and tell a vastly different story.

**Health-Promoting**
The relationship between lack of access to fresh food and communities presenting unhealthy profiles needs to be further explored and measured. Heart Disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and issues related to mental health have emerged as problems in the U.S. as a whole and can be linked to food access issues. Clearly, suburban Cook County shows a similar profile.
Figure 5
Percent of Suburban Cook County Residents Reporting Their Mental Health to Be "Not Good" in the Past 30 Days

- 18% 8 to 30 days
- 60% 1 to 7 days
- 22% None

Figure 6
Percent of Suburban Cook County Residents Reporting Having High Cholesterol

- 0.1% Don't Know/Not Sure
- 64% No
- 36% Yes

Figure 7
Percent of Suburban Cook County Residents Reporting Having High Blood Pressure

- 4% Don't Know/Not Sure
- 28% No
- 71% Yes

Figure 8
Percent of Suburban Cook County Residents Reporting Having Angina or Coronary Heart Disease

- 3% Don't Know/Not Sure
- 97% No
- 0.2% Yes

Figure 9
Percent of Suburban Cook County Residents Reporting Having Diabetes

- 8% No
- 92% Yes

Figure 10
Percent of Suburban Cook County Residents Reporting Having Pre-Diabetes or Borderline Diabetes

- 5% No
- 95% Yes

Source: Cook County Department of Public Health, Suburban Cook County Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2011
Resilient

Resiliency allows communities the ability to thrive in the face of economic downturns. Data collected from the U.S. Census Current Population Survey (CPS) show that individuals with less education attainment experienced greater percentage-point increases in their unemployment rates than their more educated counterparts. Higher levels of education also offer greater options for changing career paths when necessary. As previously noted, unemployment and low income are closely linked with higher levels of food insecurity. It is also important to remember that suburban Cook County includes both wealthy and impoverished communities; thus the aggregated data presented below obscures the severity of crisis on the low end.

Figure 11

[Bar chart showing percent unemployed for Cook County, Chicago, and Suburban Cook County from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 - 2009 American Community Survey]
Resilient (cont.)

Figure 12

Percent with Bachelor’s Degree or Higher

Source: US Census, American Community 3 year Survey 2010

- Cook County: 34%
- Chicago: 33%
- Suburban Cook County: 34%
Fair and Economically Balanced

As would be expected, income equity parallels that of employment levels. What are not obvious are the lack of employment opportunities that exist in suburban Cook County. The absence of small- and medium-sized businesses in the southern region is responsible for unemployment and poverty rates far higher than the averages depicted here. The absence of food-related businesses not only decreases access to fresh food but also minimizes a community’s economic vibrancy and earning power.

Figure 13

Household Income (in 2010 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)

Source: US Census Bureau, 2008-2010 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates

![Bar chart showing household income distribution in Cook, Chicago, and Suburban Cook County. The chart compares income levels in different ranges, from $0 to $100,000 and above.]
**Transparent**

Families living below the poverty line often live invisible lives. As is discussed in the section of the report dealing with Access, only 70% of eligible families take advantage of food support programs, compounding the challenge of poverty.

**Figure 14**

**Percent of Suburban Cook County (SCC) Residents Living Below the Poverty Line.**

*Source: US Census Bureau, 2005 - 2007 and 2007 - 2009 American Community Survey*

---

**Poverty Line**

**Poverty Definition:**
Following the Office of Management and Budget’s (2008) Statistical Policy Directive 14, the Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family’s total income is less than the family’s threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty thresholds do not vary geographically, but they are updated for inflation using Consumer Price Index (CPI-U). The official poverty definition uses money income before taxes and does not include capital gains or non cash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps).

- **Cook County:** 15% (2007-2009), 14.9% (2005-2007)
- **Chicago:** 21% (2007-2009), 21% (2005-2007)
- **Suburban Cook:** 9% (2007-2009), 8% (2005-2007)

---

2007-2009 % of People in Poverty  2005-2007 % of People in Poverty
THE SUBURBAN COOK COUNTY FOOD SYSTEM

While nearly half of all Cook County residents live in the suburban portion of the county, previous discussion papers have almost exclusively focused on the city of Chicago. Suburban Cook County has much in common with Cook County as a whole, but also presents unique assets and challenges in the development of a healthy and sustainable food system. This report endeavors to capture a snapshot of suburban Cook County from the context of its existing food system. Solutions addressing food system issues will require coordination with the city of Chicago and the broader region.

Food System Components

A food system is a set of economic activities that encompasses production, transformation (processing, packaging, labeling), distribution (wholesaling, storage, transportation), access (gardens, retail, institutional food service, emergency food programs), consumption, and waste management. Given its scope, a region’s food system is a prime driver of the health of a region’s economy, land use, environment, communities, and residents.

Community members provided input on the issues facing the suburban Cook County food system through an online survey completed by 857 respondents and a public forum held on October 6, 2011 hosted by CPPW and attended by 43 participants. Survey respondents and forum participants represented stakeholders within suburban Cook County. Participants at the public forum were allowed to self-select from six discussion groups, five focusing on the impact areas and one group focusing on the food system as a whole. Understandably, the group focusing on the overall food system had issues that were the most extensive and complex. However, the broader system-wide issues also emerged in the individual component discussions.

- Lack of a coordinating body for Cook County’s food system.
- Lack of understanding the cost of fresh food.
- Finite water sources.
- Complex policies for smaller farms.
- Land availability.
- Federal funding opportunities.
- Addressing issues identified by the Food, Farms, and Jobs Act.
- Lack of education regarding the health-related costs of not eating healthy food.

The following sections describe stakeholder input on the individual component areas of the food systems, discussion of the issues, and recommendations for addressing the issues.
PRODUCTION

STAKEHOLDERS WEIGH IN

Public Forum Issues
- Planning and zoning hurdles encountered by proponents of community gardens.
- Regulations at all governmental levels that constrain alternative food sales such as farmers’ markets.
- Potential soil contamination in both urban and rural settings.
- Hurdles encountered by those attempting to start a new business.
- Limited outlets for extended-season produce sales such as winter farmers’ markets.
- Lack of inventory of productive land within suburban Cook County.
- The need for education in innovative farming methods such as vertical farming, rooftop gardens, community gardens, and hydroponics.

Survey Issues
- Waste elimination.
- Absence of community stakeholders and residents ‘at the table’ in the agriculture policy and rulemaking process relating to production.
- Negative environmental impacts of farming methods.
- Federal agriculture policy not supportive of the growing and raising of foods needed for a healthy nation.
- Farmland purchased by foreign countries or non U.S. organizations.

Illinois, home to 76,000 farms and more than 950 food manufacturing companies, is a solidly agricultural state in the heart of America’s bread basket. Fully 80 percent of the state is farmland. Yet only four percent of all the food eaten in Illinois is actually grown there. Most of the crops grown in Illinois are exported to other states and nations, while similarly vast quantities of fresh food are imported from other states to feed Illinois’ 12.8 million residents. With annual food expenditures of $48 billion, Illinois’ current food system sends enormous amounts of money out of state, and leaves many of its residents without adequate access to healthy fruits and vegetables.22

Much of Illinois’ reliance on imported food is due to its vast swath of flat, fertile soil that makes cultivation with large machinery especially easy. “Row crop” farming in our state produces not consumable fresh food, but the commodity crops of corn and soy beans (see Figure 15).

These crops are most frequently used for animal feed or, more recently, the production of ethanol fuel. Federal farm bills have increasingly provided subsidies for such production. Originally intended to prevent family farm foreclosures, federal subsidies today reward large agribusinesses for expanded production that employs the use of chemicals and mono-crop production.23 The past two rounds of the Farm Bill have provided greater support for the production of local specialty crops with the 2012 version currently being negotiated to provide increased support for an alternative food system that is equitable and sustainable.
Increasingly, studies show that food production needs less space than previously considered. A particularly powerful scenario was prepared by the Leopold Center of Iowa State University. Author David Swenson notes: “One of the key assumptions in the study was that farmers in a region can grow enough of 28 kinds of fruit and vegetables to meet demand, based on population, during a typical growing season (about four months of the year) and longer for crops that could be stored, such as onions or garlic.” The land required for this production was equal to the cropland in a single Iowa county. Swenson continues:

Although relatively few acres would be required to significantly increase fruit and vegetable production in the region, the study also found that the job gains could be significant, compared to the number of jobs currently generated by the same amount of land under conventional agricultural production.

