

The cover features a white background with a large blue triangle on the right side. The text is arranged diagonally from the top-left towards the center. The title is in blue, the subtitle is in grey, and the date is in a smaller grey font. There are also orange and teal triangular shapes in the bottom-left corner.

**Food & Health in  
Wapello County, Iowa**

**ACTION PLAN &  
RESOURCE COMPENDIUM**

October 2014



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RESEARCH & CONSULTING GROUP

Ottumwa Regional

**LEGACY**

FOUNDATION



*Connecting Opportunity To Transformation*

**LIVE UNITED**



**United Way  
of Wapello County**

RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED BY MARI GALLAGHER RESEARCH & CONSULTING GROUP.

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MANY COMMUNITY PARTNERS ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS REPORT --- THANK YOU!

## OVERVIEW

The Wapello County Action Plan & Resource Compendium is comprised of these sections:

- 1) **Recommendations** (the key recommended steps of the Action Plan to be considered by the Working Committee and funders);  
*Pages 1 through 6*
- 2) **Resource Guide** (provides listing of available grants and program ideas specific to rural counties and towns); and  
*Pages 6 through 24*
- 3) **Exemplars** (provides specific project examples from other locations).  
*Pages 24 through 33*

A **Map Compendium** of key project maps, including those that illuminate the strategic locations to improve food and health in Wapello County, is also provided as a separate document.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Summary and Technical Addendum provide clear evidence that – by addressing healthy food solutions in key locations in Wapello County – community leaders and funders can effectively increase public health while empowering the county’s schoolchildren to grow to their full potential. We recommend the following actions steps to be considered by the Working Committee:

### **1) Focus on effective policy and program initiatives in local schools.**

Our research found that a student’s residential proximity to mainstream grocers and distance from fringe food retailers has a predictive effect on that student’s academic performance. This finding is consistent with and confirmed by other existing research concerning the effect of schoolchildren’s diet upon their educational outcomes: increased fast food consumption has been linked to decreased test scores<sup>1</sup>, “having too much junk food and an unhealthy diet decreases academic performance by limiting the amount of information to the brain,”<sup>2</sup> and young children with diets characterized by high intakes of fat and sugar tend to have slightly lower IQ scores later in childhood than their counterparts with “healthy diets, associated with high intakes of nutrient-rich foods.”<sup>3</sup> Additionally, our Wapello County research found that the magnitude of impact

<sup>1</sup> Tobin, K.J. (2013) Fast-Food Consumption and Educational Test Scores in the USA. *Child: Care, Health & Development*, 39(1), 118-124. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2214.2011.01349.x

<sup>2</sup> Rausch, R. (2013). Nutrition and Academic Performance in School-Age Children The Relation to Obesity and Food Insufficiency. *Journal of Nutrition & Food Sciences*.

<sup>3</sup> Northstone, K. et al. (2011) Are Dietary Patterns in Childhood Associated with IQ at 8 Years of Age? A Population-Based Cohort Study. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*.

on students' performance based on their food access (as measured by distance from the nearest fringe or mainstream food retailer) was larger than the impact of students' household income.

Because students who live both close to and far from fringe and mainstream food retailers can attend the same school, each school has the opportunity to level the nutritional playing field to ensure that those students with less healthy food access outside of school are ensured nutritional foods and nutrition education within the school.

Potential action steps:

- ✚ Create an internal public awareness campaign within school systems. Start by educating school boards and teachers and expand to parents and children. In order to successfully implement changes and action, it is important that schools encourage and promote messages regarding healthy choices (including food and physical activity) (4).
- ✚ Strengthen and actively support local school wellness committees. This could include expanding membership to local community health clinics and for-profit grocers.
- ✚ Brainstorm on new policies and programs to promote and advance healthy food access and choice to schoolchildren, such as educational programs in partnership with a local grocer. Other activities could include promotional materials, contests among school children to create a poster or write an essay about healthy food choice, identifying students most at risk (see maps) and launching or expanding special programs (such as the backpack program, which sends students home with nutritious meals over the weekend). Schools can work to provide healthy food choices and limit junk food distribution, not only within school hours, but also at school events (4, 18). Last, studies have shown that students who participate in a daily breakfast program increase their consumption of daily nutrients, and were more likely to show improved academic performance (8). As local breakfast programs are already in place in Wapello County, reviewing them for nutritional content and effectiveness is yet another opportunity to ensure that the students most in need are being effectively served through these programs.
- ✚ Review other school district nutritional policies and food service programs through a broader community lens. Federal law requires that community stakeholders be granted opportunities to contribute to district wellness policies and that policy reports and updates be made available to the public on a regular basis<sup>4</sup>. More importantly, how can policies and food programs be strengthened and supported? Schools can't do it alone. Some type of school wellness committee usually exists. What can other community leaders do to join and

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<sup>4</sup> Does Your District Wellness Policy Measure Up? *Iowa Department of Education*. [Online] 2014. <https://www.educateiowa.gov/documents/nutrition-learning-tools/2014/01/does-your-district-wellness-policy-measure>.

support the committee's goals? School-wide health may be encouraged as educators and school staff are informed about healthy school environments during professional development (4). While a committee does not guarantee improved healthier school environments, a study published in 2000 indicated that schools with health councils were more likely to have health and nutrition policies in place, and have more community involvement (25).

## **2) Develop community partnerships beyond schools that promote innovative food access solutions.**

Wapello County has a committed core of community partners who are engaged and already working together for the common good of the county and its residents. We recommend that the Working Committee engage these and other community partners to spearhead community-based solutions to limited healthy food access, concentrating efforts on those locations where intervention can be most effective: block groups with the most distance to travel to mainstream grocers and the lowest rates of vehicle ownership.

Solutions can include backyard and community gardening programs, farm-to-community initiatives, transportation and/or delivery services, nonprofit mobile grocers, programs with for-profit grocers, and nutrition educational outreach and advocacy, to name only a few. The most successful programs will be the ones that community leaders are the most excited about and can commit to.

- ✚ **Backyard and community gardening** programs can match novice gardeners with volunteer gardening mentors who assist these novice gardeners in planning, building, and managing their own garden (or plot in a community garden) to supplement the food supply of the novice gardeners. Along with this mentorship, the program can provide novice gardeners with basic gardening equipment and supplies, training related to harvesting and food preparation tips, and workshops on canning and preservation so that food grown in the backyard or in a community garden can be stretched to provide for households during the non-growing season. While the food harvested from such efforts would not be to the scale needed, the programs could generate excitement and advance new learning. This is an excellent project to pair with school or YMCA initiatives. Links can also be made to seniors who might have skills to pass on to young people, and the time and interest to help tend to the gardens.
- ✚ **Farm-to-community solutions** – such as Wapello County's Pearson Farm project. Examples exist around the county of very effective similar programs that not only serve an educational component, but also reach some level of scale.
- ✚ **Transportation and mobile services** can be introduced into the county's infrastructure so that households who lack vehicular access can come to rely on regular availability of a ride to and from a mainstream grocer. Transportation services could be structured through regularly established routes, by consumer subscription, or by an on-call model. Are there members of the community willing

to provide rides for free or for a reasonable fee? Can technology (web, apps, etc.) be a way to connect people? What about making connections through churches or community organizations? On the other hand, the transportation challenge can also be addressed by establishing community-based grocery delivery services. Further, mobile grocery programs facilitated by community organizations (or through a for-profit grocer) could be deployed to those block groups farthest from mainstream grocers, with a schedule that provides residents of these neighborhoods reliable access to fresh groceries at subsidized or regular market prices on a weekly basis.

- ✚ Community organizations can be called upon to share the responsibility of improving nutritional food choices for all of Wapello County's residents through **educational outreach and marketplace advocacy**. Leaders could identify potential community organizations (e.g. healthcare providers, churches, service groups, etc.) which are located in, or in close proximity to, those block groups with the farthest distance from mainstream grocers, where adults have the highest BMI and diabetes occurrence. These partner organizations could then be recruited, trained, and equipped to provide nutritional workshops and cooking classes within these neighborhoods.
- ✚ Additionally, leaders could spearhead an initiative to encourage **fringe food retailers** in these target block groups (such as gas station marts and convenience stores) to take concrete steps toward incorporating fresh, healthy options into their inventories. The effort could be coordinated through a community program and then executed with concentrated advocacy efforts by community organizations in these neighborhoods. The fringe stores might even see their bottom lines improve!

### **3) Support market-based solutions aimed at good food business development.**

In addition to focusing on policy efforts related to school nutrition and community efforts focused on nonprofit services and advocacy initiatives, the challenge to improve food access in Wapello County represents an opportunity for the creation of innovative business models that meet this community need while stimulating the local economy. We recommend that the Wapello County Food Policy Council adopt a strategy to actively support existing businesses that contribute to providing healthy food options (e.g. through "buy local" promotional campaigns that highlight the work of both retailers and producers who contribute nutritional value to the county's food system). Further, we encourage you to develop strategic thinking around supporting the conceptualization, development, launch, and incubation of new businesses that will contribute to the solution of imbalanced food access within Wapello County. Around the country, we have seen businesses both on the production and retail end of the good food supply chain that support the local food system while creating jobs for residents. Examples on the production end might include the **development of a growers' cooperative, community supported agriculture (CSA) that incorporates a buy-one-give-one model, the addition of value-added processing to locally-grown foods via rentable**

**commercial kitchens, or mobile poultry processing that provides smaller scale, rural farmers with a channel for processing and sales.** On the retail end, innovative solutions might include **produce carts** which are deployed to those neighborhoods which are farthest from mainstream grocers and lack vehicle access, a for-profit model of the mobile grocer mentioned in the previous section, or development of restaurants that are focused on offering locally-grown, nutritious alternatives to fast food. The business models will clearly need to be developed to meet the particular needs of their intended market, but the support provided to would-be good food entrepreneurs should include training and technical assistance related to feasibility assessments, market research, business planning and financing, along with mentorship from experienced business owners in the county. This assistance might be delivered as cohort-based workshop series, through a service-as-needed model or through an online rural entrepreneurship hub, or through any combination of these approaches.

#### **4) Encourage business leaders to launch employee wellness programs**

Employers have a vested interest in the health and wellness of their employees. Healthier employees are more productive and have fewer sick days. Employee wellness programs can strengthen employer and employee relations and boost employee retention and overall morale. Most employers who launch wellness programs do so out of genuine concern, but such programs can also increase business profitability. A healthy employee is more focused and is better apt to complete a highly quality job in less time. They get more done. Because programs encourage employees to live more healthfully, they might also lower healthcare costs. Business leaders can identify from the Wapello maps which of their employees live in poor food environments and strategize on how to assist them in accessing nutritional options. Wellness programs can also include opportunities to promote exercise and healthful cooking. For example, business leaders might consider approaching the local YMCA to see if they would consider providing a 3-month trial membership free to employees in a “business wellness program” who are not yet YMCA members. Usage of the membership could be tracked, and at the end of the three-month period, the employer could perhaps subsidize ongoing membership, again, based on continued participation. The workplace provides a very effective and convenient environment to encourage all employees to live healthfully. Programs need not be limited to those living in poor food environments.

## **CONCLUSION**

Through our research, we have established that in Wapello County, access to nutritious foods that promote health is not equitable for all residents. Not all block groups have the same proximity to mainstream grocers or to fringe food retailers, and we have discovered statistically significant associations between the distance to residents’ nearest fringe and mainstream food retailers and both health and educational outcomes. For adults, their residential distance from mainstream grocers that sell fresh, healthy foods was found to have a positive association with weight, BMI and diabetes occurrence (as the distance from these grocers increases, so do these health indicators). For children, while we did not find any statistically significant association



with weight, we found that children aged 3-18 were likely to be taller if they lived farther from fringe food retailers that specialize in processed foods high in salt, fat and sugar. Even more strikingly, we found a significant association between educational performance and schoolchildren's residential access to food retailers. While students' distance from mainstream grocers had a negative effect on both standardized test scores and GPAs as distance increased, test scores and GPAs decreased), students' distance from fringe retailers had the opposite relationship with these outcomes. Notably, the effect of these distances to food retailers was found to have stronger effect than students' household income.

To address these issues affecting the quality of life for Wapello County residents, we recommend the initiation of a Wapello County Food Policy Council (perhaps a permanent expansion of the Working Group) to focus on three main strategic interventions: 1) policy interventions that will ensure that local schools are balancing the county's nutritional playing field by ensuring that all students have access to nutritious foods while in school and while participating in school-sponsored activities, 2) development of community partnerships, programs, and advocacy that will increase food access and nutritional awareness in the highest need areas of Wapello County, and 3) supporting the conceptualization, development and incubation of local good food enterprises which will increase healthy food access in the county while creating jobs and growing the local economy.

## RESOURCE GUIDE

### Funding Sources

#### 1. **USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program (CFPCGP)**

Program Status: Open

Match Requirement: 100% (except for training and capacity-building projects)

In 2014, funded grants for Community Food Projects, Planning Projects and Training and Technical Assistance projects.