Another key assumption was that half of the increased production would be sold in producer-owned stores, resulting in additional impacts on regional economies. The six-state region would need about 1,405 establishments staffed by 9,652 people earning $287.64 million in labor incomes.24

Another study shows that Cleveland, Ohio, and other post-industrial U.S. cities can generate up to 100 percent of their current needs for fresh produce and other food items.25 The implication is that when assessing possible sites for food production, one need no longer look only at large parcels of land that are zoned for agricultural production. Smaller pockets including land that can be cultivated for school and community gardens must be considered.
Criteria to be taken into account could include:

- Water accessibility.
- Soil contamination.
- Zoning, including options for public spaces.
- Composting opportunities.
- Accessibility.
- Alternative types of cultivation such as vertical gardening and hydroponic options.

With respect to zoning issues, as mentioned earlier, Illinois has the greatest number of municipalities of any U.S. state. This means that with its focus on home rule, interpretations of federal and state policy vary widely regarding options for food production. In order to provide consistency for food producers it has been suggested that we look to provide model language for zoning and other food policy regulations. Like natural resources, food does not respect political boundaries. Roger Dahlstrom, Assistant Director for Community and Economic Development with the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University, suggests that we look to the language of storm water legislation that speaks in terms of “sheds” to provide policy and ordinance guidance. In this format, local ordinances defer to county guidelines.26

The good news is that suburban Cook County reflects several of the trends supporting local food production. While farmland is decreasing, the number of small farms has increased by 23 percent from 2002 to 2007 (see Figure 16). Production of specialty crops is up, while production of commodity crops such as corn and soybeans has gone down.27 While suburban Cook County is rarely thought of in terms of commodity cultivation, at one time it served as home to more rural communities.

**Figure 16**

Despite increased production and consumer interest, locally grown food accounts for a small segment of U.S. agriculture. For local foods production to continue to grow, marketing channels and supply chain infrastructure must deepen. A report by Sarah A. Low and Stephen Vogel for *Amber Waves* cited new information on farmers who market foods locally. The marketing channels they used could aid private- and public-sector efforts to support the local food production segment of the agricultural economy.28 This report indicates:
On a national level, marketing of locally produced foods, both direct-to-consumer and via intermediated channels, grossed $4.8 billion in 2008—about four times higher than estimates based solely on direct-to-consumer sales.

Farms marketing local foods exclusively through intermediated channels reported $2.7 billion in local food sales in 2008—over three times the value of local foods marketed exclusively through direct-to-consumer channels and two times higher than the value of local foods marketed by farms using a combination of the two channels.

Small farms (those with less than $50,000 in gross annual sales) accounted for 81 percent of all farms reporting local food sales in 2008. They averaged $7,800 in local food sales per farm and were more likely to rely exclusively on direct-to-consumer marketing channels, such as farmers’ markets and roadside stands.

Medium-sized farms (those with gross annual sales between $50,000 and $250,000) accounted for 17 percent of all farms reporting local food sales in 2008. They averaged $70,000 in local food sales per farm and were likely to use direct-to-consumer marketing channels alone or a mix of direct-to-consumer and intermediated marketing channels.

Large farms (those with gross annual sales of $250,000 or more) accounted for 5 percent of all farms reporting local food sales in 2008. They averaged $770,000 in local food sales per farm and were equally likely to use direct-to-consumer channels exclusively, intermediated channels exclusively, or a mixture of the two.

Large farms accounted for 92 percent of the value of local food sales marketed exclusively through intermediated channels.

For small and medium-sized farms with local food sales, more operators identified their primary occupation as farming and devoted more time to their farm operation than operators of similarly sized farms without local sales. Vegetable, fruit, and nut farms dominated local food sales.

Direct-to-consumer sales of food commodities were affected by climate and topography that favor fruit and vegetable production, proximity to farmers’ markets and neighboring local food farms, and access to transportation and information networks.29

Collection of data on organic production is relatively new. The 2007 Census of Agriculture collected preliminary data and added an organic production survey in 2008. See Figure 17 for the initial 2007 assessment in Cook County.
Figure 17

Cook County Land Used for Organic Production
United States Department of Agriculture, 2007 Census of Agriculture

Production Recommendations:
- Assess available traditional and non-traditional land for production.
- Coordinate the multi-jurisdictional food-related regulations.
- Extend access to fresh food through alternative sources.
- Increase support for new and small- to medium-sized farms.
- Address soil contamination in both urban and rural land.
- Establish a coordinating body bringing all stakeholders to the table to advance a healthy food system.

PROCESSING

STAKEHOLDERS WEIGH IN
Public Forum Issues
Contributors did not choose to participate in a discussion group focused on processing at the community forum.
Survey Issues
- Waste elimination.
- Complexity of licensing and inspections needed for various types of food processors.
- Complexity of zoning for agribusiness.
- Lack of training and education for the food processing workforce community.
- Absence of stakeholders and residents ‘at the table’ in the agriculture policy and rulemaking process related to processing.

If readers are struck by the irony of an agricultural state having to import 96% of its food, they might have a similar reaction to the idea that the region lacks adequate facilities for processing locally grown fruits and vegetables. The region’s geographic location and transportation system made it the center of America’s food chain, including becoming the hub of the food industry with the creation of the Chicago Board of Trade.30

Initially, grain milling was the region’s most important food activity. By 1860 Illinois was the number one producer of corn and wheat in the United States.31 The Union Stock Yards gave rise to a thriving meatpacking industry from
the Civil War to the 1920s. According to the Chicago Historical Society’s *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, the wide availability of milled grains by the late 1800s gave rise to mechanized bread factories that put small kitchens and bakeries out of business. Proximity to the dairy stronghold of Wisconsin helped Chicago become home to many dairy processors. The development of the confectionary industry including the production of Wrigley’s gum as well as Tootsie Rolls, Tootsie Pops, Junior Mints, Cracker Jacks, Milk Duds, and Brach’s Candies, provided further innovation for the food sector of a growing metropolis. The food service industry grew to accommodate hungry workers and those needing to eat away from home. As a result, street foods flourished and Chicago saw a rise in their famous Chicago-style hot dog. In 1955, the famed McDonald’s hamburger chain opened its first franchise in Des Plaines, Illinois. Finally, Chicago’s location as a hub of land and sea distribution routes brought a diversity of people – and foods – from all over the world. Germans, Irish, Polish, Italians, African Americans, Hispanics, and Swedes arrived first, followed in rapid succession by French, Greeks, East Indians, Japanese, Koreans, Scots, and Spanish immigrants. Today, the largest number of food manufacturing establishments in the Chicago area are bakeries and tortilla manufacturers with 465 businesses. Fruit and vegetable preserving and specialty food manufacturing is the smallest sector with only 69 reported establishments in 2009 (see Figure 18).

The Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business produced a white paper titled *From Farm to Fork: Innovations in the Chicago Food Industry*. The report identifies five key trends that are affecting innovation in the food industry today. These include a challenging economy; shifting demographics that include the Baby Boom generation and a rising Hispanic presence; health concerns including a rise in such diseases as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes; food safety and traceability of food products; and the need for sustainable practices in all aspects of the food system. Each of these issues can be addressed through the development of local food systems as they support a sustainable economy.

The concern most often expressed in the course of the research was a need for small food processing centers or commercial kitchens in which value-added product can be produced. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) publication *Alternative Enterprises: Value-added Agriculture*, such processing has a strong economic benefit for all players in the food system:
Adding value to agricultural production contributes to the economic and environmental sustainability of both farm and community. Adding value to an agricultural product offers farmers the opportunity to receive a bigger share of the consumer’s food dollar. Value-added products can open new markets, create recognition and appreciation for the farm, and extend the marketing season. Value-added products can dramatically increase a farmer’s income. Value-added agriculture is very important to any local economic development strategy. Jobs usually are created in the local community which, in turn, supports additional jobs, yielding income that is spent locally.39

Unfortunately, there are a limited number of commercial kitchens available for processing fresh product. Public kitchens often used for small batch processing at a certified site include church, school, or restaurant kitchens. However, availability of these facilities and of a licensed food handler is often limited. Several USDA funding sources are targeted at increasing food processing opportunities. Those aimed at developing community facilities, value-added products, specialty crop promotion, and community food security are particularly significant.

State and local health department regulations present another challenge. State guidelines have recently been modified to support the smaller producer. The Cottage Food Bill, for example, creates new opportunities for farmers to engage in value-added processing while making it easier for aspiring entrepreneurs to start new local food businesses by selling at any of Illinois 300-plus farmers’ markets.