Community Food Projects (CFPs) are locally driven food system initiatives and as such, vary from project to project. These projects address one or more food system issues ranging from healthy food availability, to nutrition program participation to sustainable agriculture and so on. More than half of the grants funded through the CFPCGP are for CFPs, and they range from \$10,000 - \$300,000.

Planning Projects (PPs) are funded to assist communities who are beginning to address food system assessment and planning. These projects make up 20-30% of grants awarded, and awards range from \$10,000 - \$25,000.

Training and Technical Assistance (T&TA) grants are awarded to organizations to provide assistance to CFP and PP applicants and grantees. T&TA grantees are expected to provide services that are national in scope; one such award was made in 2014 (USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, 2014).

## 2. **USDA Rural Development – Value-Added Producer’s Grant**

Program status: Open

Match requirement: 100% (cash or eligible in-kind)

This grant program is intended to assist farmers in developing value-added / processing facilities to their agricultural operations. Grants for up to \$75,000 can be attained for planning (i.e. feasibility assessments and business plan creation) and grants for up to \$200,000 can be attained for working capital. Working capital grants can be applied to processing, marketing and related salary expenses; however, these grants may not be applied toward property, plant or equipment expenses.

One hundred fourteen of these grants were awarded in FY 2012, ranging from less than \$10,000 to \$300,000 and an average of about \$150,000 each (USDA Rural Development, 2014).

## 3. **USDA Rural Development – Small Socially-Disadvantaged Producer Grant (SSDPG)**

Program status: Open

Match requirement: None

The SSDPG makes grants to cooperatives and cooperative development centers in order to provide technical assistance to producers who are socially disadvantaged on the basis of race, ethnicity or gender. In 2013, 18 of these grants were awarded, ranging from \$40,000- \$200,000, with an average grant award of almost \$160,000 (USDA Rural Development, 2014).

## 4. **USDA Rural Development – Rural Business Opportunity Grants (RBOG)**

Program status: Open

Match requirement: None

Rural Business Opportunity Grants (RBOGs) promote “sustainable economic development in rural communities with exceptional needs” through grants to public institutions, nonprofit organizations, Indian tribes, postsecondary institutions and rural cooperatives. Grants for up to \$100,000 can be used to fund any of the following activities:

- *Community economic development*
- *Technology-based economic development*
- *Feasibility studies and business plans*
- *Leadership and entrepreneur training*
- *Rural business incubators*
- *Long-term business strategic planning* (USDA Rural Development, 2014)

#### 5. **USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)**

Program status: Open

Match requirement: None

Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) grants ranging from \$15,000 - \$100,000 over 24 months are made available to support direct-to-consumer projects which:

- *Develop and expand producer-to-consumer marketing*
  - *Market start-up, operation, infrastructure*
  - *Vendor and customer recruitment*
- *Increase domestic consumption and access to agricultural products*
  - *Product introduction or improvement, value adding, branding*
  - *Advertising and promotion*
- *Develop outreach, training, and technical assistance*
  - *Farmers, rancher, manager training and education*
  - *Outreach for the market* (Humphrey, 2014)

Funded projects include traditional farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture as well as agritourism programs. Eligible entities include for-profit and nonprofit organizations, from agricultural businesses to cooperatives and local governments, among others. Priority selection is provided to projects in low-income, food desert communities.

Note: While an entity is allowed to apply for both the FMPP and LFPP grant (see below), an entity is only eligible to receive one of these grants for a given period (USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, 2014).

## 6. **Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP)**

Program status: Open

Match requirement: 25% (cash or in-kind)

Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) grants are intended to “support the development and expansion of local and regional food business enterprises, to increase domestic consumption of, and access to, locally and regionally produced agricultural products, and to develop new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets.”

LFPP grants are made for either planning or implementation. Planning grants of \$5,000 - \$25,000 can be employed over a 12-month period toward market research, feasibility planning and business planning projects. Implementation grants of \$25,000 - \$100,000 can be used over 24 months to “establish a new local/regional food business enterprise, or improve or expand an existing one.” Eligible implementation grant uses include but are not limited to working capital, outreach and marketing and facilities (non-construction) and IT improvements.

Note: While an entity is allowed to apply for both the FMPP and LFPP grant, an entity is only eligible to receive one of these grants for a given period (USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, 2014).

## 7. **Rural Cooperative Development Grants (RCDG)**

Program status: Open

Match requirement: 25% (cash or in-kind)

Rural Cooperative Development Grants (RCDG) are awarded to nonprofit organizations and postsecondary institutions who, in turn, serve as Rural Cooperative Development Centers. Grants are made for up to \$200,000 and may be used to serve individuals, cooperatives, and small businesses via activities promoting and empowering the development of new rural cooperatives. These services include feasibility studies, information collection and dissemination for the development of new cooperatives, provision of loans and grants for cooperative development as well as technical, research and advisory services in the development of new cooperatives (USDA Rural Development, 2014).

## 8. **USDA – Team Nutrition Training Grants**

Program Status: Open

Match requirement: None

The USDA Team Nutrition Training Grant (TNTG) is made to state agencies who are currently administering the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The purpose of this grant is to increase nutrition awareness and availability in schools through foodservice professional training and technical assistance, through “fun and interactive nutrition education,” and through building school and community support for healthy school environments. The TNTG is available as a noncompetitive grant up to \$50,000 as well as a competitive grant for up to \$350,000. State agencies may apply for both the noncompetitive and competitive grants but *deleted* “can” the maximum amount received by the agency may not exceed \$350,000 (USDA Food and Nutrition Services, 2014).

Iowa’s Department of Education was awarded a competitive TNTG in 2013 for the activities described below:

*Iowa school and child care food service staff will receive training and assistance on implementing the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, applying for the HealthierUS School Challenge, maximizing the use of USDA Foods, and meeting the requirements for the new meal patterns. Additionally, they will receive training and technical assistance to create and maintain a healthier school/child care environment, as well as implement wellness policies to align with the requirements set forth in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2012 (USDA Food and Nutrition Service, 2014).*

Through Iowa’s TMTG, mini-grants of up to \$500 are available to Iowa schools and programs that “want to enhance nutrition education, link nutrition and physical activity options, make policy changes regarding food and physical activity or conduct events to promote healthy eating and physical activity” (Iowa Department of Education, 2014).

***NOTE: The Iowa Dept of Education has a number of programs to increase healthy food access and education via local schools, including afterschool snack programs, child and adult care food programs, farm-to-school programs and others. (<https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/nutrition-programs>)***

## **9. USDA Rural Development – Business and Industry Guaranteed Loans (B&I)**

Business and Industry Guaranteed Loans (B&I) are intended to “improve, develop, or finance business, industry, and employment and improve the economic and environmental climate in rural communities.” B&I loans are administered through a qualified, local business lender, they require collateral and they can range up to \$10 million, with certain exceptions allowing for loan amounts up to \$40 million.

These loans are available to individuals, cooperatives, nonprofit organizations, corporations and other entities and may be applied toward the following:

- *Business and industrial acquisitions when the loan will keep the business from closing, prevent the loss of employment opportunities, or provide expanded job opportunities.*
- *Business conversion, enlargement, repair, modernization, or development.*
- *Purchase and development of land, easements, rights-of-way, buildings, or facilities.*
- *Purchase of equipment, leasehold improvements, machinery, supplies, or inventory.*

B&I terms are up to 30 years for real estate, up to 15 years or the expected useful life (whichever is shorter) for equipment and up to 7 years for working capital (USDA Rural Development, 2013).

#### 10. **USDA Rural Development - Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP)**

The Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP) offers loans and technical assistance grants to empower rural microenterprise.

For the sake of RMAP, “microenterprise” refers to a business with 10 or fewer full-time equivalent employees. Through RMAP, loans for up to \$50,000 and technical assistance (TA) are made to microentrepreneurs in rural areas through Microenterprise Development Organizations (MDOs).

Nonprofit organizations, Indian tribes and public postsecondary institutions are entities eligible for becoming MDOs.

Loans to individual microentrepreneurs/ microenterprises may be used for working capital, for the purchase of equipment, for the refinancing of business debt, for business acquisitions and for the purchase or lease of real estate. Borrowers are automatically eligible for TA services provided by the MDO, which can include self-employment preparation courses, microenterprise improvement and assistance in preparing for additional financing strategies (USDA Rural Development, 2014).

### **Food System – Production**

#### 11. **Community Gardens**

A community garden provides open land along with an opportunity for members of a community to work in partnership to grow their own food. For a community garden to be successful, the emphasis must be on *community* (Winne, 2008).

While community gardens can serve as a seasonal source of food for households and/or food pantries, they can also serve an educational purpose as demonstrations of effective gardening techniques. They can be facilitated by a community group that exists for the sole purpose of managing the garden or facilitated as a program of a broader community organization. (McKelvey)

The University of Missouri Extension offers a *Community Gardening Toolkit* which provides an overview of community gardening – its history, benefits and challenges, along with “Ten Steps to Success” in launching a robust community garden (McKelvey). This toolkit can be downloaded at <http://extension.missouri.edu/p/mp906>.

## 12. **Value-Added and Processing**

Small businesses can be strategically developed, launched and incubated to partner with local producers to provide value-added and/or processing services to locally grown produce. This addition of value can be accomplished through *innovation*, wherein the value added provides a new use or less costly production method for locally grown produce. On the other hand, through *coordination*, the value-added business purchases raw locally-grown produce for processing and sale to wholesalers and/or retailers.

In addition to increasing uses and demand for locally grown produce, these value-added partners have the potential to stimulate the local economy through job creation (Boland, 2009).

## 13. **Grower Cooperatives**

Grower cooperatives (co-ops) provide a channel for smaller scale producers to aggregate and coordinate the distribution and sale of locally grown produce. Co-ops provide scale that enables local growers to collectively, more efficiently gain access to larger markets (Wadsworth, James, 2011).

The USDA provides a presentation with steps to starting a co-op:  
[http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/supportdocuments/BCP\\_OrganizingACoop.ppt](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/supportdocuments/BCP_OrganizingACoop.ppt)

For more resources on starting a co-op, see:  
[http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP\\_Coop\\_StartingACoop.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_Coop_StartingACoop.html)

## 14. **Mobile Butchery**

Mobile butchery services increase the feasibility of small-scale, rural livestock production by eliminating hurdles related to the transportation of livestock and the scale required by industrial slaughter houses. Instead, these services are brought to

the producer and allow for meat to be processed and packaged for sale onsite (Bjerga, 2014).

## **Food System – Distribution**

### **15. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)**

Community supported agriculture (CSA) provides a system in which consumers purchase a portion of a producer's crop in advance to harvest season. This system benefits local producers by providing reliable cash flow for the season. In turn, consumers receive the value of seasonal, locally grown, high quality produce delivered to their door (or a designated location) on a reliable basis from the late spring through fall. Grants and a sliding scale pricing structure can offset CSA subscription costs for lower income consumers (Winne, 2008).

### **16. Consumer-Owned Food Co-ops**

While grower cooperatives exist to pool the collective selling potential and power of industry producers, a consumer co-op exists to aggregate purchasing power among a group of consumers. Consumer-owned food co-ops are democratically organized and usually require a one-time equity investment from their members. These businesses range from specialty food stores to full-line grocers and many incorporate community outreach and education into their business models.

Resources such as The Cooperative Grocers' Information Network's *How to Start a Food Co-op* provide extensive information and step-by-step guides for successfully launching a consumer-owned food co-op (Cooperative Grocers' Information Network, 2010).

### **17. Farm-to-school**

A growing movement in both rural and urban settings is to foster connections between local farmers and school systems for the promotion and provision of locally grown, healthy food.

The National Farm to School Network, which has engaged more than 40,000 schools nationwide, recommends that farm-to-school programs incorporate at least one of the following strategies: procurement arrangements that promote school-based consumption of locally grown foods, educational initiatives related to agriculture and nutrition, and school garden development and curricular integration (National Farm to School Network, 2014).



## **Food System – Safety Net**

### **18. Food banks**

As a repository for surplus food in a given foodshed, food banks serve the dual purpose of combatting food insecurity while preventing needless waste. Food banks typically are stocked with food from multiple sources including corporate and grocer partners as well as through individual donations. Food banks, in turn distribute food to individuals or families facing food insecurity either directly to the consumer or through partner food pantries located throughout a given geographic region. To operate effectively, food banks must be efficiently managed and receive significant support in the form of volunteer labor.

### **19. Transportation services to food retailers**

For rural consumers for whom limited food access is compounded by limited or unreliable access to a vehicle, transportation services and infrastructure development can help to ensure reliable, ongoing access to food retailers. These services can be provided by nonprofit organizations or by government agencies making use of the Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP). Transportation services can be structured by scheduled routes, by consumer subscription or by an on-call model (Wright Morton & Blanchard, 2007).