The Cottage Food Bill (Senate Bill 840) changes Illinois’ food safety laws, allowing homemade non-potentially hazardous baked goods, jams and jellies, fruit butter, dried herbs, and dried tea blends to be sold at farmers’ markets, provided they are properly labeled as homemade products. Additionally, annual gross receipts from such sales must not exceed $25,000; the “cottage food operation” must be registered; and the person preparing and selling the food must have a valid Illinois Food Service Sanitation Manager Certificate. However, state policy is subject to local interpretation, and there is a daunting lack of consistency across municipalities, challenging those who sell at several farmers’ markets across the region.

**Processing Recommendations:**

- Build on history in food processing.
- Support the development of small, regional food processing centers or food hubs.
- Coordinate the multi-jurisdictional food-related regulations.
- Identify gaps in training and education relating to the food processing workforce.
- Establish a coordinating body bringing all stakeholders to the table to advance a healthy food system.
The Chicago metropolitan area (as defined by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning) is the truck and rail freight center of North America. Major distribution centers and intermodal hubs integrate trucking and rail, contributing to our economy and its strong industrial base.\(^40\)

Regional food hubs provide multiple services to small growers such as processing facilities, aggregation of crops, marketing opportunities, and educational support. The Edible Economy Project in Bloomington, Illinois is working with a diverse group of community members to realize the great economic potential of local food production, processing, and consumption. The project’s long-term goal is to build a modern local food infrastructure, giving farmers access to expanded markets and consumers access to fresh, healthy local foods. As a first step, the project is creating a regional food hub in central Illinois. This food hub may be close enough to serve suburban Cook County food producers.

Another area of potential in the distribution of fresh food is the phenomenon of food trucks.\(^41\) Communities are currently looking at these mobile food providers as possible players in the greater distribution of fresh food options. That option is, of course, not without its challenges. Food trucks have come under intense scrutiny by municipal health regulation agencies and consumer protection agencies, as well as restaurant associations concerned about unfair competition. Currently, most city rules prohibit food truck operators from preparing food on site. Although licensing provisions exist for food carts on Park District land, attempts to come up with a broader ordinance have failed. The University of Chicago’s Institute for Justice Clinic on Entrepreneurship has launched “My Streets My Eats”, a campaign that shows citizens how to express support for mobile food vending.
**Distribution Recommendations:**

- Support the development of small, regional food distribution centers or food hubs.
- Coordinate the multi-jurisdictional food-related regulations.
- Research viability of small, mobile food distribution centers.
- Establish a coordinating body bringing all stakeholders to the table to advance a healthy food system.

---

**ACCESS**

**STAKEHOLDERS WEIGH IN**

**Public Forum Issues**

- Education regarding the use of public assistance aids like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Women Infant and Children (WIC) program at farmers’ markets.
- Lack of clear eligibility and application information for WIC and SNAP programs.
- Lack of mobile WIC markets.
- Lack of community gardens and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs for food insecure groups.
- Language barriers inhibiting the use of public assistance aids.
- Unawareness of affordable fresh food possibilities.
- Lack of instruction regarding the use of fresh food in family meal options.
- Coordination of organizations serving food insecure populations.
- Untapped food programs to address food security issues.
- Need for Farm to School initiatives that encourage schools to buy locally produced food.
- Lack of institutional procurement of local food (hospitals, prisons, etc.).

**Survey Issues**

- Waste elimination.
- Impact of rising oil costs on food.
- Lack of knowledge of fresh food preparation.
- Lack of healthy food options in school lunches.
- Lack of knowledge about food safety standards.

Public forum and online survey results identified food access as a social justice issue. A 2001 study by Katie S. Martin examined the relationship between food security/insecurity and social networks. This study found that social networks and participation in community life, or lack thereof, could either reduce or exacerbate the ill effects of poverty. Roger Cooley, former domestic director of Heifer International, an Arkansas-based nonprofit that works on global and U.S. food issues, suggests there is a shift away from the word hunger, with its implication that we simply need to distribute more food, to the terms food security and community food security. Place does matter and affects our health. For example, people who live in communities with safe sidewalks, ample parks, good public transportation and ready access to fresh fruits and vegetables are 38 percent less likely to develop diabetes.
In suburban Cook County, some municipalities have less access than others. For example, poor communities have fewer supermarkets and more fast food restaurants and convenience stores. They have limited green spaces, nearby trails, recreation centers, or safe places to walk or play.

It is no surprise, then, that pockets of poverty coincide with the most food insecure populations in suburban Cook County. The following map shows this parallel.

**Figure 19**

*Suburban Cook County Median Income and High Food Insecurity Rates by City, 2009*
This situation is made all the more challenging by the lack of public transportation in the area, one of the major issues raised by participants at the public forum. While the city of Chicago has similar profiles of areas bereft of fresh food options, residents can often use public transportation to access fresh food.

In 2011, Illinois Department of Health and Human Services reported 425,107 SNAP recipients in suburban Cook County, 73% of those recipients were children (see Figure 20). According to the 2010 Illinois Link/EBT Transaction Report, only two suburban Cook County farmers’ markets accept SNAP and WIC payment, Oak Park Farmers’ Market and Evanston Farmers’ Market (see Figure 21) leaving many thousands of SNAP recipients without the opportunity to purchase fresh foods at farmers’ markets. Unfortunately, equipping all of the suburban Cook County farmers’ markets with EBT machines may not solve the problem. Many of the areas with low food access are not served by farmers’ markets at all (see map below).

![Figure 20](image)

**Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program Recipients**
*Source: Illinois Department of Health and Human Services, 2011*

![Figure 21](image)

**Reported Illinois Farmers Markets Offering EBT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Market</th>
<th>Opening</th>
<th>Closing</th>
<th>Vendors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urbana’s Market at the Square</td>
<td>5/1/2010</td>
<td>11/6/2010</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak Park Farmers’ Market</td>
<td>5/1/2010</td>
<td>10/30/2010</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodstock Farmers Market</td>
<td>5/1/2010</td>
<td>12/18/2010</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logan Square Farmers Market (Outdoor)</td>
<td>6/6/2010</td>
<td>10/31/2010</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61st Street Farmers Market</td>
<td>5/15/2010</td>
<td>12/18/2010</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daley Plaza</td>
<td>5/13/2010</td>
<td>10/21/2010</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division Street</td>
<td>5/15/2010</td>
<td>10/30/2010</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverly</td>
<td>5/16/2010</td>
<td>10/24/2010</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green City Market</td>
<td>1/15/2010</td>
<td>12/23/2010</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green City Market</td>
<td>Year-round</td>
<td>Year-round</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Bloomington Farmers’ Market</td>
<td>5/15/2010</td>
<td>10/30/2010</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: 2010 Illinois Link/EBT Transactions Report*
Suburban Cook County Food Insecurity and Farmers' Markets, 2009

Insecurity Rate
- Less than 10%
- 10% to 15%
- 15% to 20%
- 20% to 30%
- Greater than 30%
- Data Not Available

Sources: Greater Chicago Food Depository; U.S. Department of Agriculture

[Map showing food insecurity and farmers' markets in suburban Cook County, 2009]
Of additional concern is the fact that only 70% of Cook County families who are eligible for SNAP benefits are enrolled in the program. The 2001 Martin study echoes this phenomenon nationally. The study found a high percentage of food insecure families nationwide were not participating in food programs. In her study, 45 percent did not receive food stamps, 67 percent did not use food pantries, and 37 percent who were eligible for the WIC program did not participate in it.46

**Access Recommendations:**
- Educate public on food programs supporting the food insecure.
- Increase public space for community engagement and food production (parks, community gardens, etc.).
- Coordinate the multi-jurisdictional food-related regulations.
- Establish a coordinating body bringing all stakeholders to the table to advance a healthy food system.

---

**WASTE MANAGEMENT**

### STAKEHOLDERS WEIGH IN

**Public Forum Issues**
- Lack of institutional knowledge regarding composting and regulations that govern the practice.
- Compost site certification.
- Understanding where waste management belongs in the food system - the beginning or the end.

**Survey Issues**
- Local development of alternative or new food waste management technologies.
- The cost of unnecessary waste and processing.
- Shrinking landfill availability.
- Unclear safety and wages standards for waste management laborers.

Organic waste, or food scraps, account for more than one third of the waste brought to Illinois landfills. Composting food waste can greatly reduce this volume. In Cook County, the average individual produces nearly 315 pounds of compostable waste each year (see Figure 23).