## **Food System – Marketing and Sales**

### **20. Farmers markets**

Farmers markets provide an opportunity for local food producers to sell their products directly to consumers on a regular schedule throughout the production season. Farmers markets are typically hosted at a given location once per week. They not only provide local consumers with the freshest, most locally grown foods; they serve to build a sense of community in the process.

### **21. Promotional efforts – Shop locally**

Rural residents often travel outside their communities to purchase groceries, opting for big box retailers over smaller, independent grocers. As a logical result, these local grocers who are ideally positioned to stock and sell locally produced food, struggle to achieve sales volume to keep their businesses in operation. By developing promotional campaigns that encourage rural residents to shop locally, rural communities can bolster support and the ongoing financial viability of small,

local grocers while strengthening an important retail partner for local producers (Wright Morton & Blanchard, 2007).

## Educational Initiatives – Local Schools

### 22. Health & nutrition instruction

As one of its *School Health Guidelines to Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity*, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that schools “**Implement health education that provides students with the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and experiences needed for lifelong healthy eating and physical activity.**” Health and nutrition instruction should be incorporated at every grade level with behavioral outcomes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). **A 2013 study released by the USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service indicated that nutrition education led to higher fruit and vegetable consumption by low-income elementary-aged children** (FNS Office of Chief Communications, 2014).

### 23. School gardening programs

A school garden can provide a hands-on learning opportunity for students, which can be incorporated across the curriculum, from health and nutrition to science, math, history and art. Resources such as The Edible Schoolyard Project, founded by Alice Waters provide lesson plans, opportunities for collaboration and links to exemplar school gardens from around the nation (The Edible Schoolyard Project, 2014).

### 24. Local School Wellness Policy

Federal law requires that local education agencies (LEAs) (e.g. school boards) have a wellness policy on file for the schools under their governance. School wellness policies must include at least one goal for nutrition education, at least one goal for nutrition promotion as well as at least one goal for physical activity within schools. Local school wellness policies must also provide guidelines on the types of foods that will be made available on school campuses (Scheidel, Delger, & Walker, 2014).

Additionally, the law requires that each LEA designate at least one person who is responsible for wellness policy enactment in each member school and that community stakeholders (e.g. parents, teachers, students and the general public) be given opportunity to contribute to the policy’s development, implementation and monitoring. LEAs must make local school wellness policies available to the public and must also measure and report publically upon policy implementation on a regular basis (Iowa Department of Education, 2014).

## 25. School Health Assessments

The following resources are available for local school wellness policy teams to identify strategic areas of strength and opportunity for the development and/or improvement of a local school wellness policy (Scheidel, Delger, & Walker, 2014):

### **Alliance for a Healthier Generation – Healthy Schools Inventory**

This 30-page inventory is a worksheet that lists questions to uncover areas of strength and needed improvement in a local school's wellness policy. For each item, this inventory lists how to determine whether the item is being accomplished, along with school personnel who are likely to have the necessary information for measuring progress (Alliance for a Healthier Generation, 2013).

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – School Health Index**

The CDC's School Health Index (SHI) is made available in two versions- One tool is for elementary schools and the other is focused on middle and high schools. The SHI can be completed online, allowing for multiple team members to input data independently, or by downloading and printing the manual file.

The SHI consists of eight modules, which are intended to provide a broad understanding of the health environment in a particular school. Each of the modules for the two versions of the SHI are listed below:

- Module 1: School Health and Safety Policies and Environment
- Module 2: Health Education
- Module 3: Physical Education and Other Physical Activity Programs
- Module 4: Nutrition Services
- Module 5: School Health Services
- Module 6: School Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services
- Module 7: Health Promotion for Staff
- Module 8: Family and Community Involvement

The SHIs conclude with guidelines for planning for improvement as needs are uncovered through the assessment process (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013).

### **Fuel Up to Play 60 – School Wellness Investigation**

The School Wellness Investigation is provided by the National Football League's (NFL) Fuel Up to Play 60 and is available as an online or printable tool. The investigation is designed to be coordinated by an adult member of the school community with data collection assistance provided by current students. The

investigation consists of three modules: 1) Nutrition Services, 2) Physical Education /Physical Activity and 3) Family and Community.

Fuel Up to Play 60 offers free, customized recommendations - “Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Plays” to schools who enter the investigation results online. The online investigation must be completed by schools to be eligible to apply for up to \$4,000 per year to cover the costs of implementing one “Healthy Eating Play” and one “Physical Activity Play” (Fuel Up to Play 60, LLC, 2013).

## **26. Alliance for a Healthier Generation – Smart Snacks**

The Smart Snack webpage provides a series of steps and resources to eliminate unhealthy foods from school campus services (e.g. vending machines, concession stands, etc.) while promoting the purchase and consumption of nutritionally valuable, “Smart Snacks.” Resources include a printable Food Inventory and Beverage Inventory, an online Smart Snack Product Calculator, sample memos to stakeholders such as vendors, school staff and parents, and tips for engaging students in the process (Alliance for a Healthier Generation, 2014).

## **Outreach Initiatives / Community Agencies**

### **27. Nutritional training**

Community organizations can promote the purchase and consumption of healthy foods such as locally grown fruits and vegetables by providing educational seminars and/or workshop series related to nutrition. Classes can be offered in partnership with local schools, local grocers, other community organizations and healthcare providers and can interweave nutritional education with practical assistance in meal planning and healthy cooking techniques. These classes can serve to practically empower individuals and families to improve their eating habits while building consensus and a sense of community purpose related to healthy food.

### **28. Food heritage promotion**

Rural communities can promote awareness of food access and nutritional issues and spur economic development by embracing and celebrating the diversity of food culture and history indigenous to a particular community. This promotion can take the form of establishing annual festivals/ cook-offs or developing venues within a community which celebrate local food traditions while inviting “culinary tourism.” The Farm 2 U Collaborative offers an online toolkit featuring guides to assist rural communities in turning local culture into an economic engine for tourism development (Collaboration for the 21st Century Appalachia, 2014).

## 29. Backyard garden training and assistance

Community organizations can assist rural residents toward food security by providing training and hands-on assistance aimed at the establishment and propagation of gardens in the residents' own yards. Related initiatives can include donated or discounted gardening supplies and equipment, heavy equipment (e.g. tiller) loan programs, gardening mentorships and classes on harvesting, preparing and preserving garden produce (City Slicker Farms, 2014).

## 30. Nutritional aid program participation

According to a 2010 Issue Brief from the Carsey Institute, "Although about 2.8 million rural households with children are income-eligible for [the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, Women Infants and Children or the Child and Adult Care Food Program], roughly 43 percent of those eligible do not participate in any of the four programs" (Wauchope & Shattuck, 2010).