**Figure 23**

*Food Scraps Created in Cook County That Ends up in Landfills (not Returned to Farms, Gardens)*


- **Food Scraps per Person**: 314.3 pounds/year
- **Food Scraps Total County**: 830,640 tons/year
There are 267 waste composting operations in the United States, and every state around Illinois licenses food waste composting facilities. Yet until the 2009 passage of Composting Bill SB99, institutions in Illinois could only compost organic waste on their own property and were forbidden from transporting it to another site. Illinois Composting Bill SB99 allows facilities to transport waste off-site for composting. Yet Illinois restaurants, grocery stores, and festivals seeking to compost food waste must incur hefty transportation expenses and create significant environmental impact to do so. Several investors are developing proposals for food waste composting facilities in Illinois. Chicago Composts, LLC has developed a business plan to pick up food waste from restaurants and sell the end product as garden-enriching compost. Food scrap pick-up businesses are emerging, including one serving residents and restaurants in northern Cook County (Collective Resource – Evanston) and a new CSA that includes food scrap pick-up along with delivery of the CSA share (Common Roots Sustainable Farm – delivering to Evanston). Other waste management issues that surfaced at the public forum included:

**Waste Management Recommendations:**
- Coordinate the multi-jurisdictional food-related regulations.
- Develop facilities for off-site food waste composting.
- Educate communities and institutions on composting options.

**LOOKING TO THE FUTURE**

**Recommendations**
Recommendations addressing both system-wide issues and component-specific issues are thematically grouped into three general areas.

**RESOURCE ASSESSMENT**
*Increasing food production by utilizing available traditional and non-traditional land for production.*
The issue of greatest urgency identified in this report is the need for increased production of healthy food. There is no shortage of demand. The report’s most disturbing finding is the degree of inequality in access to fresh food, particularly for communities in southern suburban Cook County. These needs could be accommodated through local food production -- specifically community gardens, farmers’ markets and community supported agriculture. This requires assessment of appropriate smaller and untainted parcels of land. Education for future farmers in this new area of specialty crop production must also be developed and made available. Increasing independent “corner store” options could supply additional products needed for healthy lives. Innovative avenues of funding for such initiatives need be developed.
- Assess available traditional and non-traditional land for production.
- Increase public space for community engagement and food production (parks, community gardens, etc.).
- Address soil contamination in both urban and rural land.
- Addressing finite water sources.

**FOOD AS AN ECONOMIC DRIVER**
*Supporting the development of food-related businesses that increase fresh access and develop sustainable economies for low-income communities.*
One of the most exciting outcomes reported by regions with well-developed food systems is the opportunity for food-related businesses to not only increase fresh food access, but also develop sustainable economies. This is particularly true for minority communities with low access to food and few minority-owned businesses.
These communities present untapped markets, and community based development organizations could pave the way forward in this initiative. Community based development organizations or CBDOs are nonprofit developers who work to revitalize communities affected by economic downturn, including creation of new commercial space.47

A significant challenge is convincing businesses to locate in underserved areas. Successfully addressing this issue will require a coordinated effort to help communities better identify their own assets and “sell” themselves to funders and businesses. In addition, communities must focus on developing small- and medium-sized businesses that not only serve residents but also generate local income. Creative investment that develops organically from within a community provides low-income residents with increased connection to social networks – a proven antidote to food insecurity.48

**Business Development**
- Build on history in food processing.
- Increase support for new and small to medium sized farms.
- Support the development of small, regional food processing centers or food hubs.
- Support the development of small, regional food distribution centers or food hubs.

**Alternative Access Point**
- Extend access to fresh food through alternative sources.
- Research viability of small, mobile food distribution centers.
- Develop facilities for off-site food waste composting.

**COORDINATION AND EDUCATION**

*Increasing transparency of local food systems to facilitate regional collaboration.*

This report identifies unique challenges presented in suburban Cook County such as numerous municipal regulatory codes and large inequalities in food access. Challenges highlighted throughout the report are issues of long standing that demand an organized and coordinated response. A Cook County food policy council could provide the coordination necessary to address these complex issues. This snapshot will allow for more informed policy decisions to be made within the larger context of Cook County.

- Establish a coordinating body bringing all stakeholders “to the table” to advance a healthy food system.
- Coordinate the multi-jurisdictional food-related regulations.
- Educate public on food programs supporting the food insecure.
- Educate public on food preparation and nutrition.
- Educate communities and institutions on composting options.
- Identify gaps in training, education, and equity relating to the food system workforce.
- Identify alternative funding sources for regional food system planning.

**What Is a Food Policy Council?**

According to the 2009 report, *Food Policy Councils: Lessons Learned*, food policy councils act both as forums for food issues and platforms for coordinated action.49 Typically, food policy councils have representation from the entire food system, including representatives from food security and food advocacy organizations. The primary roles of a food policy council are to educate policy makers on important food system issues and priorities impacting stakeholders and to provide concrete civic engagement opportunities. Ideally, the resulting decisions from the policy makers will provide forward movement of the food policy council’s mission.
The report also highlighted four possible functions of a food policy council:

- To serve as forums for discussing food issues.
- To foster coordination between sectors in the food system.
- To evaluate and influence policy.
- To launch or support programs and services that address local needs.

Food policy expert Mark Winne suggests that in order to transform a food system into one that provides individual, community, and environmental health, the projects, partners, and policies potentially impacting the system must first be considered.

- Projects are singular activities that social justice and local food system advocates pursue, such as farmers’ markets, food banks, and improving delivery of food assistance programs.
- Partners are the nexus of relationships and the wellspring of social capital that we draw from to accomplish our work in today’s complex world.
- Policy “makes the right prevalent,” allowing organizers to move in the same direction at the same time. Policy opens the doors to possibility.

Winne makes the point that the potential for promoting food security, local food systems, and economic justice lies at the local and state levels because this is the arena in which people and small, local organizations participate. Further, low-income families are more likely to be food secure if their connection to local social networks is high. Therefore, the shift to a community food security framework, looking at existing projects and partners and identifying gaps within, would be helpful. Food security would be more successful if driven by a coordinated effort to identify the unique needs of a community and the partners and projects that would yield the greatest impact. See Appendix A for a list of illustrative policies, partners and projects at the federal, state and local levels.

Why Establish a Food Policy Council?

A number of suburban Cook County residents, in particular those living in the south and southwest regions, lack ready access to healthy food. The establishment of a Cook County food policy council would be the first step in coordinating and promoting healthy food access for all Cook County residents. Food policy councils develop and strengthen relationships between government, non-profit, private organizations, businesses, and residents. Cook County government is uniquely positioned to lead this effort to ensure all residents have access to healthy food. Food systems are not defined by jurisdiction and any effort to address food system issues in suburban Cook County must also consider and coordinate with Chicago and the broader region.

The food economy is at the core of survival in any community. Above all else, the purpose of this food policy council would be to develop a sustainable system of food security that allows citizens to eat healthy local fare and find work with dignity within their communities.

CONCLUSION

The Suburban Cook County Food System Steering Committee established from the outset a commitment to develop a healthy food system that embraces the principles of health promotion, sustainability, resiliency, diversity, fairness, economic balance, and transparency. Addressing the issues of social inequity as they exist in food security is both a major focus and the major challenge associated with this project. Suburban Cook County is an area of both great wealth and great poverty, where services to underserved communities remain uncoordinated. These are issues of long standing in which a food policy council could play a leading role.
ENDNOTES


11 Cook County Department of Public Health. (2011), WePlan 2015, Suburban Cook County Community Health Assessment and Plan (unpublished document), Oak Forest, Illinois.


APPENDIX A

Prepared by Debbie Hillman
Prepared for the Cook County Food System Steering Committee Report

HEALTHY, FAIR, AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS:
Successful Local Food Policies, Projects, and Partners
February 2012

CURRENT POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS APPLICABLE IN COOK COUNTY

FEDERAL

1. KNOW YOUR FARMER, KNOW YOUR FOOD (USDA)
   Not a separate law or policy, but a coordinating framework adopted by the USDA. Here is the description from the KYF, KYF homepage.
   Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food (KYF2) is a USDA-wide effort to carry out President Obama’s commitment to strengthening local and regional food systems.

   We know that demand for local and regional foods is strong, as consumers across the country are looking to connect with their food and the people who grow and raise it:
   • The number of farmers markets has more than tripled in the past 15 years and there are now more than 7,175 around the country;
   • In 1986 there were two community supported agriculture operations, today there are over 4,000;
   • There are farm to school programs in 48 states, totaling more than 2,200 and up from two in 1996;
   • All 50 states in the U.S. have agricultural branding programs, such as "Jersey Fresh" or "Simply Kansas;"
   • As Governor of Iowa, Tom Vilsack started one of the first food policy councils. Today there are over 100 food policy councils;
   • And the National Restaurant Association declared "locally sourced meats and seafood" and "locally grown produce" as the top two trends for 2011.