Rural community organizations can increase food access and security by providing services to assist eligible members of the community with enrollment in these government nutrition programs along with SNAP and the Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs, where applicable (Ver Ploeg, et al., 2009).

## 31. Entrepreneurial / Microenterprise assistance

According to the USDA's Community Food Projects literature, entrepreneurial/micro-entrepreneurial assistance can take the form of "entrepreneurial training, technical assistance in expanding local markets, developing and producing value-added products or infrastructure development" (Ver Ploeg, et al., 2009). This assistance might be delivered as cohort-based workshop series, through mentorship, through a service-as-needed model or through an online rural entrepreneurship hub.

## 32. CDC Worksite Health ScoreCard

To promote healthy workplaces, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has published *The CDC Worksite Health ScoreCard: An Assessment Tool for Employers to Prevent Heart Disease, Stroke, & Related Health Conditions*. This downloadable resource features 125 items, which help employers to assess the extent to which evidence-based strategies that promote health are being implemented in their workplaces. As a result of completing the assessment, employers will be able to gain insights which will help them determine strategies that need to be more effectively addressed (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014). Community agencies can promote such evaluations among local employers and provide public recognition for those employers who participate.

## Healthcare System Initiatives

### 33. Healthier Generation Benefit

Alliance for a Healthier Generation is partnering with employers and insurers to provide the Healthier Generation Benefit. This benefit targets childhood obesity and provides for up to four follow-up visits with a primary care doctor as well as four consultations with a registered dietician (Alliance for a Healthier Generation, 2014).

### 34. General Rural Healthcare Recommendations

Rural healthcare providers can impact their communities through educational outreach, community partnerships, provider nutritional training and facility services. These medical practices can offer regular workshops related to nutrition, physical activity and other healthy lifestyle topics. Partnerships can be developed with community organizations to host such workshops as well as for health events such as cholesterol and blood pressure screenings. In communities where nutritionists are not readily available, healthcare providers can receive extra training to be prepared to effectively assist their patients with dietary modifications as necessary. Finally, healthcare practices that have exercise facilities could consider how these facilities might be made available for public use (Rural Assistance Center, 2014).

## Community / Policy Initiatives

### 35. Food policy council

A food policy council (FPC) often consists of a variety of stakeholders, ranging from producers to consumers, from retailers to environmentalists for the sake of advocacy and activism related to a particular area's (e.g. town, county, region, etc.) food system. According to Mark Winne, the primary goals of FPCs include:

- *Connecting economic development, food security efforts, preservation and enhancement of agriculture, and environmental concerns;*
- *Supporting the development and expansion of locally produced foods;*
- *Reviewing proposed legislations and regulations that affect the food system;*
- *Making recommendations to government bodies;*
- *Gathering, synthesizing, and sharing information on community food systems* (Winne, Doing Food Policy Councils Right: A Guide to Development and Action, 2012).

Iowa is currently home to three county FPCs (Cass, Linn and Pottawattamie Counties) as well as a statewide FPC (Iowa Food Systems Council) (Winne, CFSC List of Food Policy Councils in North America, 2012).

### **36. Community food assessment**

(While Wapello County has already done a community food assessment through this project, we include this for future reference.) One of the first projects addressed by a newly formed food policy council (FPC) is a community food assessment. A community food assessment serves to develop a deep understanding of the local food system “including social, economic, and cultural factors that influence food production, distribution, and consumption.” Such an assessment provides direction for ongoing action and advocacy by the FPC (Winne, Doing Food Policy Councils Right: A Guide to Development and Action, 2012).

The USDA has published a Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit, which includes detailed instructions on data collection, analysis and reporting. This toolkit consists of six components:

- *Profile of community socioeconomic and demographic characteristics*
- *Profile of community food resources*
- *Assessment of household food security*
- *Assessment of food resource accessibility*
- *Assessment of food availability and affordability*
- *Assessment of community food production resources*

The overall assessment results in the production of standardized scores which aid in identifying community food security assets and weaknesses, informing the ongoing work of the community’s FPC (Cohen, 2002).

### **37. Awareness-raising – Local food system (moved from school section)**

Promotional campaigns can be conducted at the community, county and state level to raise awareness of and support for the local food system. A given day or week each year can be designated “Local Food Day (or Week)” with coordinated efforts to spread the message of the value of the local food system through media coverage, retailer merchandising, restaurant specials and grassroots campaigns. Additionally, conferences can be organized to unite diverse local food system stakeholders, from producers to investors to consumers and advocacy groups. These conferences can provide training as well as networking opportunities to bolster the ongoing vitality and growth of the local food system (Ver Ploeg, et al., 2009).

### **38. Local food for local government**

Local governments can strengthen the local food movement, improve healthy food access and stimulate the local economy by giving procurement preference to

vendors of locally produced foods. Beyond purchasing food for government employee consumption (e.g. cafeterias, concessions, vending machines), local governments can purchase locally produced food for consumption in public hospitals, senior programs and residences and jails (Public Health Law & Policy (PHLP), 2012).

The state of Iowa Statute 73.1 requires that local government agencies purchase from within Iowa if the products “are found in marketable quantities in the state and are of a quality reasonably suited to the purpose intended, and can be secured without additional cost over foreign products or products of other states” The only exception is school districts participating in federal school lunch programs (73.1 Preference -- Conditions).

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## EXEMPLARS

### 1. Community Garden

**Name:** American Community Gardening Association (ACGA)

**Location:** Columbus, OH

**Website:** <https://communitygarden.org/resources/>

**Description:**

The ACGA is a helpful resource for developing a community garden. From an interactive map of community gardens across the country to information on management strategy and sample forms (e.g. land use agreements, plot registration and garden contracts), the ACGA website provides a toolkit that will assist in the conception, development and launch of a successful rural community garden. Note: Membership is required to access some of these materials; membership fees from \$45 for an individual to \$100 for an organization apply.

### 2. Value-Added and Processing

**Name:** Patchwork Family Farms

**Location:** Columbia, MO

**Website:** <http://www.patchworkfamilyfarms.org/index.html>

**Contact Name:** Tim Gibbons

**Phone:** (573) 449-1336

**Email:** [timgibbons@morural.org](mailto:timgibbons@morural.org)

**Description:**

Patchwork Family Farms is a producer cooperative which combines the resources of 15 family hog farms to facilitate the processing of their hogs. Their vision is to "develop a cooperative livestock production and marketing model in a way that will support independent producers and create jobs for rural community members."

**3. Grower Cooperative**

**Name:** Tuscarora Organic Growers (TOG)

**Location:** Hustontown, PA

**Website:** <http://www.tog.coop/>

**Contact Name:** Jeff Taylor, General Manager/Account Manager/Marketing

**Phone:** (814) 448-2173

**Email:** [jeff@tog.coop](mailto:jeff@tog.coop)

**Description:**

TOG is a grower-owned cooperative with 44 member farmers from 7 counties in south central Pennsylvania. The cooperative serves four main purposes for its growers: marketing produce for sale in the region's urban areas, coordinating crop production among growers to maximize product diversity, providing quality standards for produce sold by the cooperative to ensure ongoing sales, and providing economies of scale in purchasing power from suppliers. TOG sales account for the vast majority of member farms' annual sales volume; TOG estimates that it will sell 100,000 cases of produce, with year-round production this year.

**4. Mobile Butchery**

**Name:** Island Grown Initiative - Island Grown Poultry

**Location:** Vineyard Haven, MA

**Website:** <http://www.islandgrown.org/poultry/>

**Contact Name:** Taz Armstrong

**Email:** [taz@islandgrown.org](mailto:taz@islandgrown.org)

**Description:**

Island Grown Initiative (IGI) is a nonprofit organization focused on promoting the production of locally grown food on Martha's Vineyard. By introducing the Island Grown

Poultry program, the organization has empowered local farmers and gardeners, alike to raise chickens for distribution and retail and restaurant sale. "The trailer carries all necessary supplies for processing and travels from farm to farm with an experienced crew, bringing a safe, humane, and local animal processing solution to our local farmers. It is a unique piece of agricultural infrastructure, one that is easily shared between multiple producers and allows growers of all sizes to become involved in raising poultry." IGI estimated that this program resulted in the addition of \$100,000 to agricultural revenues while creating six part-time jobs for the local economy in 2012.

## **5. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)**

**Name:** Rural Resources

**Location:** Greeneville, TN

**Website:** <http://www.ruralresources.net/>

**Phone:** (423) 636-8171

**Email:** [info@ruralresources.net](mailto:info@ruralresources.net)

### **Description:**

Rural Resources is a sustainable agriculture education organization, but it is highlighted here for its unique Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) model. Food for the CSA is aggregated by local farmers as well as by teens from low-income households who participate in the Farm & Food Team Training Program facilitated by Rural Resources. In addition to this unique aggregation-combined-with-education model for supplying its CSA, Rural Resources' subscription model provides a regular food basket for the subscriber *and* for one of the teen grower's families throughout the growing season. As a result, the CSA addresses three issues critical to the rural food system: Reliable support for local producers, educational opportunities for local teens, and fresh, healthy foods for food insecure families.

## **6. Consumer-Owned Food Cooperative**

**Name:** Ozark Natural Foods (ONF)

**Location:** Fayetteville, AR

**Website:** <http://onf.coop/>

**Contact Name:** Alysen Land, General Manager

**Phone:** (479) 521-7558

**Email:** [alysen@onf.coop](mailto:alysen@onf.coop)

**Description:**

From its grassroots beginning as a buyer collective that stored products on a member's back porch in the early 1970's ONF has grown to a fully stocked grocery store committed to providing its owners with access to healthy, locally produced food. All of the fresh produce sold by ONF is grown within 100 miles of the store. Additionally, ONF highlights local foods through tasting events and offers special programming to engage children in the ONF shopping experience.

## 7. Rural grocer

**Name:** Chester's Thriftway

**Location:** John Day, OR

**Website:** <http://mychesters.com/>

**Contact Name:** William Wyllie, Manager

**Phone:** (541) 575-1899

**Description<sup>5</sup>:**

The town of John Day, Oregon (population 1,700) is 100 miles from the nearest discount grocery store. In John Day, Chester's serves as a vital community resource, serving as the only local grocer for residents and as a supplier for the local hospital and some restaurants. A key to Chester's success is its 5,000 square foot warehouse that allows the grocer to achieve competitive pricing from its suppliers.

## 8. Awareness-raising - Local food system

**Name:** Illinois Stewardship Alliance (ISA) - Illinois Local Food Awareness Day

**Location:** Springfield, IL

**Website:** <http://www.ilstewards.org/local-food-awareness-day-success/>

**Contact Name:** Wes King, Executive Director

**Email:** [wes@ilstewards.org](mailto:wes@ilstewards.org)

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<sup>5</sup> Information about Chester's can be found in the following report:  
<http://www.oregonfoodbank.org/~media/Files/Community-Food-Systems/Rural%20Grocer%20ReportFINALoptpdf.pdf>

**Description:**

For the past five years, the ISA has convened an annual meeting of concerned producers, consumer and advocates at the Illinois State Capitol Complex for the Illinois Local Food Awareness. The purpose of these annual events is to build an advocacy group around the topic of Illinois' local food production and sale while engaging in lobbying activities to promote local food-friendly legislation at the state level.

**9. Food heritage promotion**

**Name:** Cast Iron Cook-Off

**Location:** Charleston, WV

**Website:** <http://castironcookoff.org/>

**Contact Name:** Deb Workman, Program Director

**Phone:** (304) 669-4340

**Email:** [dworkman1@ma.rr.com](mailto:dworkman1@ma.rr.com)

**Description:**

The Cast Iron Cook-Off brings together chefs from across the state of West Virginia for a cooking competition that celebrates the state's cultural heritage through the reimagining of its local cuisine. "At the Cast Iron Cook-Off®, we are creating a New Appalachian Cuisine™ that builds on our cultural roots in terms of recipes, folklore, utensils and ingredients but that also takes into account recent findings about nutritious eating and healthy lifestyles." The weekend-long annual event includes "Tastes from the Mountains," a reception where local foods are prepared by local culinary students for sampling by attendees.

**10. Backyard garden training and assistance**

**Name:** City Slicker Farms

**Location:** Oakland, CA

**Website:** <http://www.cityslickerfarms.org/backyard-garden-program>

**Phone:** (510) 763-4241

**Email:** [info@cityslickerfarms.org](mailto:info@cityslickerfarms.org)

**Description:**

With a name like City Slicker Farms (CSF), it is clear that this exemplar is based in an urban setting. Nevertheless, this nonprofit organization's Backyard Garden Program provides a model, which could just as feasibly be implemented in rural communities as it is in the city. Low-income community members apply for this free program. When an applicant is selected, CSF works with the applicant's household to develop a garden plan and construct a garden. Each participant is paired with a garden mentor for two years; mentors provide coaching and practical resources, while ongoing garden maintenance is the responsibility of the participating household. After one year, participants are asked to serve as garden mentors to new program enrollees, thereby ensuring that the program is sustained and its impacts are at least doubled on an annual basis.