   Local and regional markets often provide farmers with a higher share of the food dollar, and money spent at a local business often continues to circulate within community, creating a multiplier effect and providing greater economic benefits to the area.

   An Economic Research Service Study (May 2010) identified barriers to local food market entry and expansion, including capacity constraints for farms, a lack of infrastructure for moving local food into mainstream markets, and regulatory uncertainties. This is the work of the Initiative.

   Our mission is to strengthen the critical connection between farmers and consumers and supports local and regional food systems. Through this initiative, USDA integrates programs and policies that:
   • Stimulate food- and agriculturally-based community economic development;
   • Foster new opportunities for farmers and ranchers;
   • Promote locally and regionally produced and processed foods;
   • Cultivate healthy eating habits and educated, empowered consumers;
   • Expand access to affordable fresh and local food; and
   • Demonstrate the connection between food, agriculture, community and the environment.
Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food also leads a national conversation about food and agriculture to strengthen the connection between consumers and farmers.

Thanks to the 2008 Farm Bill, there is more support for local and regional agriculture than ever. To make the most of our programs we are working to foster innovative, effective, and open government. While there is no office, staff, or budget dedicated to KYF2, Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan chairs a task force of USDA employees representing every agency within the Department in order to break down bureaucratic silos, develop commonsense solutions for communities and farmers, and foster new partnerships inside USDA and across the country.

2. LOCAL FARMS, FOOD, AND JOBS ACT  S. 1773 AND H.R. 3286
This bill is currently in the pipeline in Congress. Currently, there are only two Illinois co-sponsors (Jan Schakowsky - 9th district and Daniel Lipinski - 3rd district). Here is the summary as taken from the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition website: http://sustainableagriculture.net/our-work/local-food-bill/

Sponsored by Representative Chellie Pingree (Maine) and Senator Sherrod Brown (Ohio)
The Local Farms, Food, and Jobs Act will improve federal farm bill programs that support local and regional farm and food systems. This legislation will help farmers and ranchers engaged in local and regional agriculture by addressing production, aggregation, processing, marketing, and distribution needs and will also assist consumers by improving access to healthy food and direct and retail markets. And of utmost importance, this legislation will provide more secure funding for critically important programs that support family farms, expand new farming opportunities, and invest in the local agriculture economy.

STATE OF ILLINOIS

96th General Assembly (2009-2010)

1. ILLINOIS FOOD, FARMS, AND JOBS ACT

Sets forth procurement goals for state agencies and state-funded institutions. Authorizes the development of a labeling and certification program, whereby a label may be placed on local farm and food products that are grown, processed, packaged, and distributed by Illinois citizens or businesses located wholly within the borders of Illinois.

2. FARM FRESH SCHOOLS PROGRAM
HB78  Public Act  96-0153  Rep. Sandy Cole
Creates the Farm Fresh Schools Program Act. Provides that the Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the State Board of Education and the Department of Public Health, shall create the Farm Fresh Schools Program. Provides that the intent of the Program is to reduce obesity and improve nutrition and public health, as well as strengthen local agricultural economies by increasing access to and promoting the consumption of locally grown fruits and vegetables in schools and increasing physical activities and programs that promote pupil wellness. Provides that the Department of Agriculture and the State Board of Education shall jointly administer a process to review grant proposals and award grants on a competitive basis to eligible applicants to implement the Program. Creates the Farm Fresh Schools Program Fund as a special fund in the State treasury.

3. ILLINOIS FRESH FOOD FUND (DCEO Capital Bill)
SB1221  Public Act 96-0039  Sen. Trotter
The Fresh Food Fund was established in the 2009 Illinois Jobs Now! capital bill to incentivize and facilitate the creation of grocery stores in urban communities statewide.

4. **OBESITY PREVENTION INITIATIVE**
   
   **HB3767**  
   **Public Act 96-0155**  
   **Rep. Coulson**
   
   Provides that the Department of Public Health shall organize hearings on the health effects and costs of obesity and the need to address the obesity epidemic. Provides that the hearing officers shall provide a report on the hearings. Provides that the Department shall grant funds to one or more non-profit organizations or local public health departments to conduct a statewide education campaign.

5. **EPA COMPOSTING FACILITIES**
   
   **SB99**  
   **Public Act 96-0418**  
   **Sen. Steans**
   
   Amends the Environmental Protection Act. Redefines the term "compost", "compostable material", and "food scrap" to enable commercial food scrap composting. Exempts certain types of facilities, sites, portions of facilities, and portions of sites from regulation as pollution control facilities.

6. **FARMERS MARKET TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**
   
   **HB4756**  
   **Public Act 96-1088**  
   **Rep. LaShawn Ford**
   
   Creates the Farmers’ Market Technology Improvement Program Act. Provides that out of funds appropriated to the Department of Human Services for the LINK program, the Department, in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Agriculture, shall use whatever monies are necessary to implement the Farmers’ Market Technology Improvement Program to assist nontraditional fresh food markets, such as farmers’ markets, Green Carts, market boxes, farm stands and mobile farm stands, produce stands, and other open-air markets, to develop the capability to accept wireless electronic payment cards, including electronic benefits transfer cards or LINK cards, and maintain the equipment usage. Provides that the purpose of the program is to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables and other LINK eligible food products, including quality meat and dairy, for all Illinois residents by allowing LINK program participants to redeem their SNAP benefits at nontraditional fresh food markets.

7. **CHEMICAL DRIFT SPECIALTY CROP FARM REGISTRY**
   
   **SJR105**  
   **Adopted**  
   **Sen. David Koehler**
   
   Creates voluntary GIS website registry for organic and specialty crop farms. Purpose is to help conventional farmers and chemical applicators avoid damaging sensitive crops.

8. **FARM-TO-SCHOOL DATABASE (Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act)**
   
   **SB615**  
   **Public Act 96-1095**  
   **Sen. Linda Holmes**
   
   Creates a farm-to-school database to facilitate connection between farmers and schools. To be developed jointly by Department of Agriculture and Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Council.

9. **PUBLIC HEALTH - HONEY EXEMPT**
   
   **SB2959**  
   **Public Act 96-1028**  
   **Sen. David Luechtefeld**
   
   Amends the Illinois Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act and the Criminal Code of 1961 to include in the definition of "raw agricultural commodity", honey that is in the comb or that is removed from the comb and in an unadulterated condition. Further amends the Illinois Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act to provide that notwithstanding any other provision of the Act, the Department of Public Health may not regulate honey that is in the comb or that is removed from the comb and in an unadulterated condition. Provides that both forms of honey are exempt from the provisions of the Act.
97th General Assembly (2011-2012)

1. **Farmers Market Task Force**
   SB1852 Public Act 97-0394 Sen. David Luechtefeld
   Creates a task force to review the rules and laws defining what products can be sold at farmers’ markets, as well as sanitation and food preparation requirements. The 24-member task force will then assist the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) in developing and implementing administrative rules ensuring consistent statewide farmers’ market regulations.

2. **Food Handling-Cottage Food**
   SB840 Public Act 97-0393 Sen. David Koehler
   Allows homemade foods like jams, cookies and cakes to be sold at farmers’ markets. Cottage food vendors must meet the following conditions for their products to be sold at Illinois’ farmers’ markets:

3. **Liquor Craft Brewer Distributor**
   SB754 Public Act 97-0005 Sen. Donne Trotter
   Amends the Liquor Control Act of 1934. Provides that a brew pub licensee may simultaneously hold a craft brewer license. Defines “craft brewer”.

4. **DCEO Strategic Plan Agritourism**
   HB3244 Public Act 97-0392 Rep. Kay Hatcher
   Allows the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) to develop and implement a statewide strategic plan to increase agricultural tourism.

5. **Senate Resolution**
   SR0530 Adopted Feb. 9, 2012 Sen. D. Koehler
   Urges Congress to adopt a farm bill that supports and promotes the development of local and regional food systems.

**Legislators in Cook County who Support local foods**
All Cook County state legislators in office in 2007 and 2009 voted for the Illinois Food, Farms, and Jobs Acts (both bills were unanimously passed except for one southern Illinois Senator in 2009).

Cook County legislators who have been leaders in local foods include:
- Cong. Bobby Rush
- Cong. Jan Schakowsky
- State Sen. John Cullerton
- State Sen. Jacqueline Collins
- State Sen. Heather Steans
- State Sen. Don Harmon
- State Sen. Toi Hutchison
- State Rep. LaShawn Ford
- Former State Rep. Julie Hamos (now Director of Illinois Healthcare and Family Services)
ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGES

ILLINOIS GREEN ECONOMY NETWORK (IGEN): The Role of Community Colleges in Developing the Illinois Local Food System

REGIONAL (MULTI-COUNTY)
CMAP GO TO 2040 PLAN
"Promote Sustainable Local Food" (2010, 18 pages), one of 12 major recommendations by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. CMAP currently working on model ordinances, data collection, etc.

COUNTY
COOK COUNTY FOOD SYSTEM STEERING COMMITTEE
Writing a snapshot assessment of the Cook County food system and proposing a Cook County food council. Report and ordinance to be completed by March 2012. (Lara Jaskiewicz, Project Manager, under a CDC grant to the Cook County Department of Public Health under the Communities Putting Prevention to Work initiative).

MUNICIPAL AND SCHOOL
There are numerous initiatives that fall under "local food systems" heading. Policies might cover:
- community gardens on public land or unused non-profit land
- backyard (residential) livestock (chicken, duck, bee, rabbit, etc.)
- school gardens
- farm-to-school curricula
- farmers markets and farmstands
- food scrap composting (home and commercial)
- home-based businesses of all kinds (production, processing, cooking)
- agricultural zoning (especially as it relates to small acreage)
- covenants in homeowners associations

MAJOR PARTNERS FOR LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

EXAMPLES OF FOOD POLICY COUNCILS IN ILLINOIS AT ALL GOVERNMENT LEVELS (IMPLEMENTED OR PROPOSED)

1. ILLINOIS LOCAL FOOD, FARMS, & JOBS COUNCIL
State body charged with implementing Illinois Food, Farms, and Jobs Act. First meeting was in March 2010. www.foodfarmsjobs.org

2. CMAP'S GO TO 2040 PLAN
Recommends the creation of a regional food policy council.

3. COOK COUNTY FOOD SYSTEM STEERING COMMITTEE
An ad hoc committee formed under the CCDPH CPPW grant to (1) write an assessment of the suburban Cook County food system and (2) draft an ordinance to create a county-wide food policy council as the primary solution to ameliorate problems identified in the assessment. Lara Jaskiewicz Lara.Jaskiewicz@phimc.org
708/708-524-5156

4. KNOX COUNTY FOOD DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

5. LAKE COUNTY BOARD
has been investigating the creation of a food policy council since 2009.
6. **DEPT. OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**
   (Agricultural Conservation Easement Farmland Protection Committee) has been planning an assessment and the creation of a food policy council since January 2011.

7. **CHICAGO FOOD POLICY ADVISORY COUNCIL**

8. **EVANSTON FOOD COUNCIL**
   Policy, community-food projects, networking. Founded in 2005. Contact: Debbie Hillman
   DLHillman@sbcglobal.net 847/328-7175.

9. **GLENVIEW**
   A grassroots group led by the Farmers Market manager is in the early planning stages.

**OTHER FOOD SYSTEM GROUPS IN ILLINOIS THAT COVER COOK COUNTY**

Government-sponsored or connected

1. **ILLINOIS INTERAGENCY NUTRITION COUNCIL**
   Promotes health and wellness through nutrition education, coordination of services and access to nutrition programs so that Illinois residents can achieve food security. [http://inc.aces.illinois.edu/](http://inc.aces.illinois.edu/)


3. **CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN ELIMINATION OF DISPARITIES, UIC**
   Food Equity Policy Committee. Projects, research, and policy to increase local food production. [www.CEEDChicago.org](http://www.CEEDChicago.org) CDC-funded.

4. **COOK COUNTY FOOD SYSTEM STEERING COMMITTEE**
   An ad hoc committee formed to (1) influence the creation of a county food policy council, and (2) to write a strategic plan for the food policy council. Lara Jaskiewicz Lara.Jaskiewicz@phimc.org 708/708-524-5156

5. **ADVOCATES FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE**
   A broad-based grassroots coalition including a number of City of Chicago representatives (DOE, DZLU). Includes Chicago-area members, but works primarily within City of Chicago limits so far. Actively working on City of Chicago urban agriculture zoning ordinance. [http://auachicago.org/](http://auachicago.org/)


Grassroots, non-profit, academic

1. **ILLINOIS STEWARDSHIP ALLIANCE**
   Promotes establishment of sustainable local food systems and facilitates creation of food policy councils. [www.ilstewards.org/](http://www.ilstewards.org/)

2. **ILLINOIS FARMERS MARKETS NETWORK**
   Grassroots organizing of a statewide network to support farmers market and market managers. Annual forums. Contact: Pat Stieren 217-522-4274 pstieren31@comcast.net
3. **ILLINOIS PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION** - Food and Nutrition Section. Connects public health departments with food access and food security issues and policies. Jim Bloyd, Chairperson. [www.ipha.com](http://www.ipha.com/)

4. **THE LAND CONNECTION**

5. **NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY SUSTAINABLE FOOD TALKS**
   A faculty-staff clearinghouse organization for all NU food people and projects (students, faculty, staff, community) to strengthen sustainable food systems network, knowledge base, and find ways together to maximize outreach. [http://www.nusustainablefoodtalks.blogspot.com/](http://www.nusustainablefoodtalks.blogspot.com/)

6. **ENVIRONMENT AGRICULTURE AND FOOD WORKING GROUP**

7. **CHICAGO AREA FOOD STUDIES WORKING GROUP**
   University of Illinois-Chicago. Institute for the Humanities. [www.uic.edu/depts/huminst/food_grp.shtml](http://www.uic.edu/depts/huminst/food_grp.shtml)

8. **MIDWEST FARM CONNECTION**
   A Project of The Land Connection to Connect Aspiring Farmers with Retiring Farmers. [www.midwestfarmconnection.org/](http://www.midwestfarmconnection.org/)

**SUBURBAN COOK COUNTY LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM PROJECTS**

1. **CHICAGO’S COMMUNITY KITCHENS**
   Since its inception in 1998, Chicago’s Community Kitchens has been providing foodservice job training to unemployed and underemployed adults in Cook County who have a passion for “life in the kitchen” and a will to achieve entry-level employment in the foodservice industry. Students create nearly 2,000 meals a day that are delivered to Food Depository Kids Cafes, providing nourishing meals to hungry children after school, older adults who need food assistance and older adult meal programs.

2. **FRESH MOVES**
   Fresh Moves is a mobile food bus delivering affordable, healthy food to struggling communities, block by block. Fresh Moves’ mission is to address the social issues that arise in communities where the food selection is abysmal. Fresh Moves secured a bus, donated from the CTA and partnered with Architecture for Humanity to transform the bus into a mobile produce market.

3. **GREEN YOUTH FARM**
   Green Youth Farm is a program through the Chicago Botanic Garden that serves up to 70 public school students annually at four sites. Participants operate a small urban farm from which they donate fresh produce to food pantries; demonstrate healthy food preparation at centers for Women, Infants and Children (WIC); and sell fresh, affordable produce in underserved communities (including sales to low-income clients who are able to pay using the Link card and WIC and senior coupons). In 2011, Green Youth Farm participants harvested over 17,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables, generating nearly $26,000 in revenue, while donating over 2,300 pounds to charities.

4. **ORGANIC PANTRY PROJECT (TOPP)**
   TOPP is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation dedicated to providing local, organic produce to area food pantries by building and supporting community gardens and educating people about organic vegetable gardening. In 2010, TOPP built community gardens at Pleasant Ridge School and Glenview Community Church, with the help of over 75 adults and kids in the community.
5. **WINDY CITY HARVEST**

Windy City Harvest is a collaboration between the Chicago Botanic Garden and Richard J. Daley College at the Arturo Velasquez Institute campus to educate and place underemployed young adults in urban agriculture enterprises. In 2011, Windy City Harvest production operations harvested 26,370 pounds of organic method produce, with $34,547 in sales. To date, forty-one students have graduated from the program.
APPENDIX B
Seminal Reports

BUILDING CHICAGO’S FOOD SYSTEM (2008)
Chicago’s Food Policy Advisory Council
This document introduces readers to the larger issues of the food system and suggests ways to participate in its
development. Examples of food policy council in other cities is included.

FARM TO FORK: INNOVATIONS IN THE CHICAGO FOOD INDUSTRY (2010)
Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship at the University of Chicago Booth School of business and the Chicago
Entrepreneurial Center (CEC)
This paper reflects key points made at a conference by the same name. The conference brought together industry
leaders, entrepreneurs, investors, growers, researchers, government officials, faculty and students to discuss the
challenges and opportunities to advance the region’s leadership and growth in the food industry. Included is a history
of the region’s participation in this sector as well as suggestions for future strategies in this area.
www.chicagobooth.edu/entrepreneurship/docs/Farm-to-Fork.pdf

FEEDING OURSELVES: STRATEGIES FOR A NEW ILLINOIS FOOD SYSTEM (2004)
Red Tomato
Sponsored by four foundations, the Chicago community trust and the Chicago Department of Planning and
Development, this report makes recommendations on how to accelerate the growth of sustainable agriculture in
Illinois.