### **11. Entrepreneurial /Microenterprise assistance**

**Name:** Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACEnet)

**Location:** Athens, OH

**Website:** <http://www.acenetworks.org/>

**Phone:** (740) 592-3854

**Description:**

ACEnet promotes the development of enterprise throughout its region through four related initiatives. First, ACEnet operates two business incubators. One of these incubators features the Food Manufacturing Center, a shared-use production kitchen – "One of the first three of its kind in the US, this facility provides production, storage, refrigeration, freezer, and distribution space." Next, ACEnet focuses on building capacity in existing businesses by offering training, workshops and market access initiatives for local current and would-be entrepreneurs. Third, ACEnet offers business loans. Finally, ACEnet works at the advocacy/policy level to ensure that local and state laws serve the interest of small, rural businesses in its region.

### **12. Food policy council**

**Name:** Alaska Food Policy Council

**Location:** Alaska

**Website:** <http://akfoodpolicycouncil.wordpress.com/>

**Phone:** (907) 269-8072

**Email:** [akfoodpolicycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:akfoodpolicycouncil@gmail.com)

**Description:**



The Alaska Food Policy Council (AFPC) is a strong example of a rurally based food policy council for its diversified approach to creating an equitable food system for Alaskan residents. In 2012, the AFPC launched a 3-year strategic plan for the state's food system, featuring 5 strategies toward accomplishing its goals. The AFPC consists of six working groups: Legislative, School programs, Locally grown, Emergency preparedness, and Research and public engagement. Additionally, the AFPC website serves as an effective hub of Alaska-specific food system resources, from a compilation of research on the local food system to lists of agencies and programs that combat food insecurity.

### **13. Mobile grocer**

**Name:** Healthy Community Store Initiative (HCSI), Inc. / R&G Family Grocers

**Location:** Tulsa, OK

**Website:** <http://www.tulsarealgoodfood.com/>

**Contact Name:** Katie Plohocky

**Phone:** (918) 550-2877

**Email:** [kplohocky@gmail.com](mailto:kplohocky@gmail.com)

**Description:**

HCSI, Inc. offers a nonprofit solution to healthy food access through R&G Family Grocers, a mobile grocery store. In addition to making fresh and healthy foods available in food desert communities, this mobile grocer offers nutritional education, cooking demonstrations and medical screenings.

### **14. Community organization**

**Name:** Unity Barn Raisers

**Location:** Unity, ME

**Website:** <http://www.unitybarnraisers.org/>

**Contact Name:** Jim Perry, Executive Director

**Phone:** (207) 948-9005

**Email:** [ubr@unitymaine.org](mailto:ubr@unitymaine.org)

**Description:**

Unity Barn Raisers (UBR) is a nonprofit community organization "that works proactively to enhance small town character and rural environment, while nurturing a

thriving community-based economy." While food security is not its sole focus, UBR uses a multi-pronged, partnership-based approach to address food system issues in their rural Maine community. In addition to a weekly farmers market, UBR hosts bi-monthly community meals. These community meals feature locally grown food, and proceeds from the events benefit partner organizations, such as Veggies for All (<http://www.veggiesforall.org>), a 3-acre farm devoted to local hunger relief.

## **15. Nonprofit farming and education**

**Name:** Garden Harvest

**Location:** Reisterstown, MD

**Website:** <http://www.gardenharvest.org/>

**Phone:** (410) 526-0698

**Email:** [Garharvest@aol.com](mailto:Garharvest@aol.com)

### **Description:**

Garden Harvest is a nonprofit, organic farming and education operation with a holistic approach to addressing hunger, both locally and internationally. Relevant initiatives include food production and donation, animal husbandry, and educational outreach.

Garden Harvest produces fruit, vegetables, eggs and goats milk and 100% of the food produced is donated to addressing food insecurity. They constructed a nearly 5,000 square foot greenhouse in order to provide produce to low-income individuals year-round. Produce that is grown is strategically selected for its hardiness and its convenience for preparation. In addition to its own production activities, Garden Harvest facilitates an "Adopt a Plot" program that allows local nonprofits and community groups to grow food for their own consumption and/or distribution to food insecure individuals.

Garden Harvest raises animals ranging from chickens and goats to pigs and oxen. These livestock are either put to work on Garden Harvest farms or are donated to rural farmers in Appalachia and the Mid Atlantic region. Garden Harvest places a special emphasis on raising endangered farm animal species and allowing each species to contribute to the production process, though no animals are raised for meat.

Educational outreach initiatives by Garden Harvest include partnering with local schools to teach children about organic production and nutrition, advocacy around issues related to hunger and poverty, and teaching gardening, food preparation and

food preservation methods to members of its community. Garden Harvest also offers consultations for organizations that are interested in replicating their model in other communities.

## **16. Nonprofit agricultural education**

**Name:** The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture

**Location:** Poteau, OK

**Website:** <http://kerrcenter.com/>

**Phone:** (918) 647-9123

**Email:** [mailbox@kerrcenter.com](mailto:mailbox@kerrcenter.com)

### **Description:**

The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture is committed to providing educational resources to empower rural farmers and gardeners for success. "The center gives farmers, ranchers, gardeners and educators from around Oklahoma the tools they need to be successful in challenging times. Through projects on the ranch, a comprehensive website and well-regarded educational events, the center reaches people around the world." The Kerr Center offers Beginning Farmer courses that combine instruction with mentoring for new producers. Additionally, the Kerr Center's website is a strong example of a locally focused, resource-rich hub for information ranging from organic certification to vendors of locally grown foods.

## **17. Gleaning organization**

**Name:** Mid-Atlantic Gleaning Network (MAGNET)

**Location:** Alexandria, VA

**Website:** <http://www.midatlanticgleaningnetwork.org/>

**Contact Name:** Zachary Huhn

**Phone:** (703) 780-1195

**Email:** [zhuhn@midatlanticgleaningnetwork.org](mailto:zhuhn@midatlanticgleaningnetwork.org)

### **Description:**

While MAGNET does not have a rural base, they partner with rural farmers to combat food insecurity through gleaning. "When farmers are finished harvesting their crops, we go through to salvage the remaining edible foods. We are able to glean just about



every day, and are happy to work with local and regional partners to ensure as much salvageable food as possible gets to those in need." By mobilizing volunteer labor on partner farms and in their warehousing operations, MAGNET estimates that they will salvage and distribute 10 million pounds of donated food annually.