GO TO 2040 (2010)
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
This comprehensive strategic plan for the Chicago Metropolitan region includes a section for recommendations on
how to strengthen local food systems by facilitating sustainable local food production.
www.cmap.illinois.gov/moving-forward/local-food-systems

ILLINOIS FOOD, FARMS, AND JOBS REPORT (2010)
Illinois Food, Farms, and Jobs Council
This report discusses issues that need to be addressed as we ramp up our local food systems in Illinois.
www.agr.state.il.us/newsrels/taskforcereport-outside.pdf

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN DEVELOPING THE ILLINOIS LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM (2011)
Illinois Green Economy Network (IGEN) Local Food Task Force
This report discusses opportunities for community colleges to support local food economies on campus and in their
communities. Included in the report are examples of exemplary programs and curriculum resources.
http://www.llcc.edu/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=8oWzseR6r8%3D&tbid=6628
Cook County Food System Survey

We would like to get your input on the laws, rules, ordinances, regulations and government programs that have an impact on the food system in Cook County, IL. This includes activities such as buying or renting land for growing crops, selling and eating food, and what happens with food-related waste products. Currently, these actions may be regulated by a variety of agencies and supported by different programs, which may not be connected to each other.

We’d like to learn about what food system issues you experience through your work and personal life. The information you provide will be used to develop guidance for a proposed food policy council.

This survey should take about 20 minutes to complete and will close on September 29, 2011. We are particularly interested in responses from people who live or work in Cook County, IL. Feel free to share the link to this survey with others who live or work in Cook County, IL. When you submit your survey you will have the option to sign up to receive a summary report of the final recommendations, and notification of when the suburban Cook County food system assessment report becomes available.

This survey is a project of the suburban Cook County Communities Putting Prevention to Work project, a joint initiative of the Cook County Department of Public Health and the Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago. The survey was developed by members of the suburban Cook County Food System Steering Committee.

*1. How are you involved with the food system? Check all that apply:

- Consumer/eating food
- Growing or raising food for human consumption
- Processing food
- Commercial or wholesale distribution or transportation of food
- Retail food sales, including grocery and food service
- Emergency food distribution, including pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and other service agencies
- Waste disposal/recycling
- Research on food system activities
- Advocating on food system issues
- Policy making around food
- Education (teaching or student) about food and food systems
- Other (please specify)
Food Production includes activities related to growing or raising food for human consumption. This includes activities such as land acquisition, ground preparation, licensing/certification, planting, and harvesting.

2. Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following food production statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Don’t know/Not sure</th>
<th>No comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal agriculture policy supports the growing and raising of the foods we need for a healthy nation</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My community has clear rules for farming and gardening</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am concerned about the negative environmental impacts of farming methods</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm labor wages are fair</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The process to obtain food certifications, such as organic, is clear and reasonable</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing food safety standards is cost prohibitive</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food safety standards for farming, ranching and other food production need to be strengthened</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can easily find out which licenses or inspections I need for food production</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food production licenses and inspections accommodate different types and sizes of businesses</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural and post-harvest workers need additional training and education</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic development programs support locally-owned businesses as well as large national and multinational businesses</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am concerned about farm land being purchased by other countries or non-U.S. organizations</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural working conditions are safe</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community stakeholders and residents are ‘at the table’ in the agriculture policy- and rule-making process</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food production can minimize waste through composting and other processes</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Please use the space below to describe any government policies, rules or programs relating to food production in Cook County that concern you.

[Space for comments]
Cook County Food System Survey

Food Processing

Processing food involves taking ingredients to prepare raw products for sale or to make more finished products; minimal post harvest best practices (such as packaging fruit for market) or value added processing (such as milling flour or making ice cream).

4. Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following food processing statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Don’t know/Not sure</th>
<th>No comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal agriculture policy reduces the costs of foods purchased by processors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My community has zones where agribusiness is allowed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food safety standards are cost prohibitive to implement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food safety standards for food processing businesses need to be strengthened</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook County has sufficient infrastructure to support food processing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation costs for foods are too high—Agree, Disagree, Don’t know/Unsure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food labeling standards are cost prohibitive to implement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food processing worker wages are fair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is clear which licenses and inspections are needed for different food processors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current food processing licenses and inspections accommodate different types and sizes of businesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and education is needed for the food processing work force</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic development programs support locally-owned food processing businesses as well as large national and multinational businesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food processing working conditions are safe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community stakeholders and residents are ‘at the table’ in the food processing policy- and rule-making process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food processing can minimize waste through composting and other processes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Please use the space below to describe any government policies, rules or programs relating to food processing in Cook County that concern you.
6. Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following food distribution statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Don't know/Not sure</th>
<th>No comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food safety standards are cost prohibitive for food distributors to implement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food safety standards for food distributors need to be strengthened</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook County has sufficient infrastructure to support food distribution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent oil prices have had a negative impact on food distribution businesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food distribution worker wages are fair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is clear which licenses and inspections are needed for different food distributors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current food processing licenses and inspections accommodate different types and sizes of food distribution businesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and education is needed for the food distribution work force</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic development programs support locally-owned businesses as well as large national and multinational businesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food distribution working conditions are safe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community stakeholders and residents are ‘at the table’ in the food distribution policy- and rule-making process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food distribution can minimize waste through composting and other processes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Please use the space below to describe any government policies, rules or programs relating to food distribution in Cook County that concern you.
## Retail Food

Retail food businesses include stores that sell food, restaurants, caterers, public and private cafeterias, farmers’ markets, and mobile food vendors.

8. **Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following retail food statements.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Don’t know/Not sure</th>
<th>No comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food safety standards are cost prohibitive for retailers to implement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food safety standards for retailers need to be strengthened</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food transportation costs limit the ability of businesses to sell foods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food costs make it hard to be profitable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail and restaurant worker wages are fair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is clear which licenses and inspections are needed for stores,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restaurants, and other food retailers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current retail food licenses and inspections accommodate different types</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and sizes of businesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and education is needed for the retail food workforce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School lunch programs support health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stores selling healthy food are in every community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is economic development support for local retail food businesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is economic development support for chain retail food businesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retail food workforce needs training and education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail food working conditions are safe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community stakeholders and residents are ‘at the table’ in the retail food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>policy- and rule-making process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail food businesses can minimize waste through composting and other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>processes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. **Please use the space below to describe any government policies, rules or programs relating to retail food in Cook County that concern you.**
Cook County Food System Survey

Food Assistance and Emergency Food Programs

Food assistance and emergency food organizations distribute and serve food to those who face hunger or are having difficulty getting food on their own. These include food pantries, soup kitchens, and communal meal providers, among other programs.

10. Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following food assistance or emergency food statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Don't know/Not sure</th>
<th>No comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food safety standards are cost prohibitive for food assistance programs to implement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food safety standards for food assistance programs need to be strengthened</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased transportation costs have reduced the amount of foods available for those who need it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food costs prevent food assistance programs from providing the foods their clients need</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency food system worker wages are fair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is clear which licenses and inspections are needed for food assistance programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current food assistance program licenses and inspections accommodate different types and sizes of businesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and education is needed for the food assistance work force</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal nutrition and meal programs support healthy nutrition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients of emergency food programs have good access to stores that sell healthy foods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food assistance working conditions are safe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community stakeholders and residents are ‘at the table’ in the food assistance policy- and rule-making process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food assistance programs can minimize waste through composting and other processes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Please use the space below to describe any government policies, rules or programs relating to food assistance programs in Cook County that concern you.
This section asks about your individual ability to access the foods you need to be healthy.

### 12. Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following food access statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Don't know/Not sure</th>
<th>No comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food safety standards need to be strengthened</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil prices have raised food prices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School lunch programs support healthy eating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I live near a store that sell healthy foods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People would eat more healthy foods if they knew how to prepare them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior center meals are healthy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy foods cost too much</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have trouble affording the foods prescribed for a health condition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have trouble finding the foods prescribed for a health condition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food pantries and soup kitchens provide healthy foods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community stakeholders and residents are ‘at the table’ in the food access decision making process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents can minimize waste through composting and other processes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 13. Please use the space below to describe any government policies, rules or programs relating to food access or consumption in Cook County that concern you.

[Blank space for comments]
Waste processing and management includes trash hauling, composting, recycling, landfill, and other activities related to processing waste products.

14. Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following food waste and recycling statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Don't know/Not sure</th>
<th>No comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waste labor wages are fair</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and education is needed for the waste workforce</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste management working conditions are safe</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community stakeholders and residents are ‘at the table’ in the decision making process</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The food system causes a great deal of unnecessary waste costs and processing</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landfill availability is becoming hard to find</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook County should explore increasing the local development of alternative or new food waste management technologies</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. Please use the space below to describe any government policies, rules or programs relating to food waste in Cook County that concern you.
16. Where do you live and work?

Please choose the city in which you live and the city in which your office is located.

Live: 

Work: 

17. Are you an employee or volunteer of a food system organization? This can be a farm, food processor, food distributor, grocery store, restaurant, etc.

☐ Yes

☐ No
18. In what area(s) of the food system does your organization focus?

☐ Production
☐ Processing
☐ Distribution
☐ Grocery
☐ Food service
☐ Food assistance
☐ Consumer education or support
☐ Waste processing or management

Other (please specify)

19. What is your organization's market area or jurisdiction?

Jurisdiction or catchment area

Please choose:

Other (please specify)

20. Is your organization:

☐ For profit
☐ Not for profit
☐ Government
☐ Educational

Other (please specify)

21. Are you a food system advocate?

☐ Yes
☐ No
### Demographics

**22. Are you an elected official?**
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

**23. Are you male or female?**
- [ ] Female
- [ ] Male

**24. What is your age?**
- [ ] Under 18
- [ ] 18-29
- [ ] 30-44
- [ ] 45-64
- [ ] 65 or older

**25. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin?**
- [ ] No
- [ ] Yes, Mexican or Chicano
- [ ] Yes, Puerto Rican
- [ ] Yes, Other

**26. What is your race?**
- [ ] White or Caucasian
- [ ] Black or African American
- [ ] American Indian or Alaska Native
- [ ] Asian Indian
- [ ] Chinese
- [ ] Japanese
- [ ] Korean
- [ ] Other Asian
- [ ] Pacific Islander
- [ ] Other
27. What is your total household income?

- Under $25,000
- $25,000-$49,999
- $50,000-$74,999
- $75,000-$99,999
- $100,000-$150,000
- Over $150,000

28. Please use the space below to state any issues you feel were not included in the previous questions.
**Cook County Food System Survey**

**Thank You**

Thank you for completing this survey. Your input will help to shape the direction of Cook County food efforts in the future.

Interested in staying involved?

There are two ways you can stay involved in this process:

1. Sign up to receive a copy of the recommendations based on the survey results and will be notified when a report of the suburban Cook County food system assessment is completed.

2. Attend a meeting on October 6, 2011, to review the survey results and develop recommendations for what the proposed food policy council will do.

To learn more, or to register for the meeting, visit the Cook County Department of Public Health website at: [www.cookcountypublichealth.org](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org)
Glossary

This glossary is focused on terms that a food policy council would use on a regular basis.

Agri-tourism
Farm visits, bed and breakfasts, holiday events and seasonal celebrations aligned with agricultural production.

Alternative Food System
A local food system that is an alternative to the global corporate models where producers and consumers are separated through a chain of processors/manufacturers, shippers and retailers. They are a complex network of relationships between actors including producers, distributors, retailers and consumers grounded in a particular place. These systems are the unit of measure by which participants in local food movements are working to increase food security and ensure the economic, ecological and social sustainability of communities.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
a community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farm becomes, either legally or spiritually, the community’s farm, with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production.

Farm
An operation that produces, or would normally produce and sell, $1,000 or more of agricultural products per year.

Farmstand
A stand-alone store or market selling produce.

Food Cooperative
A grocery store organized as a cooperative. Food cooperatives are usually consumers’ cooperatives and are owned by their members.

Food Hub
USDA defines a “local food hub” as “a centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products.” As such, food hubs are a proven approach for building farmer and community wealth. They help farmers to obtain a fair price for their goods, improve food security for people at all income levels within the community, and ensure more of the community’s wealth is reinvested locally.
**Food Incubator**
A commercial kitchen operations that attempts to ensure safety and health of consumers and restaurant patrons who could become ill by eating contaminated food. Rules for commercial kitchens, established by the county health departments that conduct routine inspections in Illinois, mandate that equipment, food storage and preparation, cleanliness, sanitation, and staff hygiene practices meet public safety standards. Culinary Incubators drive new start-up businesses, for whom, without a health department licensed commercial kitchen, could not legally produce their food. In addition to producing food, commercial kitchens can be used to shoot TV shows, teach cooking classes, host food tastings, and other events.

**Food Policy Councils**
Forums for food issues and platforms for coordinated action. These councils can act within governmental bodies or as separate entities.

**Food Security**
USDA Economic Research Service defines food security as a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food.

**Food Shed**
Everything between where a food is produced and where a food is consumed. It includes the land it grows on, the routes it travels, the markets it goes through, and the people it serves.

**Home Rule**
The Illinois Constitution allows a home rule unit to “exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs.

**Link Program**
The Illinois Link Program is the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) system used in Illinois to distribute food and cash assistance benefits authorized under several federal and state programs. Food benefits are authorized under the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). As of October 1, 2008 SNAP is the new name for the Food Stamp Program. The state cash programs are Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Aid to the Aged, Blind and Disabled (AABD), General Assistance (GA), and Refugee and Repatriate Assistance (RRA). Families who are eligible for the food and cash programs access their benefits using their Illinois Link card by swiping the card through a point of sale (POS) terminal and entering their Personal Identification Number (PIN). The majority of Link card holders, 91%, receive only food benefits, 7% receive both food and cash benefits, and 2% receive only cash benefits. Food benefits can be spent only on SNAP eligible food items; cash benefits have no restrictions. Farmers’ markets accepting Link benefits in Suburban Cook County include, Oak Park Farmers’ Market and Evanston Farmers’ Market.
Local Food
A product available for direct human consumption that is grown, processed, packaged, and distributed within a certain distance. Typically the distance ranges from 100-300 miles from a community. In GO TO 2040, The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning did not set a mileage target, but instead defined the distance component as “within our seven counties and adjacent regions” making it a more relative term than a set standard.iii Good Greens, a network of local food advocacy organizations, defines the Midwest growing region as the following states: Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. These states are also included in the USDA Office of Food and Nutrition Service Midwest Region.

Local Rule
Municipal ordinances supersede county guidelines. Municipalities with populations over 25,000 are automatically considered in this category of governance. Others may choose to do so through a referendum.

Municipality
An urban political unit having corporate status and usually powers of self-government.

Natural
Legally, food labeled "natural" does not contain any artificial ingredients, coloring ingredients, or chemical preservatives, and, in the case of meat and poultry, is minimally processed.

Ordinance
A law passed by a municipal government.

Organic
Organically raised food follows a set of prescribed practices that differ in a number of ways from industrialized agriculture. Only farms that go through the certification process of their country or state can label their food organic. The process is expensive, and many small farms choose to forgo certification even though their own practices meet or exceed those required.

Pastured Meat Products
Any animal raised for meat or eggs, having the ability to walk around in open fields and woods, foraging for food (primarily seeds and insects, with the occasional small rodent).

Soil Amendments
Compost, fertilizers, soil conditioners, lab tests, etc.

Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)
Approval by the federal SNAP authorizes farmers’ markets to accept Link payments from the Link food account. Under this approval, farmers’ markets must follow the federal SNAP and Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) rules and regulations. The farmers’ markets must specifically
request authorization to accept cash Link payments, and to describe how Link purchases with food and cash benefits are accounted for separately at the vendor sales level.

**Specialty Crops**
Fruit, trees, nuts, vegetables, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops. Corn and soybeans are excluded in this definition.

**Statute**
A law, statue or regulation enacted by a municipal corporation.

**Sustainable Agriculture**
The term "sustainable agriculture" (U.S. Code Title 7, Section 3103) means an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will over the long-term:

- Satisfy human food and fiber needs.
- Enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agriculture economy depends.
- Make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls.
- Sustain the economic viability of farm operations.
- Enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

**Township**
A unit of local government usually a subdivision of a county, found in most Midwestern and northwestern states of the U.S. and in most Canadian provinces. Townships and municipalities have different powers and responsibilities. A township in Illinois is six miles by six miles.

**Unincorporated**
land not included in municipal jurisdiction.

**Vertical Farming**
A concept that argues that it is economically and environmentally viable to cultivate plant or animal life within skyscrapers or on vertically inclined surfaces.

**WIC**
A special supplemental food program for women, infants and children.

---
